



To fully prosper, each businesses must become an online publisher.

Learn how to --

- Create custom branded publishing channels.
- Leverage editorial-style content to drive sales.
- Configure a system using available technologies.
- And if preferred, build it yourself on a shoestring.

Content Marketing System: Buy or Build Your Own

Make Your Business Thrive by Publishing Compelling Content Online

By Joseph Riden, Strategic Consultant



Kim & Joseph's
remarkable agency
Business Development = Planning + Marketing

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Introduction

When someone searches the Internet for something you offer, will you make a sale? Any seller offering the same thing could get that business. How will you win the ongoing struggle for your customers' eyes, heart, and mind?

You need to make your company visible, cast the best light on your offerings, and demonstrate outstanding customer experience. This e-book helps you accomplish that, even on a shoestring budget. Use this information to build sales revenues by publishing compelling, magnetic, infectious, and shareworthy content, regardless of your company's size or your offerings' complexity, whatever your customers need and want.

The time when a great website was enough is long gone. Today's Internet is an ocean of valuable information mixed with clutter and teeming with competition for attention as it expands exponentially. Yet the web still offers a huge advantage in unprecedented publishing power. To win more sales, publish a quality content stream customers love to consume and share. Assist, inform, educate, or entertain them to gain attention and sales.

Even if you're barely computer- and Internet-literate, you can learn to set up an inexpensive but powerful content publishing system. No programming is required. Just configure the right selection of online services, then publish a content stream that merits respect. You'll gain admission to an exclusive group of voices your ideal customers trust, follow, and buy from. Use compelling content to propel leads through your sales process, draw customers back, and stimulate them to refer friends.

*Today's Internet offers
companies unprecedented
publishing power.*

Content for marketing can be any relevant information that attracts and rewards customers. When it's your stream, you select subject matter your audience prefers. Create an exciting information channel for them. Content brings best results when produced with high production values -- quality white papers, reports, articles, blogs, e-books, e-newsletters, and other formats.

So-called "content marketing" is taking our whole business climate by storm because quality content helps customer relationships begin, grow, and endure. Many flourishing companies now routinely drive sales activity with content streams. Worthwhile web content builds customer engagement by providing solid value before, after, and even without sales. It's like publishing your own custom magazine except your private label, branded channels are online and interactive.

Marketing with content is less demanding than other alternatives. It takes less cash and follows a more credible approach than older-style, outbound marketing and sales. Newer inbound methods can be far less expensive than advertising and much more effective than interruption-based selling through cold calls or ads. Just about anyone can market with content online with manageable effort and cost.

High quality online content can market anything that's sold. It propels your business forward whether you deal in products or services, in either consumer or B2B markets:

- Content publishing helps professional service firms establish referral-based practices with backlogs.
- Content helps manufacturing companies generate enough inbound leads to meet strategic goals.
- Non-profit and political organizations use content to champion their causes at manageable cost.

The more complex your sale, the better a thought leadership web presence attracts inbound leads. Search engines value expertise because it identifies authorities in each area of business. Customers seek you out when they discover you're an authority. A magnetic content stream helps you drive traffic to your web presence, connect with customers, and become a preferred provider.

The longer your sales cycles, the more a steady stream of expert content helps nurture customers through sales. Compelling content strengthens lasting bonds over time to improve customer retention. Your content stream makes it more likely customers will choose your offerings repeatedly instead of going to the competition. That's because compelling and useful content helps build familiarity, affinity, and trust.

***Publish with an
inexpensive content
marketing engine to help
your business thrive.***

When you configure your own system, you're not locked in to some total solution's inherent limitations. Search engines relentlessly improve algorithms, altering natural search results. Social consensus weighs ever more heavily in searches. Older SEO measures become worthless or start working against you. With your own digital publishing operation, there's no need for concern because you can change features and functions by adopting new or different web-based services at will.

Create an inexpensive content marketing system "engine" to help your business thrive:

- Conserve marketing budget while improving inbound leads and sales.
- Drive more traffic to your entire web presence.
- Build familiarity, affinity, and customer confidence continually.
- Engage with customers and lead conversations to sales.
- Use content as both attraction and reward for considering your value propositions.
- Nurture customers through sampling or trials, initial and repeat sales, and referrals.
- Increase customer satisfaction and retention over the long haul.
- Stimulate more referral business to build backlog and drive growth.
- Achieve a more stable cash flow at higher levels and exceed your business goals sooner.

These days, each business must become an online publisher to fully prosper. This e-book helps you determine your content strategy, set up a working tactical system, and generate and deploy content marketing without under-buying or over-spending. In the following pages, you'll learn to create a content marketing engine that includes what you need, leaves out what you don't want, supports safe e-publishing, and minimizes your effort to market well.

Use this e-book to help you reach business goals and share it with friends. Please ask them to download it from our Agency's [Newsletter Blog](#). Your questions or comments through our blog or [website](#) are welcome.

-- Joseph Riden, Strategic Consultant
Co-Founder, Kim & Joseph's Remarkable Agency

Why Market with Content?

In this era of tight cash, a business owner or manager is compelled to hold down costs while also growing income. Yet as you get leaner, you have fewer resources and more to do. This kind of performance pressure puts businesses in a bind. A marketing investment you'd be willing to risk might bring too small a return, take too long, or require too much effort. Fears of marketing costs, low returns, or complications compel many of us to finally risk nothing and thereby gain nothing.



**Share what you know
to nurture customers powerfully.**

If you're concerned you're not getting ahead (but you're actually falling behind), there's some good news. A straightforward business process can help you reach the profitability you want using the budget you have. It's a rather paradoxical approach to promotion called "content marketing."

Though it has many forms and variations, content marketing boils down to mostly content production and distribution usually provided for free. "Content" is simply a term techies use for "stuff you put online," whatever the format. With well-directed, purposeful content, online publication becomes a powerful, Zen-like way of "marketing without marketing." Content marketing even works well in print, but online is where it shines brightest.

Market with Editorial Content

People no longer tolerate being "sold to" with convince-and-coerce style arguments. Customers want to learn about their complex purchase options and become well enough informed to make their own smart buying decisions. It works better to more subtly attract and influence them and sell only after they become believers.

Content is the key to connecting with your customers. It enables you to tell an objective yet compelling story about how your business generates value. Typically, we're so eager to see the customer's money that we cut the getting-to-know you part of relationships too short. Anyone who has ever dated much knows asking for a deal too soon kills interest.

In editorial-style content, you offer subject matter to inform, educate, or enlighten. You let your reader relax and learn about what you do without asking them to buy anything. You don't push your customer into a heavy mind space around how to spend budget. When customers' thoughts remain more open and relaxed, it's far more likely they'll actually *get* the messages we so intently wish they would receive. Over the Internet, engage with your audience without selling. Influence customers with content they find interesting, attractive, valuable, useful, or even entertaining. Don't give them the feeling it's time to switch channels.

Content marketing may seem "too indirect" at first. You may have difficulty believing it works if you come from an old-school sales tradition. Willingness to give influence a try is a content marketing cornerstone and a prerequisite for content-based success. This more relaxed, indirect approach has proven to work far better than traditional tell-and-sell. If your customers access the Internet to search for what you offer, or anything related to it, a full-flowing content stream helps your business prosper. Examples given throughout this e-book show how companies of all sizes and even individuals are attracting more business with online content.

Useful marketing content may provide examples of your work and achievements. It may show how you think and communicate, tell what you're like to work with, build your reputation, and drive consensus on the value you provide. You may give guidance on purchasing what you offer or on how to use it effectively. However it's slanted, content marketing is based on facts, statistics, history, actualities, results, and analytic findings and insights -- not boring puff 'n' fluff, hype, or marketing hoopla.

Content marketing may seem "too indirect" at first. Willingness to give influence a try is a content marketing cornerstone and a prerequisite for content-based success.

To underscore the stunning marketing power of objective content, here's a short example. What's the single most pressing issue you face in business today? Generating sales leads or closes? Securing adequate raw materials? Finding the special talent you need? Locating a source of capital to fuel growth? Reducing manufacturing costs? Upgrading your employee benefits within a tight budget? Or maybe standing out from your competition? Pick anything that keeps you up at night or some key business goal you dream of accomplishing.

Okay, got something clearly in mind?

Now let's say you find some content online (maybe a white paper, e-book, or a set of articles) that squarely addresses and resolves your pressing issue or reveals the way to achieving your dream. The company that gave away this incredibly valuable content for free also offers workable solutions to other pressing issues you face and products or services you routinely procure. Wouldn't you want to connect with this source and at least find out more? If you could learn more without concern that you'd trigger unwanted solicitation, wouldn't you go ahead?

That's the kind of content you can use to your advantage. Content can make your business quite attractive with a manageable effort -- assuming you actually provide stellar solutions, you can document them clearly, and you deploy your content effectively. Once customers see you're engaged in helping them materially and you genuinely have something to offer they really need, they'll want to learn all about your services, products, and company.

Times Have Changed

The time has come to replace tell-and-sell with show-and-help. Frankly, not even marketers want to be exposed to ad overload any more. Hold off selling until the time is right and assist and educate customers for a while. You'll give them space to clearly perceive the value in your offerings. Put the persuasive rhetoric on hold. Nobody believes it anyway, and we all have many effective ways to avoid it, so we do. People buy from folks they like, and genuine assistance is very likable. Attractive content effectively builds positive sentiment for your brand.

Publish valuable information that's meaningful in your field of business in order to connect with -- and influence -- an interested audience of prospects and customers. Speak to your audience regularly, in your own voice, and demonstrate mastery. Provide intelligence your audience can act on to resolve issues and reach goals. You'll forge

connections. You'll become the esteemed problem-solving, go-to expert. Content is a key to entering easy, natural dialogs that build trust and connections with potential customers.

The sales process doesn't benefit from pressure. Once prospects are confident they'll have a customer experience they like, they want an easy, low-commitment way to sample it. After they've proven your worth in their own experience, they become willing to commit. If you deliver great return on investment, some customers may risk recommending your service to others simply because they believe in helping people and because recommending a valuable service makes them look good.

Open, sustained dialogs strengthen customer relations. The more often and better you use content to connect with customers online, the more likely they are to work with you long term. Engage your customers with valuable content, and you'll win their continuing attention, interest, and gratitude -- especially when you publish *well-curated* content.

What Is Content Curation?

When someone competent reviews what you will publish per your own standards and also checks alignment with your audience's values -- that's content curation. A curator assures your content pleases and delights, informs and educates, stimulates wonder, or otherwise attracts, rewards, or assists your audience in some organized, useful,

Marketing self-publishers often need some help from a specialist to get great results. All the help you need is available and eager to connect with you.

sustainable way -- while also remaining consistent with your brand values. Curation is someone maintaining content quality through informed evaluation and judgment, even if the standards and process may not be formal.

That eliminates information from content mills or machines -- "info" scraped from the web or cobbled into robotic mashups. Also rejected is self-authored content from well-meaning business owners who may know their business very well but lack the production skills to generate materials their audience will respect and follow.

Throughout this e-book, "content" and "content marketing" mean *the curated kind* unless otherwise stated. Marketing self-publishers often need some help from a specialist to get great results. All the help you need is available and eager to connect with you.

Curated Examples -- You're marketing with curated content when you publish high-quality information online that helps your audience get ahead in business or in life. Your information channel can use any digital format your audience likes. Content can (and does) take forms like these:

- A wealth management e-newsletter that helps readers make smart, safe, and profitable investment decisions.
- Videos that instruct people in yoga, cooking, or playing poker.
- A series of articles that show ancestry enthusiasts how to research and document their roots.
- A website that helps buyers choose goods such as tires or smartphones or services such as law or dentistry.
- Regular podcasts to bring investors news about market conditions.
- Information releases and teachings from world spiritual leaders to their followers.

The wealth management e-newsletter subtly influences customers to place investments through the firm publishing it. The instruction videos build interest in related goods or services, such as coaching or classes. The

ancestry articles may entice people to join an ancestry membership website or buy a related book. The investment podcasts might lead listeners to use the brokerage that broadcasts them. The spiritual guidance helps followers make progress. It may also help motivate contributions. And so on.

Any Business Can Market with Content

If you're a professional service provider, you trade time for money, so your firm or practice lives or dies by billable hours. Naturally, you want to maximize hours, but you didn't spend decades accumulating credentials and marketable experience so you can sell services over the phone. Yet without enough business development, income may lag unless you achieve that enviable state called "backlogged."

If you manufacture or sell capital equipment, customers will be keen on discovering all the details -- the specifications, features, benefits, and applications of your lines. Customers want to educate themselves, satisfy their curiosity about your company, and compare your offerings to those from the competition. They'll be eager to hear what buyers have experienced. If you have to dig up each new customer from scratch and explain every supporting detail from pre-sale to close, you won't sell much. What you want most is more orders, more consistently, and more easily.

The viral lift achievable with an online CME is limited only by these things: the effort and budget you dedicate, your content's appeal and volume, and the your CME's effectiveness.

Here's the way out of these familiar, vexing dilemmas -- become a source of knowledge, intelligence, insight, and wisdom for your customers. Your content stream can work like an attractively decorated store window on a busy street. Content publishing enables you to promote your brand and sell by simple demonstration, without self-conscious sales calls or pressurized closes. This approach brings more billable hours or product sales. It also positions you to pick and choose the highly qualified customers with whom you prefer to work.

It's fast and easy to build a simple but powerful online distribution system for your content. You can do it over a weekend, or within a week working only a couple hours a day. The cost ranges from

free to very affordable. Once your distribution system is running, simply produce, procure, or find compelling content, broadcast it, collect the leads that emerge, and nurture them through sales. Your content marketing engine (CME) is composed of the distribution system, plus the content you publish through it.

Why You Need a CME

You may be thinking, "I don't need content marketing because I already have an e-newsletter," or "I'm already blogging, um, intermittently," or "I use an SEO service to get leads." You'll soon see that an integrated CME has far greater reach, depth, and effectiveness than any single component working alone.

Doing a little something here and there is not comparable to the continuous power of an integrated CME running at the peak of its power curve. A single CME event can combine the effectiveness of several complementary marketing elements reinforcing each other -- a blog post, an e-newsletter broadcast, multiple social media posts and any resulting comments, likes or recommendations, multi-node article marketing, a live offer presentation, continuing online presentation marketing, and possibly phone or in-person contact to advance and close sales.

You may think, "Yeah, but all this sounds expensive. What's my cost for this kind of exposure?" If you use free services, plus your own effort to build your CME, cash outlay can be absolutely zero aside from the value of your time and effort. You may decide to spend a little cash for key supporting services rather than stay at zero cost and be limited to stripped-down, entry-level services. As for the content, you can spend as much or as little as you can tolerate. Just budget enough to create the results you need.

Something like \$100 per month could cover a powerful distribution system, not counting content production cost. Your CME will leverage powerful keywords, for free, that cost advertisers big money in their online campaigns. You stand to save a bundle on ads you won't need. The remaining cost is in your labor if you can produce and curate your own content. If you need help with content production, that cost will accrue. However, I'll provide surprising ways for you to hedge content costs in Sections to follow.

When companies large or small implement smart content strategies well, their inbound inquiries explode.

The viral lift (of others spreading your content) achievable with an online CME is limited only by these things: the effort and budget you dedicate, your content's appeal and volume, and the your CME's effectiveness.

Our Agency receives thousands of impressions monthly from [content marketing](#) at very low cost. Over time, the number of customers we reach grows as we build equity in content and publishing assets. You can enjoy a private branded media channel where you are the sole advertiser as everything comes together:

- Your publishing blog picks up momentum in the blogosphere.
- New subscribers join your e-list.
- Your content collection grows and gets more popular.
- Your website and blog traffic increase, and you get new back links.
- More friends, followers, and connections comment and make recommendations in social media.
- Other e-publishers pick up and re-publish your articles to their e-lists.
- Search engines return your content more often, and higher, in more web searches.
- Your reputation grows and stimulates more mentions and referrals.

Content Is King, and Your Content Can Rule

When companies large or small implement smart content strategies, their inbound inquiries explode. Successful upstarts and top contenders use content to get ahead and stay ahead in our knowledge-hungry business climate. Three example [success stories](#) show the same pattern playing out repeatedly. Mint.com, a hot personal finance startup; Hubspot, a content marketing powerhouse; and even old guard American Express, a sophisticated direct marketer, all got the message.

Search on the terms "content marketing," and you'll get a torrent of hits because many marketers have caught on to what works best and costs the least these days. Use content to engage your audience and lead them to a web presence that offers solid value. Then you get attention, and people start following you. If your website converts well, new leads arrive and some become buyers. Part of them even become repeat buyers who refer if you keep them interested, assure they feel delighted with their customer experience, and ask them to refer.

Your business can easily and quickly become a digital publisher to gain attention and mindshare and reach preferred provider status. Then you no longer need much outbound effort to keep your sales process jammed full. Focus on delivering valuable information rather than working so hard to get new customers or more orders using costly outbound methods like advertising or difficult ones like cold calling.

These days, people research online before making purchases, especially complex or important ones. Every business needs their own stream of custom branded content if they hope to market well. That means your business needs someone bright and creative with the right skill set to generate your custom content stream. You need someone who can engage customers and keep them pleased with their experience, returning for more, and recommending you via social media.

Find Your Direction

Is your content marketer you, someone who works for you, or an expert you engage? Maybe it's some of each.

What you need to do is clear: support your company and offerings well with content. But how to do that isn't so obvious. To get some insight, ponder whether you have more time, required skill, and creativity than money, or if you have more money and resources than time.

If your time, production skills, and creativity abound, a do-it-yourself approach makes sense if you also have the discernment and self-discipline to curate well. If you are short of time and

resources but have the cash, it's better to assign or hire a qualified resource or engage a competent freelancer. Examples of professionally produced content streams abound online and are probably even in your email inbox. One way or the other, you can tell the greater saga of your business to people who'll buy from you at a manageable cost.

Here's a good self-publishing example: a medical doctor who writes a periodic newsletter for his patients. He enjoys a reputation as an advanced healer. He has built a strong practice in his community despite not billing insurance and not being a network provider for any insurance plan. Dr. Douwe Reinstra's "[Medicine for People!](#)" newsletter helps patients understand their health issues, make informed healthcare decisions, and reduce their healthcare costs.

With ample funding, it's easy enough to engage a capable content marketing firm. They may call their work custom publishing, branded content, private media, or something similar. They're waiting to serve you at a price. From content strategy planning to tactical implementation and ongoing support, you could buy the whole solution from an agency -- publishing system, curation, content, and ongoing management with analytics and reporting.

There are also excellent "middle solutions" such as [Hubspot](#) that equip you with tools and copious coaching but leave the heavy lifting of actual content production to you. You might develop your strategy and delegate the creative production to staff or a contractor.

If all a small, local business needs is a free Google Places listing and a good email marketing service, I use and recommend [iContact](#) but with a caution to resist any temptation to just broadcast ads. If you turn email marketing into "a cheap ad channel," your subscription base will dwindle unless you enjoy such a raving fan base you can do no wrong.

Remember, you're trying to build audience *engagement*. Ads focused on just selling kitchenware, for example, are going to enjoy very limited success by comparison. You'd do better to connect with local chefs, persuade a few to write for your cooking blog, and include some simple but delicious popular recipes they are known for. Then foodie customers can follow your content stream and cook like a professional chef as you place occasional offers before them.

You could also send out cooking "technology" articles about how items you sell make cooking better and food more beautiful, healthy, and delicious. Then you're not just selling kitchen gadgets. You're helping your audience fully enjoy a complex hobby that pleases, delights, and entertains them and their friends. Then you earn the chops to add, "Oh, by the way, we have the ricer you need to make this dish on special this week. Just print the coupon and bring it into our store."

First, get your audience eagerly consuming your content and waiting for each new issue with anticipation. Then run occasional relevant ads *after* you've earned audience respect and gratitude and gauged their tolerance for frequency.

Your best option may be to build or operate your own e-list and distribution system, but source content from professionals.

Do It Yourself, Get Help, or Some of Each?

Your best option may be to build or operate your own e-list and distribution system and get the content from professionals. Agencies help create systems like this for businesses. You can source your content in a number of ways discussed in Sections to follow. If your cash and resources are limited, build a low-cost distribution system using free or cheap (but high-quality) tech

tools online. All the systems you need are waiting to be configured into a workable CME.

That covers everything except intelligence, resourcefulness, creativity, and the necessary communication skills to produce and curate your content. You have to hire, rent, or bring these last few items. There are highly skilled freelancers and agencies out there ready to answer your call. Choose one that demonstrates great outcomes with their own content marketing.

If do-it-yourself is your best option, this e-book is perfect for you. When you complete a plan, you'll have a full-fledged, easily manageable content marketing engine up and running to bring in a flow of new business. You don't have to do this all alone, either. It takes time, effort, and some specific skills. It's not cheating to call in some qualified helpers.

Is your content marketer you, someone who works for you, or an expert you engage? Maybe it's some of each. Only you can decide what the mix should be. Why not defer that choice until you finish this e-book? If the best choice is to outsource your content marketing, even partially, this e-book will bring awareness of what you need to procure, how to manage the effort, what you can expect, and what to do about all the usual concerns.

Please allow me to caution you about one almost unbelievable thing some of our Agency clients hire us to undo. Don't build failure into your new content effort by defaulting to the youngest person in the office, a handy relative, or the summer intern. Content marketing is a specialty that begs for a specialist. Be prepared to access one or become one.

Content marketing has proven powerful and effective, but it's a broad, fragmented, and diverse field. It can get bewildering without a conceptual framework to help put it into practice as a business process. You need a good grasp of fundamentals, a solid strategy, and a tactical plan if you're to implement well. This Section offers theoretical and strategic grounding to lay a solid foundation for success.

If you're "old school" about sales and marketing, why not give content a sincere trial? I predict you'll be astounded by outcomes. It's less stressful and more enjoyable to receive respect, admiration, and gratitude rather than the usual defensive responses to coercive selling.

The Big Picture

Your content engine must be fueled regularly. Marketing is a long haul that gobbles up a steady volume of materials and approaches. To illustrate, [Hubspot](#), which offers an integrated inbound marketing solution, recently broadcast a focus presentation titled *100 Inbound Marketing Content Ideas* to their e-list. It's a useful, deep treatment of a narrow area -- a big list of ideas for subject matter.

If you're "old-school" about sales and marketing, why not give content a sincere trial? It's less stressful and more enjoyable to receive respect, admiration, and gratitude, rather than the usual defensive responses to coercive selling.

On the other hand, *The Content Marketing Playbook* from [Content Marketing Institute](#) is a valuable, sweeping review of 42 types of content (another giant "catalog"), but it covers only a thin layer -- various tactics you can use. Similar deep-but-narrow articles and sweeping-but-shallow presentations arrive in my email inbox almost daily.

There's a need for a broadly usable theory, some general application strategy, and easy-to-implement tactics. When time comes to start your content effort, you don't want 100 content ideas and 42 tactics to sort out. What you need is a solid basic mechanism -- just a few elements that work well together. Once you have your system up and running, you can build on it using the many options available.

To sell your offerings, you need a steady flow of new and repeat customers who are ready to buy from you. You need good ways to convert them into buyers. This all takes powerful lead generation followed by effective customer nurturing. Begin with a workable CME that's easy to start up but also versatile enough to go the distance for some time to come. You want to support sustainable growth and maintain ample cash flow with an active, successful, and vibrant marketing and sales activity.

Follow a Practical Theory

I favor a theory from [John Jantsch](#), a leading marketing author and entrepreneur. Jantsch proposes a down-to-earth view of lead generation and conversion in his two popular books, *Duct Tape Marketing* and *The Referral Engine*, which I recommend. Jantsch has distilled the sales cycle down to a one-liner about *what you want customers to do*. It makes a powerful business mantra -- "Know, Like, Trust, Try, Buy, Repeat, and Refer."

A volume of customers moving through this marketing process continually makes a business thrive. Along the way, all seven of these marketing phases will be active in your audience simultaneously. This action sequence must take your whole audience's engagement with you into account if it's to serve well as a theory for driving concurrent and repeating purchase cycles. Some folks will be learning to know, like, and trust you, as others try what you offer, while another group is buying from you. Yet another group will advance to repeat buying, while some move on to refer. So in the end, customers who go through this process will be doing everything you want.

Drive Your Sales Process with Content

John Jantsch used verbs for sales phase names.

Brilliant.

Action words focus on what you want customers to do --

< Know + Like + Trust >
| Try | Buy + Repeat |
<---- Refer ---->

I constructed the notation shown in the sidebar to represent layered, concurrent marketing activity. This rearrangement helps make the mantra's process more obvious. The Know, Like, and Trust piece is all pre-sales "drip marketing" that drives initial engagement. In the Try, Buy, and Repeat phases you make offers that lead to sales and deepen your customers' connection to you.

The Try phase is like an audition -- your trials either make the cut or not. Buy and Repeat [buy] are two versions of the same thing, except follow-on selling is usually easier. Also, one would assume most referrals happen during or after the Buy or Repeat phases. That's where you'd expect a credible positive testimonial.

We're enabled to drive Jantsch's insightful progression as a continuous business process by assigning sub-groups within your audience to sequential sales phases. That's our strategy -- to drive sales prospecting using editorial content as both attraction and reward, then to make occasional offers to propel customers through the sales phases, generating deals continually.

Two Steps to Sales with a Dual Content Hub

You may be familiar with a powerful, versatile, and time-tested approach called "two-step marketing." Content works to drive two-step marketing, and "two-stepping" works well to leverage content. These elements make a natural team for complex sales because customers must consume a volume of familiarization content (in step 1 of 2) before they understand your value propositions to feel their full force (in step 2 of 2.)

Content gives good old two-step marketing a whole new lease on life. It helps immensely to first familiarize new customers with your company, offerings, history, and outcomes; build some brand affinity; present some credible proof of value; and then present offers only after you've made a stunning impression. Be sure not to sell prematurely. In my humble opinion, selling before the customer is ready to engage is one of the most common and most damaging mistakes you can make in business.

Here's a key concept we need next: a "content hub." This is a collection of interrelated components organized around a center, like spokes in a wheel, to accomplish a specific purpose. The parts work together to perform marketing functions. It's possible to market using any digital format at the center of a content hub -- audio, video, mixed media, text, images, etc.

Now let's examine content hubs that work together to form a CME. They put Jantsch's mantra to work making sales. The steps shown in Figure 1 reveal a complete lead generation and order acquisition system. For now, don't worry about *how* we'll do all this; just consider *what* we'll do. Soon we'll look at how it's done in great detail.

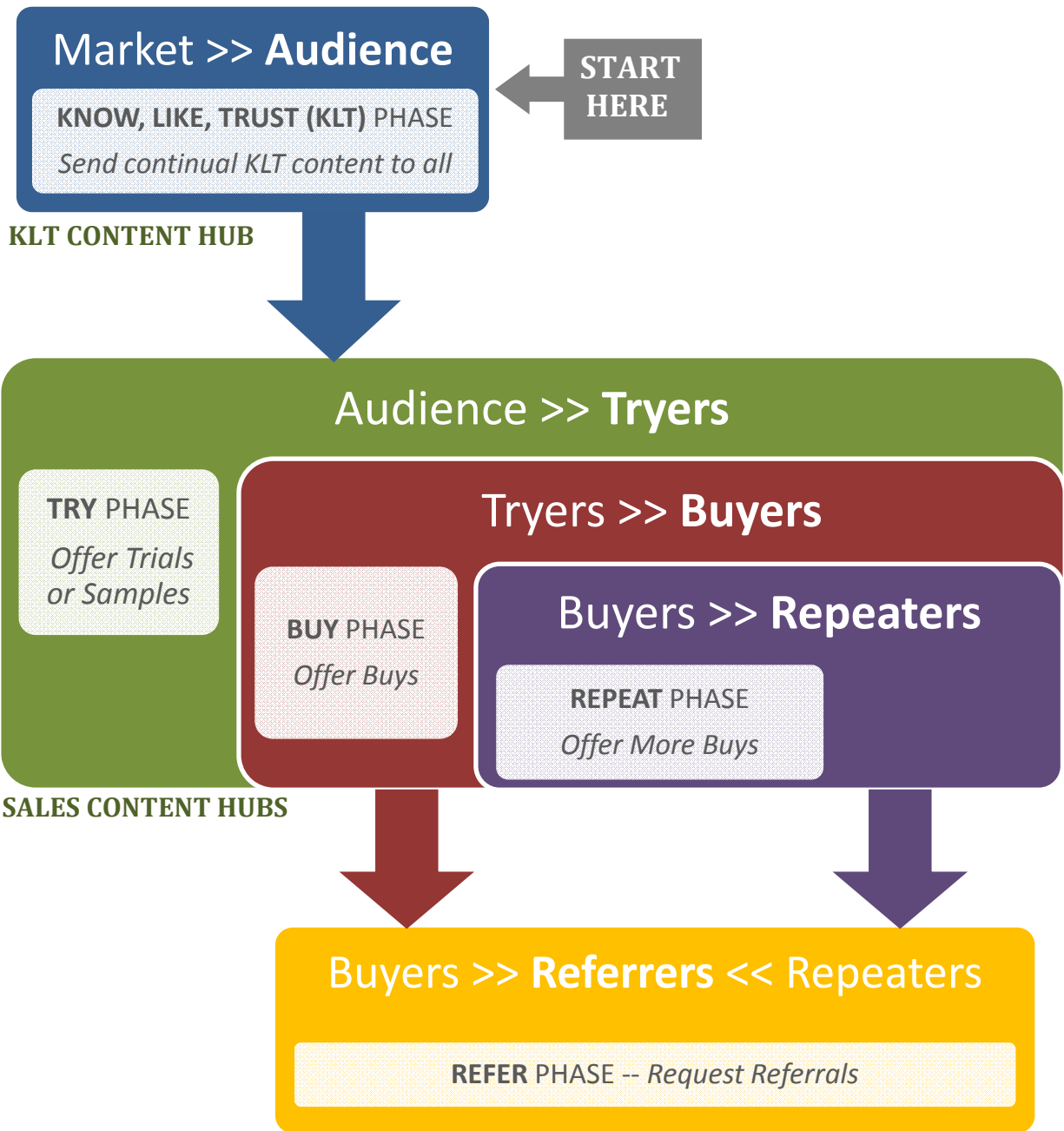


Figure -- Content Marketing Phase Progression

In this approach, content marketing campaigns begin with a Know, Like, Trust (KLT) content hub. Send free KLT content to your whole subscription base, all phases, continually. This is a form of "drip marketing." Minus sales pressure, it's trusted, welcome, and digestible.

Broadcast content that attracts e-list subscribers and helps them become familiar with your company and offerings and gain confidence that you deliver as promised. Over time, subscribers develop a natural affinity. A portion of your *Market* will be converted into an interested *Audience* that's listening.

Thereafter, present offers in Sales Content Hubs to propel customers through the remaining phases. Offer to let your Audience try (or sample) what you sell in some easy, non-threatening way. Some of them will become *Samplers*. After some time, offer what they're sampling for purchase or make the purchase step automatic when the Try Phase expires. This converts a portion of your audience into *Buyers*.

More offers create *Repeat Buyers*. However, to convert *Buyers* and *Repeat Buyers* into *Referrers*, all you need is a simple request. Obtaining referrals is easier if (as Jantsch suggests in the books previously cited) you build in eventual referrals as you sell. Referrals are easy to get when you go back to request them from delighted customers who have pre-agreed to refer if they like the customer experience you provide.

KLT Content Hub

Two-Step 1 -- KLT Content Hub Fan-out		
Content Formats	Channels	Recipients
Blog posts (original and repurposed)	1. Your blog 2. Guest blogs	Blog regulars E-list subscribers Web searchers Forward recipients
Blog post snippets (w/links to full posts)	Blog feeds	Social media sites Feed subscribers Forward recipients
Blog post notifications (w/links to full posts)	Announcements to your e-list	E-list subscribers Forward recipients
Short articles (repurposed blog posts)	Article submission website	E-zines' e-lists Web searchers Browsers Forward recipients
Long articles (aggregated blog posts)	Placements in industry journals, on websites, and on your own website	Industry readers Your website visitors E-list subscribers Web searchers Forward recipients Print publication readers
Email announcements	Your e-mail mktg. system	Your e-list Others' e-lists as a guest Forward recipients
Press releases	PR newsfeeds	Feed subscribers Web searchers Social media sites Forward recipients

KLT Content -- Know, Like, and Trust content starts with your capabilities brochure and website, and it continues with more detail. The role of KLT content is to help customers become familiar you, what you do, how you do it well, and why that matters to them. Save all selling and offers until the Sales Content Hub. Just tell the greater saga of your business in a newsy, objective style. Recount customer successes you've enabled, but don't allow

persuasive rhetoric to creep in. Give your customers all the credit. Keep it highly relevant to what customers care about -- themselves and their own pain, aspirations, and interests.

KLT Content steeps newcomers in your business lore. They see what you've accomplished and notice what you consider important. They learn how you think, how you work, and how you help customers as they become more familiar with their own problem space and available solutions. KLT content gives customers a look inside your company.

KLT publishing informs your *Audience*. They notice you and want to know more. Be sure to cover supporting facts, statistics, insights, research findings, performance analysis, and insights to support an *unstated inference* that customers should work with you. In addition, send out other kinds of sharable branded content that demonstrate your usefulness and helpfulness without selling.

Keep sending KLT content to subscribers in all phases unless they opt out. Your stream continuously warms up your whole e-list. It builds awareness of your offerings and charges your audience with enthusiasm about results they can achieve. Check in with your customers from time to time to see when to move ahead. Polls, surveys, or phone calls work to sample audience sentiment.

The best KLT content helps a customer tangibly in a meaningful way, or it helps them understand your value:

- Document a stellar customer experience and successes. Customer experience information (ratings, reviews, case studies, success stories, etc.) is key.
- Give your audience good reasons to respect you professionally.
- Show them how you deliver on promises during KLT as you avoid selling.
- Provide broad, general familiarization with your people, your company, and your products and services.
- Build perceived mastery -- combine expertise, savvy competence, and high professionalism.
- Report on specific details such as facts, statistics, history, research findings, expert opinion, best practices, recommendations, accomplishments, associations, your company's attributes, and so on.

15 KLT Phase Content Types		
Case studies	How-to articles	Educational webinars
Breaking industry news	Dos and don'ts lists	Clever Infographics
Frequent questions	Numbered list articles	Best practices
Key research findings	Custom apps & widgets	Purposeful e-books
Analytic insight articles	Reference materials	Customer success stories

KLT Content Flow -- The Table "Step 1 -- KLT Content Hub Fan-out" (on the previous page) shows the greater saga of your business spreading to your audience with a manageable effort. The formats and channels are commonplace and easy to implement. Detailed treatments of how to do all this follow in later Sections.

KLT Tactical Tips

One goal is to drive customer engagement and brand sentiment. Another is to warm up your audience without invoking sales resistance. KLT is all about supporting sales by pre-conditioning your audience using content before and without any overt selling until customers are ready for it.

Build Your E-list -- To get things rolling, you'll need a subscribed (permission-based) e-list to which you can announce each new blog post and article you publish. Start by compiling a list of everyone for whom you have an email address and with whom you have a business relationship of any kind. Send out a brief, one-time email inviting them to join your list. From there, keep building your e-list following best practices. Also invite all new customers and contacts to subscribe. Many more list building methods are available online. It's also likely your email marketing system includes lots of list building tips and advice.

Keep leveraging any usable content you produce to help overcome the tendency to run out of excellent content. Repurposing works in either direction.

One of the best list magnets is a keyword-optimized landing page to gather new subscribers. Include ample content incentives on this page. The page can be on your website, or it can be freestanding. Never send spam (commercial email without permission) or you stand a good chance of having trouble or even ruining the whole effort. Offer your email newsletter to everyone you meet in the course of business. In retail operations, invite store visitors to subscribe at the checkout. Online, invite subscriptions on every platform you control.

Start Small and Build Up -- Begin with a dedicated publishing blog and grow from there to achieve good reach. Keep adding each successive stage in the Table "Step 1 -- KLT Content Hub Fan-

out" until you have the full KLT Hub up and running:

1. Set up a dedicated blog to publish editorial content regularly.
2. Configure an email marketing system to get the word out to your e-list with each new blog post.
3. Publish short original articles and blog posts repurposed as articles on an article submission site.
4. Publish longer bylined articles such as repurposed blog posts, combined shorter articles, or original content in industry literature.
5. Each time you publish anything relevant, announce it via your e-list and through social media feeds, and include links to your web presence.

Post Announcements -- If you start publishing online but you don't draw attention to each piece, chances are good nobody will ever find your content because it's lost among the millions of blogs and articles already out there. Keep announcing new content to your e-list when it becomes available. Even after your readership starts to grow, keep on announcing to maximize growth.

Repurpose Content -- You'll notice a continual effort throughout this e-book to keep leveraging any usable content you produce. This helps overcome the tendency to run out of excellent content. Repurposing works in either direction, starting with blog posts that become articles or the other way around. You can also combine shorter pieces to make longer articles. Just be sure not to expose identical content in more than one place at a time without doing something to mitigate any content duplication issues. (See the Section on content duplication for details.)

Suggested Flow -- You can eliminate concern of content duplication if your flow always goes from blog posts to article site and you replace each repurposed post from your blog with a snippet and a link to the related article. Also, this flow allows you to debut each new content piece on your blog, then accumulate your growing article base in your online article collection where it can keep driving traffic to your web presence. Your content base will grow to eventually become a large presence that automatically draws attention and interest and drives traffic.

Place Longer Targeted Articles -- Your longer bylined articles can be entirely original or composites of shorter blog posts or articles. It's best to have these brewing at all times in parallel with the rest. It can take a while to get these placed in industry journals.

Publishing Frequency -- Let audience preferences be your guide to how often you publish content. Post content to your blog and to your short article collection at regular intervals, at least twice per month (or more often) to sustain engagement. If you post less often than that, you risk losing the interest of your audience. If you post too often, you will cause subscribers to leave your list. Bylined articles can be released at irregular intervals whenever you're able to gain editor acceptances.

A Presentation Content Hub

Two-Step 2A -- Presentation Sales Content Hub		
Content or Copy	Action	Desired Result
Invitation email to your e-list (w/ newsfeeds to social media)	Invite your subscribers to a presentation Offer free valuable information premium to incentivize attendance Invite social media contacts to your offer	Builds attendance Sizes the event Spreads your content
Landing page (optional)	Reach online search customers Offer free valuable information premium	Increases sales opportunity Builds your subscription list Spreads your content Captures more traffic to event
Email reminders	Remind registrants to attend	Sustains audience size Re-sells the presentation
Valuable info premium	Reward customers Incentivize attendance Provide a Try Phase sample or trial	Rewards sign-ups, attendance Spreads your content Sweetens the deal
Online presentation, conference call, or video teleconference	Attract new e-list members Present value proposition and call to action	Sets up sales opportunity Motivates sales appointments Sales of your offerings
Thank you message autoresponders to attendees, buyers	Thank your customers Follow-on selling (up-sell and cross-sell) Build connection w/ customers Deliver info premium(s)	Customers note your gratitude Provides info premium access Links to recordings & slides Up-sell and cross-sell sales
Recording	Make your content a branded, reusable resource	Another venue, more exposure Rounds up absentees Repeats your offers Drives traffic to your links
Slide deck extracted from presentation	Make your content a branded, reusable resource	Another venue, more exposure Rounds up absentees Repeats your offer Drives traffic to your links
Special offer phone call appointment	Opportunity to make a sale Present a special offer in person	Make sales Gain new customers

After members of your list are familiar with you, start making periodic offers in a second hub designed to list features and benefits, present value propositions, and close sales. If you offer complex or costly solutions or something intangible, you'll probably want to do some fresh selling just ahead of your offer.

To do that, conduct a presentation teleconference, with or without video, or even just a conference phone call. Your presentation must provide enough value to attract attendees on its own. Then add an extra content premium to raise the incentive. You can either give people that when they sign up or wait until after the conference to help prevent dropouts. Another option is to provide something at both times.

Content's role now shifts to directly support sales activity. Depending on what you offer, even your samples may be some form of content. Drive attendance by offering a high-value piece like a white paper, a substantial e-book, or access to a valuable reference library as a premium. Make your offers within the context of educational presentations, which are forms of content.

Content's role now shifts to directly support sales activity. Drive presentation attendance by offering a high-value piece like a white paper, a substantial e-book, or access to a valuable reference library.

For example, you may offer an informative video teleconference that helps your audience understand something important to them more deeply and includes a specific offer at the end. Your "bait piece" might be a phone app or computer widget that performs a key calculation or another item suggested in this e-book.

Presentation Content Hub Tactical Tips

Build Your E-list -- If a hub's value motivates participation, it will also drive e-list subscriptions. Consider composing a keyword-optimized landing page in advance and use it to drive traffic. You

can never have too many subscribers to your e-list. Presentations are worth making just for the e-list subscriptions they generate. But make them do more.

Increase Value with Information Premiums -- You need strong incentives to get people to dedicate valuable time to attend a presentation. In your invitation email and on the landing page, offer free pieces of content in addition to the presentation to drive attendance and subscriptions. Offer e-books, white papers, infographics, or other content assets of significant value.

Offer Free Recordings and Slide Decks -- Broaden consumption of your presentations to capture dropouts and no-shows. Post your recorded presentation transcript on your website, then offer it in a follow-up autoresponder email. Also, to drive additional ongoing search traffic, post your presentation on a slide sharing website where it will keep on selling indefinitely.

Use Autoresponders -- Send pre-presentation automated emails to remind attendees of their upcoming appointment to help minimize dropouts and no-shows. After the presentation, use follow-up messages to thank attendees and make your premiums, recording, and a slide deck available via links. After some delay, you might make another invitation to another edition of the same presentation or to a new one.

Advertisement Content Hubs

Two-Step 2B -- Advertisement Content Hub		
Content or Copy	Action	Desired Result
Email ad w/ offers to your e-list (w/ newsfeeds to social media)	Make compelling direct offers Include free incentive premiums Provide a Try phase content sample	Makes sales Gains new customers Spreads your content
Landing page ad w/ offers online and to e-list (w/ newsfeeds to social media)	Make compelling online offers Drive traffic from your e-list Include free info premiums Provide opt-in to join your e-list Provide a Try phase content sample	Makes more sales Gains more new customers Increases reach to search returns Builds your subscription base Enables cross-sales and up-sales Spreads your content
Slide deck, video, or audio ad w/ offers online and to e-list (w/ newsfeeds to social media)		
Email invitation to landing page ad or slide deck, video, or audio (w/ newsfeeds to social media)	Invite your e-list to your offer Invite social media contacts to your offer	Drives traffic to your sales copy, plus results of the offer
Valuable info premiums	Reward customers Incentivize copy consumption Provide a Try phase sample	Rewards sign-ups and copy views Spreads your content Sweetens the deal
Autoresponders to ad recipients and buyers	Thank your customers Follow-on selling Build connection w/ customers Deliver info premium(s)	Customers note your gratitude Provides info premium access Links to recordings & slides Up-sell and cross-sell

More two-step selling options are shown in the Table "Step 2B -- Advertisement Sales Hub." An advertisement may work better for simple products and services that don't justify a whole presentation. Again, make offers periodically using a hub designed to close sales but only after your KLT hub effort has run long enough to accumulate a pool of warmed-up e-list subscribers.

Compose your offer carefully in an advertisement you can email. Then email your ad to your permission list or email a link to a keyword-optimized landing page ad, a presentation slide deck, or an online video or podcast. Using iContact.com you can also distribute to social media.

Advertisement Content Hub Tactical Tips

Add Value with Information Premiums -- The role of information premiums in an ad-based sales content hub is to strengthen the incentive to buy. Offer free valuable content in email invitations to view the ad, as well as in the ad itself, to sweeten the deal. Use content assets of significant value. Information incentives motivate people to dedicate precious time to entertaining your offer and to ordering. You might even make one or more content pieces available before the sale to excite interest and drive traffic to your ad and include others with the sale to reward buyers.

Use Autoresponders -- After a sale, send a follow-up message to thank your customers and make your information premiums available with a link. After a delay, you might repeat your email ad or re-send a link to your

offer to folks who didn't buy. Or you can make a new, different offer. Just don't barrage your e-list subscribers with too many ads, no matter how good, or you risk seeing them unsubscribe. The exception would be if you serve compulsive shoppers or extreme enthusiasts as a market, as with daily deal type ad operations.

Build Your E-list -- If this hub's value motivates participation and makes sales, it will also drive e-list subscriptions. Offer your e-newsletter every time you touch your customer via any medium.

Actions after Sales Events

Track Results -- After your sales event, review results to disposition each attendee according to how they responded. Those who bought your offer can be marked Buyers in your CRM system and passed on to appropriate follow-ups. No-sale customers can be noted in CRM and recycled back into your KLT content stream for more preconditioning, leading to another presentation later. Or you may devise a special track for them. Many subscribers will eventually become ready to buy on a subsequent offer if your continuous KLT stream works as intended.

Actions After Sales Events		
Sales Phase	Customer Response	Your Action
<u>KLT HUB</u> Know Like Trust	Read content, verbally mention you, leave a comment, forward, like, recommend, react, rate or review, email you, click a link, visit your site, link to your web presence, request info, subscribe to e-list.	Keep sending KLT content. Answer any emails. Use polls or spot checks to gauge when to move ahead. When enough people are ready, send invitations to your offer hub.
<u>SALES HUB</u> Try	All as in the KLT Hub. Plus -- request a sample, start a trial period, try a special limited offer or stripped down version.	Fulfill their needs. Provide what their interest level tolerates.
Buy	All as in Hub #1. Plus -- make initial purchase.	Sell to them and thank them.
Repeat	All as in Hub #1. Plus -- repeat purchase.	Sell more to them and thank them again.
Refer	Recommend your content/ product/ or service to someone.	Thank them. Report on outcomes. Ask for more.
Any Phase	Some will ignore you.	Keep sending KLT content.
	Some will unsubscribe from your e-list. Don't worry -- you only want people who like your content and offers.	Ask for feedback -- what's the reason? Make adjustments if needed.

Follow-Up Actions -- Each customer response calls for a specific counter-response from you. A number of possibilities are listed in the Table "Actions After Sales Events" above. When you close a sale, you not only need to fulfill the order but you also need to pass the buyer forward for up-sale, cross-sale, or new sales action. Answer

any queries. Thank you email messages give you yet another chance to touch your customer. How would you like to spend that opportunity?

You need a customer relationship management (CRM) system if you sell to more than a few customers. The web now makes it possible to implement CRM very economically in a cloud-based system.

CRM Is Indispensable for B2B

Keep in mind you need a customer relationship management (CRM) system if you sell to more than a few customers. The web now makes it possible to implement CRM very economically in a cloud-based system. For many companies this is a great solution.

A CRM system will track your customers through sales processes and enable you to enter each conversation armed with up-to-the-minute status on every customer. Most CRM systems are equipped to perform many helpful functions (like email marketing) to streamline your sales process. If you don't have a CRM system yet, get one going to make any mass sales effort workable. If you sell to consumers, CRM may apply only if you sell high-value items or something that creates a long-term relationship.

The following Sections give you implementation details for everything suggested in this strategy Section. If a content-based two-step strategy fits your offerings and budget, use it to drive significant cash flow indefinitely. Just keep your content and your offers fresh, alive, compelling, and shareable.

Now let's consider how your CME will work from day to day. As you see your order acquisition system come together at this more granular level, think about how you can tailor it to your company's needs. However you source content, coordinated action of integrated online services builds your customer base. Your hubs elevate your reputation, stimulate customer interaction, and set a context for getting you hired or for product sales.



The CME Defined

A software "engine" is a powerful coded system that produces desired results from specified inputs repeatedly or continuously.

"Content" is meaningful, relevant information broadcast in any digital format.

Hub structures make content work harder for you.

A CME is a publishing system that distributes useful, informative, or helpful information to an audience of choice online. The objective is to gain mindshare and willingness to entertain and accept your value propositions.

Your CME comprises five main functional parts:

1. An overarching *content strategy* that determines your content-based marketing approach, its infrastructure, and specific campaigns.
2. An *editorial calendar* -- your tactical plan for content production and publishing within a schedule structure.
3. *Digital content* in common formats -- your text, audio, video, images, presentations, etc. Produce this yourself if you have the skills or source it from others.
4. An *online publication system* run from a computer to broadcast to your subscribed e-list and to others. This part can be configured in many ways using components available online.
5. A *tracking process* provided by a CRM system, to keep individual tabs on your customers moving through sales phases. This element is critical for control, effectiveness, and smooth execution.

CME Example

The following example describes a real CME in action.

Situation -- A marketing agency has a local newspaper as a client. Most of the newspaper's customers (local businesses) are dependent on print advertising, yet they harbor misgivings about running print ads because they have little awareness of what makes ads actually sell. Typically, to lower ad cost, business owners compose their own ads or they use the newspaper's free quickie layouts. In a down economy, a business should lower costs where possible *except not in marketing and sales*. Unfortunately, free ad composition lowers cost but seriously reduces response.

The resulting ads are consistently less effective than hoped. The ad customers are dissatisfied without understanding they created a tragic flaw. Ad results and revenues are depressed. The newspaper's ad customers lack faith in local print advertising as a worthwhile marketing tactic. They continue to buy ads mainly because they don't see an alternative.

Solution -- The marketing agency publishes a digital content stream to educate local merchants and service providers about print advertising, covering the subject in depth in an easy-to-understand style. The articles cover underlying advertising principles, the structure of an effective ad layout, major dos and don'ts, and best practices. They also address tracking and how to make ads pay back their cost and bring in more business. They dispel myths about advertising and remove false expectations. This content stream amounts to a serialized concise manual for local print advertising success, delivered in installments, for free.

The agency broadcasts this branded educational content to the newspaper's e-list subscribers (business locals) as a series of insider articles on a regular schedule. At intervals, the agency offers professionally composed ads to the subscriber list. The newspaper keeps selling ad space as usual. Knowledge is power, and local business owners learn what it takes to make ads work for them. As the newspaper's customers apply their new insights, they no longer consider ad buys a degenerate form of financial Russian roulette.

Publish content that will help customers know, like, and trust your business, staff, and products or services. Cover subjects your customers want to know about.

Outcome -- Many of the local ad clients start paying the agency to create great ads that really work. And for the first time they prosper as never before with consistent return on ad investment even though they pay more for professional quality layouts.

Now the newspaper's ad customers enjoy substantially improved ad response, better sales volume, and consistent overall ad cost payback. That brings more ease and comfort around advertising and reduced stress from uncertainty, frustration, distrust, and financial losses. It also improves the newspaper's image.

Everyone involved wins when the ad customers gain income and greater understanding and control of their businesses and cash. Improved customer satisfaction brings a larger, steadier stream of ad business for the agency and the newspaper.

Your CME In Action, Step By Step

Let's consider publication in some detail before going into other CME processes such as planning, content production, and tracking. Reviewing distribution now will help ground the theory in a specific application. Your system will be made up of pieces you probably find familiar. You might even be using some of them already.

The publication process is tangible and immediately gratifying. You broadcast a content piece and call attention to it with emails. You see people open it and comment on it or share it with friends. Your email marketing system analytics track immediate responses, as well as results over time. Your website's analytics monitor the effect each new publication has your page views. You may be able to see your promotional download stats and watch online sales stack up if you sell that way. You'll probably appreciate all this real-time immediacy because so much of marketing and planning takes a while to produce any results.

Two content hubs are described below to provide a stepwise breakdown of how a CME works. The first hub is based on articles. The second uses a presentation. Keep in mind there isn't enough detail given here to

implement much. That will come in later Sections. If you're highly web-literate, this general outline may get you started, but don't be concerned if you need more information because all is revealed in later Sections.

An Article-Based KLT Hub

First, Cover what your customers want to know about you. Publish content that helps customers know, like, and trust your business, staff, and products or services. Your newsletter-like, blog content hub familiarizes your audience with your offerings, company, capabilities, market niches, customer case studies, and history in business.

Consider how much can happen in the span of a few hours. You take time to compose or acquire content your audience will find interesting, useful, and valuable. Then you put it to work to engage many people in several ways, through blogs, email, social media, article publishing, and your website. Never before has it been possible

for just anyone to publish so much, to so many, with such a manageable cost and effort.

Study your audience and carefully gauge their enthusiasm for your subject matter. Decide how much content, what type, and what format it will take to help move them through your sales process.

More importantly, you can depict a more desirable future your audience can expect when doing business with you based on the experiences other customers have with you. After case studies, provide success stories, interviews, how-to information, frequently asked questions, or any of the editorial or reference topics suggested in this e-book's later Sections. This content is either text and graphics or another digital format your audience and you prefer, perhaps video or audio.

Survey your audience and carefully gauge their enthusiasm for this subject matter. How much do they need and want what you offer? Decide how much content, what type, and what format it will take to help move them through your sales process. Make any needed adjustments.

Here are your KLT Hub publishing steps in broad strokes. Full implementation details follow in later Sections:

1. Produce or find a content item (say a brief, informative text article giving insider tips) and post it online. A blog is perfect for this. Just a reminder -- in the KLT phase, content needs to provide some kind of intrinsic value, not marketing puffery or any attempt to sell something.
2. Give your article exposure on your company's social media company pages. It will automatically go out to social media of your choice when you configure newsfeeds. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and many others will accept your feeds.
3. When your article is posted, compose a brief announcement email and broadcast it to your e-list using an email marketing system. Include a link to the newly posted content so recipients can click through to it. Or you can send the same content within the email that you publish on the blog, if it's short.
4. Observe your email marketing system's analytics. When your e-list's interest falls off in a couple weeks, give your content a set of legs. Repurpose the blog post as a short article of up to about 700 words on an article submission site where it can be found in searches or picked up and re-published in e-zines.

5. Configure your article submission site to feed your articles back to your website. But don't post them directly on the web in more than one place or you might draw a duplication penalty from search engines.
6. Promote your e-list as you publish, using a free information premium as an incentive to subscribe.
7. Watch your content publish in real time using analytic tools for email marketing, blog, and website. Article repositories may also offer some limited tracking stats.
8. Customers and prospects consume your content and possibly comment on it, discuss it, and share it with their friends.
9. Back links to your website accumulate when readers link to it.
10. Over time, you build a growing body of work that makes your presence more visible in web searches, becomes a valued resource for your customers and prospects, and helps establish you as an expert thought leader and trusted provider. Link back to your web site from primary keywords to drive link authority.
11. Your publishing blog, article collection, and other online nodes remain visible. People who search on terms that match your keywords may find their way to your web presence, your content, and your offers.

How many people can you reach with this system if you have business presence on social media and a decent sized e-list? The answer is thousands, each time you broadcast. Equivalent ad impressions would cost a tidy sum. All

How many people can you reach with a system like this if you have business presence on social media and a decent sized e-list? The answer is thousands, each time you broadcast.

this content exposure is free or very affordable, though content production will have costs depending on how you go about it.

The blog posts and articles in collections and on your website will have lives of their own, hanging out on the web where they can be found, consumed, and linked to by thousands of readers over time. They drive traffic to your web presence. They help generate back links continually if you publish consistently. Your search rank improves as inbound links accumulate.

A Presentation-Based Sales Hub

Here's a different content hub based on an online presentation.

The popular presentation hub doesn't have the viral lift of the article-based example because its distribution is narrower. It does have advantages, however, such as live event immediacy and sharper sales focus. This tactic is often used in B2B applications to make offers that move customers through a sale after they become familiar with your company and offerings. It may also work to some degree standing alone, but results will probably be fractional by comparison.

1. Build a stunning sales presentation. Use Microsoft PowerPoint, or the like, and an online teleconference tool such as WebEx, GoToWebinar, or Acrobat Connect. Even an audio-only conference phone call can work.
2. Place links in the slides to your web presence, your offers, and relevant references.

3. Invite everyone on your e-list to attend. Include a free valuable information premium for attendees. It can be a white paper on how to apply something you sell or any high-value content they find worthwhile.
4. Option -- also create a keyword-optimized landing page to drive more traffic to the event and build subscriptions at the same time.
5. As the date approaches, promote your presentation in reminder emails to build interest and attendance. Add another free content piece for people who sign up.
6. Option -- offer another valuable premium that will be given away in a random drawing at the end of the event.
7. At the scheduled time, hold the event with questions and answers at the end and record it for redistribution.
8. Extract a slide deck from the presentation. Post it on SlideShare.com or on a similar site.
9. Post the full recorded version on your website and announce it to your e-list to reach stragglers who missed the live event. That way many customers who can't attend may still view this content.
10. After the event, send out a thank you message. Invite the group to take the next step, which may be to subscribe to a trial version of a service or to review other content you want to share. You might request a phone conference to make attendees a special offer. Or you could link your group to an offer landing page.
11. In your thank you email, include links to the slide deck and/or presentation recording. Post these links on your website and on the landing page. Also email the links to dropouts who registered but did not attend the event.
12. Don't miss the chance to promote your e-list in each step that allows you to touch your customers.
13. If results are good, you might repeat the event. Or try a different one.
14. If attendance falls short, analyze what happened, make improvements, and try again.

Create an Order Acquisition System

The article KLT hub is suited to continual sales prospecting. A presentation hub works better for groups in later stages who are ready to buy. Both hubs work together well in a two-step marketing strategy.

Your CME can span the whole distance from zero sales to a standing order backlog. Connect KLT and Offer hubs end to end, like this:

1. Offer the KLT Hub content continually. Use it to build brand affinity and gain trust, as well as to generate leads and nurture them. Send email invitations to the second hub's presentations at intervals, whenever enough KLT audience members are ready.
2. Move on to offers in a Presentation-based or Ad-based Sales Content Hub. Events like presentations have a greater sense of immediacy, urgency, and drama to help selling. Choose a Presentation Hub or an Ad Hub depending on the need for fresh selling immediately before your offers. Simple products and services do well

with expertly composed ads or landing pages. Complex or intangible products and services need presentations.

3. Near the end of the presentation, make your offer. Or book phone call appointments via mass emails to all attendees. Then use those calls to lead a sales conversation and make your special offer.
4. If the customer isn't ready to buy, recycle them back into the KLT hub. Then make another offer on the next pass through the Presentation or Ad Sales Hub.
5. Until prospects buy and beyond, keep them circulating in your system unless they leave on their own. Don't be concerned about occasional unsubscribes. You only want interested people in your e-list.

After a sale, pass the customer onward to more offers using your CRM system. For resales, up-sales, and cross-sales, use the same two-step, dual-hub structure with different content. Or you may be able to do another presentation with the same group. Study and poll your audience to sense temperament. Experiment and guide your approach by results you obtain. Try any other promising ideas you want to test.

In the Sections to follow, I'll cover how to configure this whole operation in full detail, using services already available on the Internet as content marketing system building blocks, such as blogs, e-marketing tools, newsfeeds, social media, article repositories, and presentation, video, and audio sharing websites.

People tend to think your business is just like any other until you reach out by sharing expertise. When people know, like, and trust you, your phone rings because they want you, specifically. Little overt selling is required, though there's no harm in making a low-key offer now and again after you earn your audience's attention and respect. When a good-sized, well-selected group consumes your content regularly, it's just a matter of time until *they close you*.

In the previous Section, I focused on your CME in action. Now let's consider your CME's various components one by one in greater detail.

Organize Publishing with an Editorial Calendar

This essential management tool organizes all your content production and coordinates publication. Use it to scale your program's ambitions to match your budget and resources and to reach desired outcomes without strain, missed deadlines, or errors.

If you think you're "not good at planning," first check your assumptions. Are you holding back because you're hoping for some magic success button to appear? There's no magic button for success, but with good work you'll reach your goals in time. For many of us, just getting started is half the work. If you really are challenged with planning, consider this: planning is just telling a story you want to come true, backwards. Nearly anyone can tell a brief story. If you can tell a story, why not assume you can also plot one if you start with the outcome, the setting, the situation, and the characters?

Planning is plotting the story of your process in action. Start from a desired outcome, in this case a sale. Sketch the event sequence that leads to that outcome. Write down all the essential details, and sort them out. In this case, it's the story of your content marketing engine cranking out opportunities and helping you take advantage of them to make sales. Cover key aspects of who, what, when, why, and how it all happens, and you've got a plan.

Plan Your Content Production

Try this approach: Look over the Table "21 Favorite Topics for Content Marketing" (page 33). Select some content formats and topics you believe would appeal to your customers and also serve the main action of the KLT Phase, which is to familiarize your audience with your business, what you offer, and the benefits. You also want to hold audience attention and earn respect for your level of mastery, which eventually leads to trust. Some of your KLT material should be useful and helpful to customers. Some items may be usable in multiple installments, such as serialized articles on a common theme or task.



It's easier to sell to someone who knows, likes, and trusts you.

Now list the content you want to produce. If you need more content ideas, search online to find types that will work for you. Content Marketing Institute has a [free ebook download](#) that lists 42 different content types. Hubspot has a report titled [100 Inbound Marketing Content Ideas](#).

Decide who will produce your content, when they will create it, and how it will be deployed. Insert that information into a table or spreadsheet. Enter your tactics as events. Show particulars for each specific content item from creation to publication. Include item names, associated actions, dates, and so on. An example is shown in the Table "Editorial Calendar Example." If you need to track more items, just add columns for them.

Editorial Calendar Example						
Filename & Revision	Source	Start	Publish	Destination	Phase	Description
Car Detailing-B, RB 3.doc	TBD	1/21/11	1/31/11	Gearheads.com	B, RB	750 wds. Write article, send to Features Editor
Build Ads That ROI-B 5.mov	Internal	2/05/11	3/01/11	Our website	B, RB	3 min. offer to entire e-list to promote membership site
The Life Of A Rose-KLT 9.ppt	Paul K.	2/15/11	3/18/11	Vivafresh.com	KLT	Presentation - Growers' Assn Natl. conference

Consider the following organization scheme a starting point, and modify it to suit your company's processes:

- Name each calendar record (line item) for each content piece using a unique file name.
- Name content files naturally and uniquely using the document title and a revision number.
- Include the three-letter filename extension that indicates format and associated application in MS Windows. Even if you use a Mac. Then the digital format shows up in file directories on any computer.
- As a minimum, include the columns shown in the example. Add more if you want them.
- Note columns for Source and Destination (or purpose) and which sales phase customers the content is intended for. Later on, you'll use selected content items to help propel customers from phase to phase.

With your plan in place, walk each item through the paces and deploy it. If you don't have a favorite calendar application, consider the free [Google Calendar](#) for scheduling editorial production. The format is better than my table, with a separate color-coded time line for each content item. All activity appears in parallel time lines across the page (like a Gantt chart) with start and due dates for each task. On any given day, you see a slice across all active projects showing what's up and what's due or coming due. There are also places for notes and other useful features. The Table is an example, but Google Calendar is much more dynamic, easier to work with, and useful.

Once you're organized, produce and distribute your content as scheduled. Items you publish get keyword indexed by search engines and found in web searches. The story of your business and the value you create will wake up and begin to have a whole life of its own on the Internet, finding its way to e-list subscribers and to non-subscribers who find your content in searches. Some items will stay available for you to reference with links.

What Content to Produce

As with any form of publishing, think like your audience. Consider what kind of content would help precondition you to buy what you're reading about. Even [pure entertainment](#) works if that's a good choice given your products

or services and your audience. Thought leadership is intelligence and insight you share to help others achieve good results in a particular business, industry, or field of endeavor. Expert content helps people make progress in a chosen activity or in their lives. Any relevant information that helps people solve problems, reach goals, and become experts will be received well.

Focus where you are seeking more business or improved reputation. Then prepare your audience to become good customers by educating them. Consume relevant content yourself and digest it constantly. Great business blogs abound, and some of them may be right up your alley. Investigate timely blogs and develop a collection of favorites you read regularly.

If you're a business management consultant, for example, you might also get ideas from magazines such as *Forbes*, *Fortune*, *The Economist*, *Fast Company*, or *Inc. Magazine*, as well as your industry's print and online newsletters. Some of these content flows will be just right for your guest authoring. Approach them when you're ready.

What's in those magazines' tables of contents? Smart publishers have their fingers on the pulse of your market. What discussions dominate your industry? That's probably what your customers want to hear about. What are your customers' big issues? What popular, current, and relevant topics match your knowledge, background, interest, and field? Saving time, making money, solving specific problems, and key insights are perennial themes.

Broaden your approach using keyword research. Find terms your customers search for online that are relevant to your business. Then use a keyword research tool (such as [Google's free one](#)) to discover more related keywords. Use all those keywords to produce content that speaks to your audience's needs and links to your web presence.

21 Favorite Content Types for Content Marketing		
Strategic advice	Innovation and technology	Building specific skills
Best practices	Behind-the-scenes reports	Frequently asked questions
Dos and don'ts lists	Pricing trends and guides	Thought-provoking rants
How-tos and applications	ROI and other calculators	Improving profits
Industry trends	Key research findings	Effects of legislation
Market intelligence	Solutions to vexing issues	Quick numbered tips lists
News, reviews, interviews	Case studies, success stories	Informative Infographics

For example, let's say you're a talent recruiter and your customers are firms that are reworking their C-level executive suites. An expert article on what attributes to look for, how to find qualified executives, and where to find them would position you to be awarded recruiting work by proving your capability. You don't have to give away any trade secrets. Divulge enough to make clear you have it down and deliver some worthwhile assistance -- enough to evoke a sense of "glad I found this resource."

What If You Don't Like to Write?

If you don't like to write but you're well-spoken and think on your feet, get a super-easy-to-use [Flip video](#) camera and some video editing software, or even use a computer webcam and some videoconferencing software. Record live talks, and post them online. Audio (podcasting) is another popular format and is even easier to produce. All

you need is a [digital voice recorder](#), some inexpensive sound editing software, a little imagination, and a passion for your topic.

If creating original content is not your strong suit, don't worry. Other writers and content producers are ready and waiting to help you, some even for free. Or you could rely on capable freelancers. Here are some additional low cost ideas:

- Collect relevant articles from [EzineArticles.com](#) and similar article marketing sites and republish them. Your added-value contribution could be just commentary on the articles.
- Partner with a colleague who likes to write or speak.
- Interview experts and publish what they say. Record or video the sessions.
- Invite others to write guest blog posts on your publishing blog.
- Base your presence on moderated user-generated content, like a Dear Abby column.
- Invite guests to post on your blog and comment on their posts.

Here's an example you may find intriguing. Josh Hinds, a motivational speaker and sales educator, curates [several hubs](#) that distribute original content that's 100% willingly authored for free by people who have valuable niche knowledge and the ability to write about it. A contributing author gets a back link from their post and exposure to

a new audience that might subscribe to their e-list. Josh also appears to derive some ad income.

It's easier to sell to someone who knows, likes, and trusts you, who sampled what you offer and wants it, and who has the budget. Your inbound inquiries will reach levels you could never expect if you just keep pounding the outbound sales approach.

This is a great way to build a presence that search engines like. [Hinds' website](#) sits at the top of the natural results for "sales training advice." In like manner, Josh has also captured top search rank for other key phrases, including "business networking advice" and "business leadership advice." On each site, he can post a small ad and a link about his speaking services, as well as sell some ad space.

Josh's content strategy for these blogs is to simply cruise the web to find relevant writing he likes. For his subjects writers should be easy to find. Then he invites the author to provide an article via email. Some authors write more than one post. He curates incoming posts and publishes them on his several blogs. By doing so he gains all the advantages of a CME without writing a single line of content.

This example shows, one way or the other, you can probably find everything you need at a cost you can afford. Plus, guest publishing can help you overcome the tendency to run out of excellent content.

The World Is Waiting to Hear Your Voice

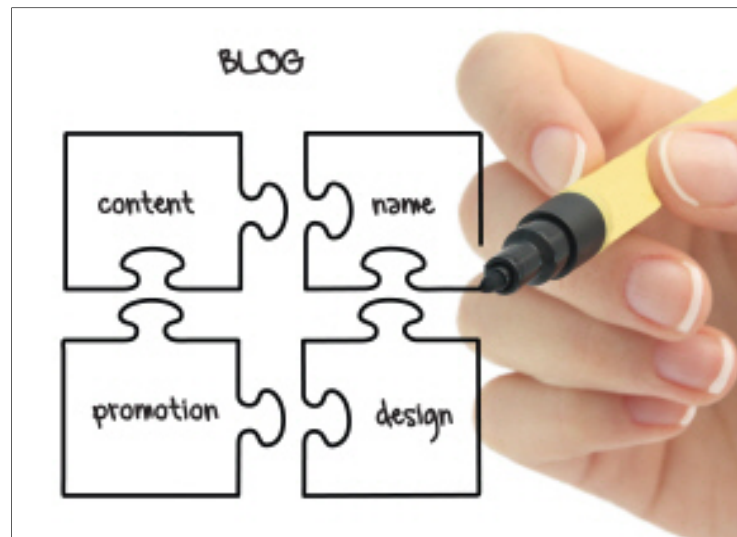
It's easier to sell to someone who knows, likes, and trusts you, who sampled what you offer and wants it, and who has the budget. Once you put in some hours building your CME, you can enjoy results far beyond traditional media exposure most companies could ever afford. Even industry giants with huge marketing budgets market with content because it works. Over time, your e-list will grow and your inbound inquiries will reach levels you could never expect if you just keep pounding the outbound sales approach.

Just put on your consulting hat and belt it out. Since the devil is in the details, don't be concerned about giving too much away. Say what to do and why to do it, but not so much how. Reserve a proprietary secret here and there. You may be educating your competition, but remember, initiative and dedication keeps everyone else behind you.

In the next Section, I'll discuss web resources you can leverage to build a publishing engine that will send your content out to a list of subscribers, to select social media connections of your choice, and to the world.

Now let's get hands-on with building your reputation as a thought leader. By the time you finish this Section, you'll be able to fire up your new CME and publish regularly to a niche. As you move ahead, you'll escape the need to slave away on expensive outbound marketing.

In the previous Section, I showed you how to organize content publication. I also covered how to decide what to write, talk about, or video. If you skipped that part, you'd do well to go back and read it now. Each Section in this e-book builds on the previous Sections.



Blogs have evolved to support content publishing well.

Are you organized enough to move on? You need to have your editorial calendar set up. And you need to have your first several articles

scheduled before you start broadcasting content. Set a clear direction with topics for your specific audience. Writing a few articles ahead makes it easier to keep deadlines. Keep your publishing rhythm smooth and predictable.

Build Your KLT Hub

Content publishing begins with a blog. Why a blog? Because today's blog platforms have evolved to serve exactly what we want to do. They archive your content, keeping it accessible and tag searchable. Your article collection will become a useful knowledge base and might even develop into a standard reference, e-book, or a published paper book. Your blog will hang out on the web to get found in searches and visited through links.

Blogs began as simple tools for publishing rapidly changing, news-like content, but many powerful websites are now based on expanded blog functionality. As their capabilities grew, blog platforms became perfect tools for content marketing. Now blogs can support an entire web presence, with static pages, hundreds of handy widgets, sophisticated formatting, images, backgrounds, and more complex functions like online sales. Web syndication through newsfeed services will help you transmit your blog posts to other web nodes, even automatically on a schedule.

Voice, Style, and Subject Matter

The word "blogging" has come to stand for a particular writing style -- informal, personal, experiential, irreverent, terse, opinionated, and subjective, even when addressing serious subject matter. Some bloggers have elevated this writing style to an art form, and some even attract enormous audiences. On the other hand, amateurish bloggers are far from serious or capable. Wannabes try to emulate the standout pros, but they don't deliver the

goods. Many vanity blogs lack purpose or value. They can be ridiculously self-indulgent. At their worst, blogs are trivial and boring.

"Blog" has become both a verb and a noun. Naming your activity after a container you use is a tricky mind trap that can trip you up. Content can take any style you choose and be delivered in many different containers. Although you do need to achieve a distinct voice, the famously blogged writing style doesn't suit serious marketing purposes. You won't be "blogging" in the typical sense or "becoming a blogger." You'll be producing professional-grade article content for business marketing that's appropriate for your intent and audience. If you also want to blog in the better-known way, go ahead and start a different blog using that writing style.

Your personal brand speaks volumes -- even more in writing than in person. Undoubtedly, you know you need to relate to your customers, use good manners, and avoid offending people. This concept extends to writing. Spelling, punctuation, and style matter in your written communications because they help shape your professional persona and reputation. Don't settle for sloppy, lazy writing or an affected presentation. Use appropriate grammar, syntax, and vocabulary in your communications. By all means, be yourself. Write the way you speak, but be well-spoken.

Your personal brand speaks volumes -- even more in writing than in person. Write the way you speak, but be well-spoken.

To market a business, produce content on planned topics that appeal to your specific market niches. Make your content useful and relevant thought leadership and proof-of-value expert subject matter. Write in a friendly and conversational, but economical and businesslike, style. Your blog will not be the only place where your posts appear. Your content can also be sent to places where a more buttoned-down style is the rule.

Which Publishing Platform Is Best?

You need to choose a blog platform. Depending on preferences, you might select Word Press, Type Pad, Blogger, Moveable Type, or something else. Considerations include cost, whether ads appear with your content, formatting capabilities, editing ease, hosting and programming requirements, and available templates and add-ins.

Do some comparisons and check out user ratings. Consider why a platform is preferred by its fans. Spend a little time investigating which service will work best for you. Just don't let your platform choice turn into a big deal. Any of the blog platforms mentioned above will work for writing. However, I do have some practical recommendations to help you spend more time publishing and less time and money messing with fiddly blog details.

[Blogger](#), the most popular platform, is my current choice for [content marketing](#). I use it successfully but not without occasionally wishing it had more. I like Blogger's array of free features, such as cloud hosting, no requirement for programming or designing, the ability to leave out ads, a good-looking, configurable meta-template, and useful analytics. This full set of attributes is unique to Blogger.

At first I was put off by Blogger's dated look and feel. Then I discovered I could use [Blogger In Draft](#) to achieve a much higher level of aesthetics than the older Blogger.com allows. The newer templates are more attractive. Now Blogger is undergoing a style makeover as Google updates its look and feel.

If you're somewhat techy, Blogger setup will be a snap. Someone with a ready article who's intuitive about web technology can go from zero to published in under 30 minutes. After setup, you can post text articles in 15

minutes or fewer. Adding photos will take a bit longer. Photos are a good, cheap way to increase visual appeal and search results, but you'll lose them when you repurpose blog posts as short articles on submission sites.

You might want to include static pages to make your blog a more complete website. Blogger offers such pages. If you plan to publish video or audio, you'll need a videocast or podcast platform rather than a writing-only blog. They are out there. Blogger allows you to embed videos and also link to podcasts or to any online content.

Your KLT Blog In Practice

Write and post new articles at regular intervals for best results -- twice a month may be a good starting point, though your audience might want more frequency. Articles should be from about 400 to about 1,250 words long.

Search engines will index your blog posts, so include keywords that are relevant to your market's interests. Your articles will appear in search results higher and more often if you make titles and opening paragraph keyword-rich.

Include links to your website (anchored on your target keywords), a request to share the post, social media sharing icons, and a copyright line that hints you might allow republishing if requested. Content used to reward customers is an exception. Protect it by copyright so it doesn't become ineffective as a gating mechanism when people freely spread it around.

Blogs have their own life on the Internet. Search engines will index your posts, so as you write, include keywords that are relevant to your market's interests. A good practice is to include them at the beginning of post titles and in the opening paragraph. When you do so, your articles will appear in organic search results higher and more often. Note: don't stuff your articles with keywords. Keep the language natural-sounding. Google's SEO guidance says to write for the human audience interested in your subject matter.

Also consider adding one to three captioned, relevant images to each post to illustrate your ideas. Visuals help bring your content to life, making your text much more vivid and interesting to read. They give your posts added visual appeal and help your search rank. You can get inexpensive, royalty-free images at iStockphoto.com and Shutterstock.com. There are also other, lesser-known imagery sources online. Never just scrape photos on the web. It is bad form, and it can get you in trouble with copyrights of others.

Extend Your Content's Reach

Now let's cover the easiest way to start "fanning out" your content. Otherwise, you may not reach beyond those who might find your new blog in a search. When you do these things, your publishing blog becomes more. It also doubles as an e-newsletter:

- Pick an email marketing program and sign up for free or inexpensive service. There are a couple dozen options to choose from and probably at least one with free membership. I use and recommend iContact.
- Build a list of subscribers from your email contact list and customer list. Invite them to subscribe with a one-time email. Once someone subscribes, you have permission to send commercial email to them repeatedly. If they've been a customer, you already have a business relationship that justifies sending business email.

- Don't scare off your subscribers by asking for too much information. Request only their first name, last name, and email address.
- Reward your subscribers for signing up. The best subscription incentive is probably some premium content like an e-book, a white paper, or membership in a subscription website or reference library.
- Each time you post an article, send an enticing email to your list announcing the new post.
- Pick your favorite non-spam methods for building your e-list and practice them continually.

Gain as many subscribers as possible without buying or renting lists, but be sure to use only appropriate (non-spam) permission-based methods. Guest posting and landing page offers with incentives work well to build

subscriptions. If you have frequent contact with prospects (as in retail operations) get that business card fishbowl or signup notebook working for you at the checkout.

Make your offers irresistible to build e-list subscriptions faster. An irresistible offer is one so valuable, for something so easy to acquire, the person considering it has absolutely nothing to lose and a lot to gain.

Offer your blog (or e-newsletter) for free, plus offer a free download incentive when customers subscribe, such as an ROI calculator, an e-book, a drawing to win a valuable premium (iPads are popular), a coupon for some added features on your services, or a free trial of what you offer, etc.

Drawings are a good choice because they enable you to incentivize a large crowd using a single premium. A chance to win something that has high perceived value is almost as compelling as many individual premiums. Avoid discounting price as an incentive because that sends the wrong message and sets a costly precedent you won't want to follow. Offer free extras instead.

Don't worry if your e-list starts out small. There are many ways to grow it:

- Create an invitation form and circulate it where people you want to subscribe are concentrated. Retailers have an advantage because everyone who comes to their store can be pitched to join.
- Post an invitation form on your website. Then offer incentives to attract subscriptions.
- Invite people to subscribe when you speak, network, meet new contacts, cold call, or visit customers.
- Include a link to your invitation page in your email signature line, on every platform you have online, and on each piece of collateral, such as your business card and print brochure.
- Ask subscribers to forward your emails to their friends. Include an invitation in each email.
- Run occasional promotions specifically to build up your list.

Make your offers irresistible to build e-list subscriptions faster. An irresistible offer is one so valuable, for something so easy to acquire, the person considering it has absolutely nothing to lose.

For an e-list subscription, free is your best offer if you also add an additional free, but valuable, premium. Content is the perfect incentive premium because you produce it once and you can re-use it infinitely and retain exclusive legal rights. This is where you can give away your most valuable piece of content and feel like it's a fair exchange.

Be sure to protect it with a strong copyright notice to help keep it from spreading all over without doing its assigned job. You may copy and adapt copy mine if you like (on Page 2) but I offer no guarantees with it.

The fastest safe way to build a large e-list may be to publish to collaborators' e-lists. Cross-promote with a collaborator when their subscribers like your content and your subscribers also like their content but you don't compete with each other. This approach can bring you hundreds or even thousands of new subscribers each time you use it, depending on the size of the lists and the strength of your promotions:

- Network with people in similar businesses who have permission-based newsletter e-lists.
- Invite selected friends and colleagues to cross-promote with you.
- Ask them to send your guest post to their e-list on their blog or e-newsletter. Invite their audience to join your e-list in your bio.
- Broadcast your collaborator's guest post and include an invitation for your subscribers to join their e-list.
- If your lists are very different sizes, keep it fair. The owner of the larger e-list can offer a segment of equal size to the owner of the smaller e-list.

When you cross-promote, don't violate trust. If you say you don't reveal your subscribers' names in your privacy policy, then don't. That's easy enough. Just get your guest author's content from them and broadcast it to your list transparently. Announcing it as guest post and recommend your subscribers consider joining your guest's e-list.

Don't ask your audience to reveal more than their first name, last name, and email address. People shy away if you ask for too much detail.

When you publish on your guest's blog they can do the same for you.

You should like your potential collaborator's content, e-list, and blog. You shouldn't broadcast anything just for the sake of it. I also assure I like my collaborator's reputation and style of doing business, and I recommend you use this extra filter.

Make your privacy policy simple. There are many ways you can word this notice. Keep it short. Just a one-liner is best :

"Your email address is safe. We never sell or share subscriber information. Unsubscribe any time easily."

People shy away if you ask for too much detail in your subscription form, such as street address, phone number, job description, if they're qualified, their favorite color, name of their first pet, and so on. At first, just drive volume in your e-list by making your deal supremely easy and super rewarding. After you gain your subscribers' trust and confidence, you might ask for additional qualifying information. Your list will grow much faster that way.

One more piece of blog advice: be sure to permalink your blog posts. In Blogger, the post titles are automatically permanently linked, but not all blogs work that way. If you choose a different platform, attend to link permanence. Readers who know your post will always be there are more likely to link to it.

I covered enough in this Section to get you started publishing your content for marketing online. You also now have a couple great methods to increase the attention it receives. In the next Section, I'll cover ways to gain even more exposure for each article, and I'll address social media connections.

If you publish online regularly now, why not expand your content distribution to maximize impact? By the end of this Section, you'll know how to multiply your online self-publishing scope powerfully but safely to reach a wider, more diverse audience. Increase exposure, increase your subscriber base, and more using these methods.

Article Marketing

Almost-free exposure has brought thousands of impressions through our agency's newsletter blog, article publications, search results, feeds, email marketing, and social referrals. Visitors who view our website or social media pages, or who follow us, receive a rich collection of highly relevant, meaningful, and useful knowledge that helps them get ahead in business. Good results encourage us to keep enhancing this thought leadership. Our subscriber list is growing steadily. We get new contacts calling from across the United States. We're even growing our fan bases in other countries.

Wider distribution magnifies the total effect of publishing when you fan out a portion of your content stream to other e-publishers' audiences. Bonus exposure through article marketing gives your growing expert content library a huge "web footprint." Wider publishing also elevates your website's page rank when readers see merit in linking back to it. You also capture more new subscribers if they like your articles and subscription offers. You would never reach so many readers or enjoy equivalent search rank without this extra distribution and the traffic it brings to your web presence.

Article Targeting Options

There are two approaches to article marketing, depending on how you believe your resources should be used and the preferences of your audience. I'll refer to these two article marketing types as "highly targeted" and "loosely targeted," according to the way they address customers. In either case, produce content in-house or hire someone to do it. There's no compelling reason to use either path exclusively. Why not try both, if they appear useful in your industry, and consider reader response and the net effects to guide the best use of your resources.

Each approach has a different cost, complexity, and reward. For example, longer, more complex, highly targeted articles that guide a consumer to find an attorney are attempting to win possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees per client. On the other hand, a shorter, loosely targeted, more casual article about making beer at home may vie for a \$200 sale of a home brewing kit.



**A big online footprint drives
more traffic to your site.**

In the highly targeted approach, industry publishers accept your article idea before you write the piece. These articles must be authored by someone cognizant of the subject matter, who knows your customer's jargon, and who writes well in a more structured, formal style. Publication is pre-approved to a degree by editor acceptance, and the impact is higher, but this process takes more effort. An example would be an expert article by a senior accounting firm partner to gain attention from major corporate customers in a lucrative segment such as regulatory compliance. This kind of article may be harder or more expensive to produce, but it also earns more recognition and attracts better qualified traffic.

You simply pre-write and submit the loosely targeted articles to publishing sites and e-zines. These shorter, speculative pieces are about what you believe may be popular in a niche. An example might be a set of articles on Caribbean cooking by a chef who's writing a regional cookbook and earning his chops.

This kind of article brings less recognition and maybe less traffic, but it's easier and faster to produce. Each time an e-zine picks up one of your free articles, you achieve a whole new distribution wave as your content goes out to yet another new subscribed reader base.

Most industry publications are hungry for great content. They're interested in hearing from writers who will contribute articles that match their audience's orientation.

Verify your article site publisher is legally required to retain your name and link and to attribute your copyrighted content to you. That means you gain traffic and possibly secondary back links to your website.

Highly Targeted Niche Publishing

Most industry publications (both print and online) are hungry for great content. They're want to hear from writers who will contribute articles that match their audience's orientation. To be selected when you query, show that you're able to produce content they like. You don't have to be the writer, but you need to have rights to the content.

This is one way you can cross over to publish in print journals and magazines for your industry. These pieces tend to exceed the usual length for blogs and e-zines, running up to as much as 2,000 words or longer. Editors will probably allow you to include a short bio, and they may let place a link to your website. Just ask them.

One caution: don't write a long article first and then try to find a home for it. Always query first. A "spec" article would probably become an orphan. Editors very rarely accept pre-written material. They want to see what you have in mind and add your article concept to their editorial calendar. They also want to influence your ideas before you write to assure the content will match their preferred style and policies. If you do end up with an orphan targeted article, you might post it on your website or break it up into smaller pieces for the e-zine channel.

Follow these steps to pull together all the essentials:

1. Get a competent writer -- someone who can write with authority and who has deep knowledge of your interest area. This can be you, an employee or associate, a guest writer, or a freelancer or agency.
2. Target publications -- one or more (print or online) where you believe your content will stimulate worthwhile response. Pick publications your customers consume so you reach an audience you sell to. Or it may be a new area where you hope to gain new customers or make a splash and your chances for acceptance are good.

3. Read several back issues of publications -- become familiar with the editorial stance, typical style, and audience orientation.
4. Understand the publication's editorial or writers' guidelines -- become familiar with the publication's requirements, usually available on their website.
5. Send queries -- use the approach your target publisher prefers, whether that's email or letter mail. Express interest in writing an article for them, include your writer's main qualifications, and present some teaser ideas for content.
6. Ask about their editorial calendar -- ask if they share their editorial calendar with potential writers. You might propose to write a planned article.
7. Provide prior published articles -- list some things your writer has authored to support your ability to follow through.
8. Provide other qualifying factors -- briefly mention anything else that contributes credibility or value.
9. Ask about rights -- state your preferred arrangement is to "retain all rights." Reach agreement or move on.
10. Decide the length -- one page is best for a query, two if you must. Try to connect with email or a phone call first and then send a query. If you call, have a voicemail message prepared.

Nothing pleases an editor more than receiving consistently excellent writing on or before deadline. When you get an acceptance, send a quick thank you note to the editor, reconfirming the publication dates and word count, then write with excellence.

Once you have the elements all together, send your query to the most preferred editor on your list. Wait for a response before you query another publication. If you don't hear back within two or three weeks (four or five weeks if you use letter mail), contact them again and allow one or two more weeks. If there is still no response, go ahead and query the next best choice and inform the one you're dropping *very politely*. You may want to query them again some time.

Keep going in this fashion until you get an acceptance. If you're aligned well, it shouldn't take more than one or two months. It often comes together on the first try if your aim is accurate.

If that amount of delay is an issue, there's nothing keeping you from running the same scenario for more articles and different publications in parallel. Just don't overload yourself, and be sure to keep good track of what's going on. Stay on top of developments, follow through, be responsive, and always keep commitments.

A reputation of expertise combined with honesty and reliability will help you immensely in this area. It's important to never two-time periodical editors. If you seek an acceptance in a publication, resolve that query before offering the same piece to another publisher. For reputation's sake, never secretly publish in two places at once.

Nothing pleases an editor more than receiving consistently excellent writing on or before deadline. When you get an acceptance, send the editor a quick thank you note, re-confirming the publication dates, subject, and word count. Then write with excellence to the word count and deadline you're given. If you gain acceptance and follow through well, chances are good you'll be able to publish with that editor again.

Once you have this activity playing out within your content marketing effort, just keep it going. Publish these valuable feature articles regularly. If you retain sufficient rights, you will be able to republish this content on your website and possibly in other places where it will help build up your online footprint, credibility, and website traffic. Think ahead and produce a string of substantial articles that are thematically connected, then consider collecting them into an e-book to offer as link or subscription incentive. Repurpose everything.

Loosely Targeted Article Marketing

As you write new posts, start conforming to your article submission site's publishing guidelines. Then it will be a breeze to repurpose them.

Leverage e-zine article marketing through free-or-paid websites where you can publish some of your expert content, such as EzineArticles.com (EZA). You'll be offering your work three ways at once: published on that site to visitors who browse, to visitors who find it using search engines or when following a link, and to online e-zine publishers who need articles to include in their email newsletters. Each time one of your articles gets picked up, it goes out to a whole new list of someone else's subscribers -- and with your bio and link intact.

I recommend EZA because it's a highly useful article marketing resource:

- Membership is free, or you can pay a fee for higher service levels.
- Almost 400,000 contributing authors create a giant web footprint that helps your content be found.
- Tens of millions of visitors each month contribute to your potential exposure.
- EZA does a great job training you to write well and to succeed with article marketing.
- It can transmit your content elsewhere automatically. (We'll make good use of that feature shortly.)
- Their reputation, facilities, coaching library, and monthly visitation make it a great choice of platform.
- It has many niches for your articles and a suggestion service -- "Articles Wanted." You may find opportunity in a channel where your customers hang out.

You'll be required to follow composition guidelines and restrictions on how and where you place links. You'd do well to follow many of EZA's guidelines in all your expert content anyway -- that would likely raise almost anyone's article quality. You'll need to add a summary to the head of each article and assure your headlines and copy are keyword-rich. You're required to not market yourself within the article body. An author resource box enables you to market yourself a little and point to your web presence. Your main selling point is the high quality article.

There are some minor drawbacks to using article repositories such as EZA. For example:

- You'll lose any images in your articles because ezine publishing is usually text-only.
- Articles have to pass editorial reviews and follow conventions stated in guidelines. They may require tweaks.
- Articles must be manually published using online submission tools and processes. It's a bit tedious.
- Some of the content these sites publish is written to lower standards you may not prefer. However, you will set the standards for your own articles.

These constraints don't seem unacceptable given all the benefits. Some of them increase the likelihood your content will get picked up. Some increase your articles' general quality and magnetism. Just go to the EZA website, sign up, visit the FAQ and editorial guidelines, and familiarize yourself with their environment. Then post some articles and track them.

Repurpose Your Blog Content

It doesn't take much effort to repurpose your blog content as short articles of 400 to 700 words. That's EZA's stated sweet spot for article length. Select posts you want to convert to articles, edit them to conform to EZA guidelines, and republish them on EZA. Or write new articles if you prefer. Most likely you'll do some of each in actual practice. If you followed along and wrote your blog posts per my previous advice, your edits will not take much effort compared to the rewards. Just don't pass up this opportunity to reach out farther and deeper.

All the benefits of expanded e-publishing with articles also accrue to guest writers. If guest writing for others makes sense and appeals to you, consider inviting writers you admire to contribute to your blog or website.

If you re-purpose any content online that is already present elsewhere online, be sure to replace it in the original location with a snippet and link to the new location. Or do something to mitigate any duplication issues. See Section 9 for details. From here on, I'll assume you are publishing some articles on EZA and others on your dedicated content marketing blog and that any given article or post could be in either place.

As you write new blog posts, start conforming to your article submission site's publishing guidelines. Then it will be a breeze to repurpose them. In theory, you can submit first in either place -- on your blog or on your article site -- and move your content later to get it in front of a different group when it seems to start losing interest and readership. Keep in mind that you can't replace a repurposed EZA article with a link. So, you might want to flow content only from blog to article site and not the other way.

Syndicate Your Content Stream

Now things get really interesting because you're poised for automatic web syndication to push your original content to many more websites. This includes social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn; your website (with an added plug-in); and many other websites and blogs. Any form of content, including videos and audio podcasts, can be fanned out or aggregated using *newsfeeds*.

A few quick definitions are in order. On the web, *syndication* refers to automatic content distribution. Syndication occurs through *newsfeeds*, also called *RSS feeds*, or just feeds. These are programs that transmit content you designate. Feeds broadcast to *subscribers* -- any number of individuals or websites signed up to receive through *feed readers*. Feed readers are software programs that display content visually or, in the case of audio or video, play it. *Feed aggregators* and *feed readers* can receive and display (or play) your content through feeds.

Most blog platforms offer feeds. You also need a *feed reader* function at the destination. When both feeds and feed readers exist, and transmission and reception are *configured*, a connection is made. Then your blog becomes a *transmitter*, the destination site becomes the *receiver*, and posted content will flow from your blog to configured destinations automatically shortly after you post it.

Keep in mind the receiving side of the connection has to be *possible*. Some destinations (like LinkedIn.com) have feed reception already built in, so all you have to do is configure it. Some connections are made by a third-party service such as [Twitterfeed](#), which connects a transmitter node to Facebook and Twitter. Some destinations you may want to connect with might not be feed-friendly. Find the ones that are, and include them in your content strategy if your customers hang out there.

There are many options for setting up your content marketing feeds. Decide what distribution you want, locate feed services that meet your needs, and set them up. I've used Twitterfeed and Blog Link with success. For centralized control and monitoring, [Feedburner](#) can be a useful tool. It may even become possible to feed directly from your publishing blog into all desired social media sites at some point.

Here's an example of how web syndication plays out in practice. Our agency's setup works like this:

1. I manually publish expert articles in two places that are syndicated so readers can directly subscribe through our feeds -- [Kim & Joseph's E-Newsletter](#) and my [EZA expert authorship](#).
2. I configured automatic feeds that offer this content on three social media sites --
 - [LinkedIn](#)
 - [Facebook](#)
 - [Twitter](#)
3. I send out mass emails announcing each new article to my subscriber base using [iContact](#).
4. I configured EZA to automatically feed my articles back to a feed reader widget on our agency's website to make that content available to site visitors.
5. I include an [e-list signup form](#) on our blog so visitors can subscribe to our e-list. Most subscribers prefer to receive an email announcement when a new article appears.
6. Visitors can also subscribe to *announcement feeds* on our website. We use a mini-blog to feed [agency PR](#) and news releases to social media.
7. Social media buttons on our dedicated e-newsletter blog and on our website enable friends, followers, and

contacts to share our content instantly. For manual social media referrals, I include buttons from [AddThis.com](#) at the end of all posts and on the blog home page.

Guest writing helps you answer demand for content volume and provide variety in your information stream as you also uphold content quality through curation.

We set up business pages on the top three social sites mainly for content marketing. Establish a presence for your company on social media where your preferred readers hang out. Then distribute your articles and PR to your social media business pages via feeds to all your fans, friends, and connections.

Guest Writing

If you haven't realized this already, most content marketers tend to run out of material eventually. You feel the pressure sooner or later, depending on how ambitious you make your program. Beyond quantity considerations, most audiences appreciate hearing more than one single voice in a given channel. More variety is an aspect of higher content quality.

Guest writing helps you answer demand for content volume and provide variety in your information stream as you also uphold content quality through curation. You can guest write on other platforms, and other authors can guest

write on yours. The arrangement can be one-directional and still be beneficial for both parties, though the most good for both sides comes from reciprocal activity.

If guest writing for others makes sense and appeals to you, consider also inviting writers you admire to contribute to your blog or website. Guest appearances by known thought leaders or experts elevate your blog's clout and may help build readership.

Blogs are prime targets for guest publishing queries. Using searches on your primary keywords, locate some high-profile, influential web nodes where you can guest publish. Be on the lookout for companies who sell into niches similar to yours but whose offerings do not compete. When you query, you can offer to place your content with the other editor, invite them to place content with you, or both.

It's entirely possible to build a blog that markets well using nothing but guest content.

To query, email the editor with your proposition. Provide specific article topics you think they will find interesting. Ask what they might like you to write about. I predict if you do this enthusiastically and show good expertise behind your web presence, you will be able to land as many guest gigs as you want to handle. If you're an interesting, engaging, and compelling writer, you'll soon find you could spend all your time guest blogging.

Invite your favorite writers using appealing propositions. Post an invitation to guest writers on your publishing blog. Suggest subjects, ask for suggestions, and make an offer to write for others as well. Make your offers contingent on checking out any potential guest authors and platforms before making commitments firm.

Try some guest writing and guest appearances to accomplish these important content marketer's goals:

- Gain new exposure to different audiences who are interested in your chosen subject matter.
- Provide more variety and new perspectives for your and your host's e-list members.
- Be seen in multiple places. That presents a higher impression than always appearing on your own sites. Build your reputation.
- Gain new subscribers to consume and spread your content (more links) and speak highly of you as an expert. Be sure to link to your blog whenever you guest post and invite your new readers to subscribe. This is a great way to help build your e-list.
- Gain new friends, followers, or contacts in social media -- choose guest appearances that distribute there.
- Get invited back to write or be referred in some other good way.
- Grow as a content producer and become able to handle more complex subjects and higher productivity.
- Improve your writing as you encounter editors who can help you.

Some blogs are 100% guest writing and rank very well for their primary keywords. As mentioned earlier, it's entirely possible to build a blog that markets well using nothing but guest content. Of course, there's an effort required to find and invite your guests, but most content writers are prime targets because they understand and leverage the power of guesting writing.

Don't wait around to be discovered. Be proactive. If you haven't found a few blogs and sites to regularly consume, it's time to do that. To produce new web content well, you have to be thinking interesting new thoughts on

subject matter your audience would enjoy reading. Consuming good source material makes your job as a content producer much easier because it conditions your mind to be relevant and generative.

A Guest Writing Success Story

Since I market using content, it didn't take me long to find and appreciate RainToday.com, a website specializing in B2B professional services sales and marketing. We serve the same target market but not in a competitive way. My agency's offerings are entirely different from theirs. This makes us great collaborators.

After a few months of appreciating content I read on RainToday.com, I approached their editor with a guest writing query, including some article ideas based on what I could uniquely provide. She liked the concepts so I wrote a few articles, which she published. One of them was even a piece co-authored in collaboration with one of my clients.

Once we achieved a good pace, I offered a much more ambitious project: a series of how-to articles on content marketing for their niche. The editor liked that idea, too, so over the next few months I wrote five articles that she

also published. This article series was inducted into their permanent reference library behind a member login. I also published them on our agency's newsletter blog.

Continuing effort helps build ever-more billable hours or product sales for your business as your appreciative readers recommend your content stream to friends and your reputation and online readership grow.

Readers appreciated my RainToday.com articles. (I even received some fan mail.) As a result, some readers subscribed to our blog newsletter, one reader invited me to guest on his blog, and we gained a few back links.

After proving out my subject as a good choice for an ebook, I'm now repurposing (and greatly expanding) that content as the ebook you're now reading. I hope to be invited back or to query successfully again. Best of all, I made some great new contacts and friends. What a gratifying experience.

Now some of the power and appeal of content marketing are yours to enjoy. Continuing effort helps build ever-more billable hours or product sales for your business as your appreciative readers recommend your content stream to friends and your reputation and online readership grow.

While Results Develop

Content marketing isn't the only way to build your business. It's just a great way. It will take a while to establish your content publishing empire, however, depending on the intensity of your effort. Work at it patiently and methodically. If you need an immediate and sharp increase in sales, consider some short-term prospecting via the web, with emails followed by phone calls. Just don't become abjectly dependent on cold calling. Leave time to build your CME and start receiving inbound results and eventually work mostly with referrals.

You may need to alternate your effort between building your CME and other methods. A colleague recently found herself in a slump and located a couple dozen likely prospects using Internet searches. After about 20 inquiries, she received a call back on a voicemail and landed a great contact who needs and wants to work with her in a big

way but not immediately. Another respondent sounded hopeful starting in a few months. A couple days later she made a sale. This kind of prospecting is hard work. What if all those people you call were calling you instead?

I don't consider this advice heresy. The daily pressures of business are real, and I can't pretend content is all there is to marketing. I believe you'll be much happier in business, however, once you switch from outbound approaches to mostly inbound methods. Life is just better when your new business comes to you copiously and more steadily, with significantly less effort and stress, and the need to chase after sales under pressure goes away.

As new customers get to know you, their growing familiarity with your expertise and thought leadership leads to appreciation, eventually to admiration, and to some initial trust. In the KLT Phase, your content effort has been about helping your customers become familiar and comfortable with your company, offerings, and value propositions and about growing the size of your subscription base.

Now let's consider some ways to present offers that help you reach the ideal steady state with each customer. That's when they make repeat buys and make referrals from time to time. After we look at basic offer mechanisms, we can move on to propelling buyers through the sales phases.

When your KLT Phase audience has gained enough willing subscribers, start making specific offers to move them through the three remaining sales phases -- Try, Buy, and Repeat. You'll be asking for deeper commitment in a growing business relationship. Sales phase transition offers are the same exercise repeated for each sales step after KLT. From one phase to the next, the differences will be mostly in specifics you propose and what you and customers stand to gain from each offer.

Offer Samples or Trial Periods

It's easier for customers to say yes when you build trust in gradual steps rather than jumping straight to your final goal. Make promises and deliver on them beyond your customers' expectations to increase trust. A trial offer (or sample) is a small step and a great way to transition customers from just learning about your offerings to making their first buy. Trials ease them toward a purchase. Sampling dispels fears, diminishes the feeling of risk, and builds ease, belief, and excitement. When a buyer likes a trial, the critical first sale gets much easier.

Decide on a simple, non-threatening, no-commitment way to allow new customers to check out what you offer. If it's not too costly, give them a small quantity of your wares for free. If you offer a service, find a way to allow new customers to experience the benefits, value, and advantages. A brief complimentary project may be enough. Be sure to include information about how and why your product or service is superior.

Many companies offer free or very inexpensive entry-level services. Customers can get used to a trial service and the organization behind it, compare services, and learn how a higher, fee-based service level would help them even more. Your sale might even be automatic after a free or low-cost trial. It's okay to offer separate trials, but you might integrate that step into a sale to streamline things. Getting into a trial offer should be smooth and easy.



Content can buy your audience's attention to value propositions.

Selling after trials can also be a slippery slope. After trials or sampling, move briskly onward to an attractive special offer. Make it irresistible. You'll be selling to folks who are already satisfied customers, and that's so much easier than selling cold.

Presentation Sales Hub Offers

According to Ardath Albee, a leading content marketing expert and author of the book [E-marketing Strategies for the Complex Sale](#), content serves as a form of currency that buys your audience's time and attention to your value propositions. You probably know from experience that you can "buy" online presentation attendance from large numbers of e-list members using just one piece of valuable content as currency (or bribe, bait, trade -- whatever you want to call your incentive).

Find advantage in this exchange using presentations. Selling with presentations is a tried-and-true content-based approach. Some of the details may change, but sales basics are constant. Good conferencing tool choices abound, and some are even free.

Whatever you choose, try to avoid showing just talking heads in video presentations. At least have a flower in a vase on your desk or your dog sleeping at your feet. Or use an interviewer. Have a conversation to pique interest

Content serves as a form of currency that will buy your audience's time and attention to your value propositions.

rather than lecturing your audience through the camera. Share files on your computer's desktop. Make drawings to clarify the commentary, or give a demonstration to liven up the action. Audience boredom, in this situation, is your worst enemy.

Search on the terms "video teleconference service reviews," and you'll find many options. [Top Ten Reviews](#) is a good resource. I've seen great results produced with [GoToMeeting](#) from Citrix, [WebEx](#) from Cisco, and [Adobe Connect](#).

Bells and whistles aside, keep in mind the single most critical selection factor is the teleconferencing service's fundamental reliability. You'll be disappointed if you pick a service for fancy features and then discover it drops calls or goes dead in the middle of your show. Technical issues could ruin an opportunity you may never be able to recoup after you put a big effort into gathering a group. Check reviews and pick a system that offers known reliability and a trial period, then test and practice. Also, if you can afford video, it's a great enhancement over audio-only presentations. People engage better if they can see you, regardless of whether you can see them.

Gain attendance to your presentation event by inviting everyone in a subscribed e-list or segment via email. Use a free information premium as incentive to attend. You might also design and post a keyword-optimized landing page to drive additional attendance from online searchers looking for your primary keywords. This page could also be the destination after the show to complete sales.

Create your presentation using PowerPoint or a more advanced tool like [Presi](#). Make it crisp, dynamic, and entertaining. If it's slow and boring, your audience will leave. Take your audience through these steps in 10 slides or fewer:

1. Define your audience's relevant needs and wants -- describe their specific problem or aspiration.
2. Describe how well the product or service you offer meets their needs and wants.
3. Show outcomes customers have achieved with your offering. Name some customers.

4. List the features, tie them to benefits, summarize value, and list all business advantages.
5. Show how your offerings stack up against competitive and alternate solutions.
6. Mention the consequences of not using your solution.
7. Give the cost of your solution along with cost comparisons to alternate means.
8. Create a sense of urgency in a credible way, such as using a time-limited special offer.
9. Make a call to action. Ask for the deal.
10. Add some deal sweeteners, perhaps free or low-cost add-ons and extras or some high-value content.
11. Tell the customer exactly what to do to acquire your item.
12. Answer any questions or objections from the audience.
13. Summarize the incentives and repeat the call to action.
14. Thank your audience, mention the next step, and end the event.

After the presentation, follow up with automated thank you emails and fulfillment of any orders. Pass attendees forward for more follow-on sales action.

Give your presentations continuing life after you switch off the projector or shut down the video teleconference. Upload extracted slide decks to a slide sharing site.

It may seem you need a different offer presentation for each phase remaining in the sales process after KLT -- Try, Buy, Repeat, and Refer. In actual practice, you could probably use the same presentation repeatedly to generate all *initial* sales. You'll likely need different presentations for follow-on sales -- resale, up-sale, and cross-sale. The same outline should work for all with some minor adaptations. Finesse the Try phase if it's structured into your Buy phase offers. Referrals need only a simple request. After some planning, your presentations may address only the Buy and Repeat Buy phases.

Extend Your Presentations' Reach

Give your presentations continuing life after you switch off the projector or shut down the video teleconference. Upload extracted slide decks to a slide sharing site. On SlideShare.com, they will be transformed into Adobe Flash files with transcripts. These transcripts are indexed by search engines and returned in online searches. That means the presentations you make in person will keep on selling online apart from live events.

Use this exposure to send traffic to your website or offer landing page. Here's a partial rundown of some of the uses and features of SlideShare.com paraphrased from their website:

SlideShare.com is an online community for sharing presentations and slideshows. It's among the 200 most visited websites in the world. It has racked up almost 50,000 Likes on Facebook as of 10/2011. Capabilities include:

- Upload PowerPoint, Open Office, Keynote, or document files, including PDF and MS Word
- Download presentations on any topic and reuse or remix
- Embed presentations on blogs, websites, and company intranets
- Tag uploaded presentations for searchability
- Embed presentations into a blog or website as Flash files (using SlideShare's widget)
- Non-Flash devices can access the presentations online
- Share on Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn (via newsfeeds)
- Embed YouTube videos in the presentations

- Browse presentations others have uploaded
- Comment on individual slides
- Transcripts of presentations are indexed by search engines and found in search results

Animation and embedded audio are lost during conversion to Flash. However, you can sync an mp3 audio file with your presentation slides. With editing software, extract the audio stream from your live presentation's recording and tailor it to fit.

Free and paid memberships are available. With a paid version you also enjoy more features --

- Custom branded channel
- No ads
- Analytics to develop insight from statistical results
- Direct contact from leads right from SlideShare.com

Presentations work especially well to offer complex, costly, or intangible items -- things that need some explaining. Other alternatives may be better if you sell simple items or commodities that have very basic value propositions.

There is one important concern with SlideShare. SlideShare's terms of service require you to give them unconditional permission to allow their users to reuse and repurpose your material without respect to your rights. So, posting on SlideShare.com is in essence waiving your copyright for that presentation's entire content. Only you know if this matters. You might be able to just keep sensitive material out of your presentation and create a version specifically for public viewing.

Landing Page and Ad Sales Hub Offers

Presentations work especially well to offer complex, costly, or intangible items -- things that need some explaining. Other alternatives may be better if you sell simple items or commodities that have very basic value propositions. Just be sure not to short-change the selling process if you really need a presentation to do some persuading right before you ask for a deal.

Consider making simple offers using a landing page (also called a "squeeze page") optimized for your specific primary keywords. This is a highly focused, single web page that stands alone online. It has no navigation or links leading to pages other than a shopping cart. The only way off the page is to click through to buy the offered item. Otherwise, visitors have to use the browser's back button or type in a new web address. This kind of page is built specifically to make sales.

Landing page design is a specialized skill best left to copywriting professionals, unless you want to put forth the effort to become a landing page expert. Search online, and you'll find a large amount of how-to information about building landing pages. You'd have a learning curve to build them well enough to actually work. But that's a very useful and valuable skill.

Another option is to use a straightforward email advertisement to make your offers. Start with your CRM or email marketing system. Segment your e-list and extract a target list of ready subscribers. These might be new customer prospects who have responded to a teaser offer or subscribers who have simply been marinating in the KLT Phase content hub long enough. Buy or build a strong email advertisement that makes your offer compelling

by following ad-building best practices. Include all the right elements in the right places, and give it great visual appeal.

Optimize the ad for the intended use. Then email it to your selected list segment. If the ad is well-optimized for your major keywords, it may also pick up more buyers if you post it online, perhaps on your website. Whatever you offer, using email ads should yield a higher closing ratio because your list segment has been warmed up by KLT Hub activity.

Refer Phase Conversions

We've considered all the sales phases except Refer. It's an exception. It's indispensable, but it's initiated by simple request to customers who passed through all the preceding phases happily. That means they're largely Repeat

A real referral is when someone sends you a new customer with a strong recommendation they work with you. When someone just mentions a name so you can contact them cold, that's not a referral. It's just a tip.

Buyers and maybe major fans. These most valuable customers are preconditioned by their positive experiences with you to refer. A real referral is when someone sends you a new customer with a strong recommendation they work with you. When someone just mentions a name so you can contact them cold, that's not a referral. It's just a tip.

I like the way John Jantsch treats referral nurturing in his book *The Referral Engine*. I recommend his approach, though some may think it's too pressured. Talk about referrals during the sale and make a deal at that time to come back and get a referral later, once they're certain they are happy with your item and their customer experience. Then the referral becomes a prior commitment you're just calling in as agreed.

If they aren't willing, it may not be a good idea to try motivating them. You certainly don't want to bribe them by offering any form of incentive beyond their altruistic satisfaction for doing good out of gratitude. Sometimes customers simply can't make referrals due to factors they don't control, such as employer policies. Sometimes they are simply too risk-averse.

My business partner considers all this referral setup action unnecessary. Kim Jons' approach is to be sensitive and aware of client sentiment, and when the right moment comes, simply ask a happy customer if they would be willing to refer to us someone they know who needs our services. That would be the moment when gratitude wells up and they spontaneously thank her profusely for all the great things we've done. My preference is to savor that moment, not to go mercenary on them right after saying, "You're welcome." Neither of us insists we're right.

You may wait a long time for a perfect moment that may never arrive. I favor asking for referrals in the normal course of business. Honestly, I'm not sure what works best, but I do believe in good science. Try something that feels natural, and if it works, keep it up. If it doesn't get results, try something else. Keep going until you get the referral volume that satisfies. One thing is sure. You don't get as many referrals unless you ask for them.

All the work prescribed in the previous Sections sets a powerful content strategy in place to achieve high sales conversion rates. You're well-positioned if you integrated your preferred online applications into an Order Acquisition CME. Now propel customers through your sales process by sending the right marketing messages to the right customers, at the best times, in their preferred medium -- using high-value content as incentive and sales copy (in presentations, ads, and landing pages) as stimulus. Sell continually to accumulate an expanding pool of repeat buyers who generate referrals. That's just where you want to be.

You empower yourself to drive an order flow by completing your CME-based self-publishing capability:

1. Attract leads from your preferred markets in the KLT phase.
2. Track progress through your sales process using CRM.
3. Satisfy good customers' needs and wants in Try, Buy, and Repeat phases.
4. Leverage content assets to precondition customers to move from each sales phase to their next.
5. Propel customers through sales phases continually using offers and referral requests.

Customer Sales Phase Progression						
Your Actions	Content Tag	Customer Tag Changes		Goal and Conversion (>>)	Applications (CRM is used throughout)	
		From	To		Type	Brands
Broadcast Content	KLT	None	KLT	Generate Leads Market >> Audience	Publishing Blog, + Newsfeeds + Email Mktg, + Article Mktg	Blogger or other, + iContact, or Constant Contact, + Salesforce.com, or many others
Offer Trials or Samples	Try (or Buy)	KLT	Try or Buy	Start Buying Process Audience >> Tryers Audience >> Buyers	Your Website, or Presentations, or Ads, or Landing pages	Your Website, or other web pages, or PowerPoint, or many others, + Citrix GTM, WebEx, Adobe Connect, or many others
Offer Buys	Buy	Try	Buy	Generate Sales Audience >> Buyers Tryers >> Buyers	Automatic step, or Presentations, or Ads, or Landing pages	
Offer More Buys	Repeat	Buy	Repeat (buy)	Make More Sales Buyers >> Repeaters		
Request Referrals	Refer	Buy or Repeat	Refer	Generate Referrals Buyers >> Referrers Repeaters >> Referrers	In-person contact, or Phone call, or Email Mktg, or Autoresponders	Meetings, or Skype, or other VOIP System, or just telephone

Sales Phase Progression

High-quality expert content as a magnet that pulls customers through your sales process. Observe the Table "Customer Sales Phase Progression" (above) carefully to gain a 25,000-foot overview of a referral-building, CME-based selling system powered by online content and offers. Match compelling content with offers or referral requests because they reinforce each other to stimulate progression. With your CME running at cruising speed, some customers may initiate calls to you. If they don't, any calls you make to them will be warm, not cold.

As your e-list grows, different audience segments will be in different sales phases at any given time. Every customer is always in the Know, Like, and Trust (KLT) phase. As some are getting to know, like, and trust you, others will have bought from you and could become repeat buyers. Still others are trying samples as they consider purchasing from you, others are buying from you, and some become fans who refer. You'll need to coordinate all this concurrent activity.

Use a contact relationship management (CRM) system to integrate your content marketing effort.

To stay organized, integrate your whole content marketing effort at the most encompassing level. Adopt a contact relationship management (CRM) system. [Salesforce.com](https://www.salesforce.com) is my CRM choice. For an affordable price, it is filled with comprehensive functionality, offering 1,350 add-on applications to integrate your marketing and sales effort. Salesforce.com (including carefully

chosen applications) should cover all the CRM functionality you need to support content marketing at any scale, from a one-person consulting practice to an international corporation.

Get Ready

The following activities set the stage for you to propel customers through a sales phase or to stimulate them to repeat a desired phase.

1. Editorial Calendar -- Set and meet deadlines for content production and broadcasts. Track content items you want to produce for each sales phase. Produce (or find) and publish the content you need, as scheduled.
2. Customer Relationship Management -- Enter or import your whole subscribed customer e-list into your CRM system. Keep it up to date at all times as you operate.
3. Content Storage -- Keep content available in a file system or database as you generate it per your editorial calendar. Then it will be a snap to find content to send to any customer you're working with.

Only you can decide which piece of content to send any to a customer or Sales Phase group. Broadcast timing also matters, so plan carefully for best results.

When pre-conditioned by content, some customers may initiate contact or may call in to order something. (High five.) If they do, by all means, sell them what they want without further ado. No rule says you *have to* run a ready buyer through a bunch of phases they don't need. However, do incorporate them into your process at the point where they decided enter it.

It's easy enough to coordinate sales activity when you're well-organized. To drive phase progression, you need to know which phase each customer is in and which content will help move them into their next phase. If you sell only one thing and have few customers and content items, you might be able to track activity manually in a flat file system, such as Windows Explorer, using several folders.

Most companies sell more than one thing. Many have extensive offerings and large customer databases, and they produce copious content. You could have many customers going through the sales cycle for various different offerings, with multiple content items stimulating their phase progressions. Sales activity that intensive and complex could generate millions of combinations of customers, offerings, content, and phases.

No need for concern. *Relational databases* handle multivariate data with ease and grace. Be sure to take your content library needs into account and select a workable solution. Possible candidates include [Zoho Creator](#) and [Filemaker Pro](#). Or the CRM system you adopt may have a built-in or add-on database available. If possible, select

a content library database that will plug in to your CRM, allowing you to pick the content you need in any sales scenario from choices that match the customer's destination phase.

When pre-conditioned by your content, some customers may initiate contact. If they do, just sell them what they want. No rule says you have to run a ready buyer through a bunch of phases they don't need.

Zoho Creator offers cloud-based operations, simplicity and ease of use. It requires no programming, and it integrates with Google Apps. These features are especially appealing if your business is already set up on Google Apps and you prefer to store your content library in the cloud. Filemaker Pro takes a different approach. It installs on your computer and includes a built-in Data Library application you may be able to adapt for marketing content.

Consider beginning manually, using a flat file system for a small initial data set and then adopting a relational database for your content files when the need becomes clear. If you're starting out with a grand vision, you'll need a relational database right away.

Once your data set exceeds a couple variables, it's best to set up a relational database to track all customers' Sales phases for each salable item you offer, along with which content will help move them onward. Then a query to the database will resolve the selection you need in the moment.

Get Set

Now let's look at Sales phase progression and tracking in greater detail. Your CME works the same in principle whether you use a simple manual approach, a database, or even an automated system you might create.

To guide and track customer phase progression, use *tags*. Tagging is a continuous process that's essential to the success of your CME. Tags make it possible to manage the sales cycle effectively. They enable you to identify and select appropriate content to send a customer based on where you're trying to propel them.

Follow these tagging conventions for sales phases, customers, and content:

1. Derive a set of tags from the sales phase names. You could use KLT or just K for Know, Like, and Trust; T for Try; B for Buy; RB for Repeat Buy; and R for Refer. Whatever you choose, keep it as easy and intuitive as possible.
2. Tag customer CRM records as customers "earn" each tag, like Boy Scout merit badges on a sash. For example, a customer moving from KLT into Try for a given offering would earn a Try tag for that offering. Identify all newcomers (before they earn a tag) with the KLT tag only. Perfect customers will eventually earn them all. Tag customers for *the phase they are in*.

3. Tag each piece of content for the phase(s) that item is meant to *move customers into*. For example, content meant to help move a customer from KLT to Try is tagged Try and sent to customers tagged KLT. When a content item works for more than one sales phase, *apply all relevant tags*, in phase order. For example, if a piece is used for Buy, it may well also work for Repeat.

With tags applied, you'll be able to see two critical things at a glance, then act on them -- a customer's current phase for any given offering; and which content will help move them forward. With some daily practice, this whole process will feel natural in a short time.

To propel customers from phase to phase, leverage the right content assets and structure matching offers to motivate movement. Remember, your means for making offers are your sales content hubs, which can be based on presentations, ads, or landing pages.

Go Drive Sales

Broadcast a steady stream of expertise and thought leadership themes following tagging conventions. Publish continually, sending appropriate content to each phase group. To propel customers from phase to phase, leverage the right content assets and structure matching offers to motivate movement when they're ready.

Remember, your means for making offers are your sales content hubs, which can be based on presentations, ads, or landing pages, as described in Sections 2 and 3 and summarized in this Section's Table. Pair your offers with one or more content assets to incentivize your audience to consider your offers and reward them for listening to your value propositions.

The following sequence is how you'll interact with customers from day to day. I use arbitrary time intervals here for illustration. You may need different intervals for your audience and business. Try something intuitive, then test and adjust the timing to achieve the best performance.

Send KLT Content to All Subscribers -- Arrange your editorial calendar to support frequent KLT broadcasts. Send KLT content to your entire database regularly. Send it to newcomers until they have received it for a month.

Make Offers -- After KLT, the next three Sales phases follow good offers made at the right time. Offers are your means to persuade KLT customers to Try, Try customers to Buy, or Buy customers to Repeat. First, offer trials or samples (Try), then offer a more complete service version or the full offering (Buy). Then send more Buy offers to stimulate a Repeat buy. When buyers are ready, offer similar value for their friends with Referral Requests.

Work a sequential-offer plan consistently to bring in a flow of orders. If they accept a trial offer or buy something, move them onward. If they don't buy, leave them in their current phase to marinate and catch them again the following month. If customers tire of this, they may opt out of your e-list. That's not a concern unless it indicates there's something amiss that needs correction. Sometimes people just lose interest. Let them go easily. You want only interested parties subscribed. Just don't put customers off by churning your e-list.

Phase Progression Details -- Tagging prepared you to route the right content (per your Content phase tags) to the right customers (per your Customer phase tags.) Drive progression from one sales phase to the next following these steps:

1. Each time you prepare to broadcast to a phase group, segment your e-list per the CRM Sales Phase tags you assigned to each customer. Extract the group you're working with. Go one phase at a time, in order.
2. Send content tagged for the current group's destination phase. Select the content type you need to send from your content folders or run a database query if you're using a relational database. Filter the results to remove files this customer group has already seen.
3. After newcomers have received only KLT content for a while, graduate them to Try or Buy content matched with a good offer in a presentation, ad, or landing page.
4. If a customer is tagged Buy, use Repeat or Buy content to motivate them to buy again. If they are tagged Repeat, use more Repeat or Buy content to stimulate more sales. Or request a Referral.
5. Keep offering Repeat buys if that makes sense for your business and offerings. Repeat is what customers do when you make follow-on offers to up-sell, cross-sell, and resell.
6. Update a customer's Sales phase tags to track status changes when they graduate from one phase to the next by performing each phase action. Each customer will accumulate a collection of tags to indicate where they are in the process and everywhere they have been.
7. Make it a standard procedure to update tags immediately each time a status change occurs. No need to repeat tags. Again, like a merit badge, one of each is enough.
8. Track all the content customers receive by filename and date in their CRM records. It wouldn't be efficient to send them the same content twice too closely or repeatedly unless it's designed to be used that way.
9. Stimulate referrals by making direct requests. My preference is to contact them by phone or email, ask for the referral, and send the referring party a special coupon to give their referral. This engages them in motivating their referral to make contact and in rewarding them. You may download [our referral coupon](#) from our Library page and use it as a guide to create your own. Scroll down to see the coupon download.

People become willing to buy when they feel confident they'll have a customer experience they like.

Try Phase Offers -- Make Try offers to KLT customers and any others who may have moved onward but have not seen a given Try offer yet. Use autoresponders during and after trials to sample temperament and deliver appointment reminders. Use polls or surveys to contact your samplers during trials. Request feedback. Find out if they want your help solving a problem or

reaching a goal. Have a good tactic for trials that expire. The best is automatic purchase, the slipperiest slope of all.

Customers can sample working with you many ways. These should be free or low-cost, no-commitment, and non-threatening. Some examples include:

- Display a creative portfolio or product samples if you have them.
- Free initial consultation, plus a relevant, high-value, free information premium.

- A free process analysis with a custom solution brief, plus offer of a full proposal.
- A free or low-cost small project that could lead to a larger one.
- A free full proposal for a paid plan.
- Temporary use or a limited service that becomes full-featured or a regular signup after trial.

If you offer more than one type of trial (multiple products or services), tag each trial type differently and track them all (Try1, Try2, etc., or the like)

Buy Phase Offers -- People become willing to buy when they feel confident they'll have a customer experience they like. Near the end of a trial offer or soon after you send out samples, contact customers with Buy offers.

Your best customers are usually the ones you already have. Contact past customers regularly to stay in touch. When you have a decent-sized customer base, this group should get the most effort with properly spaced Repeat offers and Refer requests.

Emphasize value. Familiarize your audience with your offering's advantages. Show which benefits produce them and how. Detail features of your products or services that produce tangible benefits. Say how benefits translate into advantages and improve progress to goals. Structure an attractive offer that fits customer needs at fair prices. Ask for the sale.

Content for this phase *proves your value*. Accompany offers with white papers, e-books, case studies, success stories, feature articles, favorable press, key research findings, best practices you follow, ratings, reviews, testimonials, and so on. You may also want to take advantage of video customer interviews.

Repeat Offers -- Your best customers are usually the ones you already have. Contact past customers regularly to stay in touch. When you have a decent-sized customer base, this group should get the most effort with properly spaced Repeat offers and Refer requests.

Feature special deals to win Repeat sales, but don't get stuck discounting. Offer an incentive premium, higher service levels, or added value rather than reduced prices. Set fair market prices and then differentiate your business with higher quality, extra value, and better service to avoid discount-based competition, also known as "the race to the bottom." You can't win discounting. There is always someone willing to go out of business faster than you.

Content for this phase keeps you top of mind and supports follow-on selling (resale, up-sale, and cross-sale). Include content such as polls and surveys, price comparisons, information giveaways, research findings, upgrade enticement, your ratings, reviews, testimonials, PR, webinars, training, success stories, case studies, handy device apps, software tools, and reference materials.

Referral Requests -- Each time customers compliment or thank you on a product or service, ask them if they know someone who needs what you do. If you structure referrals into the sale, start requesting them when it becomes appropriate. Suggest the customer send their referral to seek your help. Remember, a real referral is a delighted customer [selling their referral](#) on calling you. Refer request content could include your referral form, polls and surveys, comparative performance reports, product release notes, news, rating summaries, your portfolio, success stories, apps, etc.

Automate -- Science works. Test different trials and samples, content, trial periods, send intervals, and so on. Subject everything you do to testing. Find what works best. Do that and leave the rest. Once you find which content works best, use your email marketing and CRM automation functions to segment e-lists and configure broadcasts of matching content to list segments to propel *customer groups* through the sales phases briskly.

Automated selling is intensive activity. Be prepared for mass orders, resulting fulfillment activity, and all growth implies. Growth is two-edged. It has to be planned so that it won't break your bank account before you can catch up and meet increasing demand in financial safety.

Content Marketing System Operational

Now your CME is in full motion. Use this process to establish a referral-driven business. Just keep turning the crank, evaluate what you're doing based on results, and introduce improvements as needed. Don't stop improving your CME until it's tuned to perfection and cruising at the peak of its power curve, bringing in all the business you can handle and building a nice backlog.

Duplicate Content Can Hurt You

Google recently altered its search algorithm to crack down on what they consider abusive content duplication practices. Many websites that post duplicate content online are being "devalued" until they remove their duplications and request a review. Devaluation means a website loses some priority in the organic (or natural) search returns. Some observers say this is good. Others decry it. Whatever you think, if you're on the web, now you must attend to this issue.



Google is penalizing companies for publishing duplicate content.

Copy any identical or largely similar content on your own website or across others and you could be affected.

Penalties of -5 to -250 positions or more are being meted out for duplicate content "offenses." That means, for example, in searches when your site might have been returned in position 3 of page 1, a devaluation of -20 would push it to page 3. In that case, it might as well be on Jupiter for all the page views it would get. Research shows 75% of all searchers don't click beyond the first page.

In cases Google considers egregious, it may remove an offending website from its search index entirely. Any level of penalty could cause a website owner large losses. If you're not high on page one (or at least somewhere on page 1 or 2) you're, in effect, nowhere. The situation is even worse if your site can't be found at all using Google.

If your site draws any level of penalty, you have to diagnose the cause, hope you found it, correct it, and then request a review. You may be reinstated at a position below your former glory. You might never fully recoup a previous high page rank.

Duplication Impedes Web Users

Content duplication contributes to web clutter and related inefficiencies. It degrades our user experience. What we all want is fast, efficient searches. Duplication practices, such as posting identical articles on more than one article submission site, waste users' time and energy. It can be frustrating and annoying to encounter the same content returned from many locations when you search. We want to see returns from a varied range of references, if they exist, so we can evaluate confluence or disparities in information from different sources.

Duplicate content makes search engines, and the companies that run them, work harder to accomplish less. They must try to sort out which copy to return when they encounter largely identical content in more than one place. They may not return a copy you would prefer to see or be seen. Finding "the real content" consumes time, energy,

programming effort, and processing power. Google has decided to not allow this practice because, most importantly to them, it degrades their users' search experience.

It's especially wasteful when the same chunk of content hogs more than one position on page 1 of the search returns. With only 10 positions available, page 1 is precious space because hundreds or thousands of sites may compete to be there in a given search. That page 1 space can be so valuable many competing sites would pay dearly for a position that was wasted by a spammy duplicate.

What Experts Say

Search engine staff and webmasters take a hard-line stance against placing copies of content online without mitigating all dupes by adjusting your website's code. Some of this commentary is available at [Google Webmaster Central](#). Search the [Help Forum](#) and the [Blog](#) on "content duplication" and "article marketing."

Read selectively, though, and *discount any specific marketing advice* when it comes from self-serving sources.

Why associate your brand with a practice that annoys and inconveniences web users and search engine companies? Duplicating content to manipulate search returns is just another form of spam. The search engines are not going to allow anyone to spam their search returns.

These writers may lack the expertise to advise people on how to market even though their technical approach to content duplication may be right on. Get your marketing guidance from authoritative sources, not software engineers or webmasters.

On the other side of this issue, some e-publishers actually advocate massive, willy-nilly duplication similar to email spam. Don't go there because others report tragic instances of lost search rank, sometimes from a high, first-page position to position -200 or even farther back. Some even tell of having their site dropped from the search index completely.

See Google's guidelines [in this article](#). They advise to either flag any dupes or remove them from the competition for page rank. Of course, technical solutions tend to require web programming skills to implement. You may need assistance to make modifications to your site's code. I can offer a far simpler and more elegant solution if it works for you technically.

Just Say No to Content Duplication

Why associate your brand with a practice that annoys and inconveniences web users and search engine companies? Intentionally duplicating content to manipulate search returns is just another form of spam. It's clear the search engines are not going to allow anyone to spam their search returns. If you depend on keyword searches to lead customers to your web presence (and who doesn't these days?) devaluation could be devastating.

The best solution is total avoidance -- simply *never duplicate content where search engines can find it*. Then you have no mitigation concern, cost, or effort, and zero risk of a penalty. If you must duplicate for some reason other than gaining search precedence, then mitigate all dupes. Maximize exposure for your content but without brute force approaches involving copies.

Posting duplicate articles can do you little good, and it could ruin your whole content marketing effort. Instead, if you're concerned about being found, generate high-quality, curated content that has high-perceived merit

(relevance, meaning, and value) and make sure it's keyword-optimized. That's proper web etiquette and also the approach that will bring you the best performance.

When posting content, quality matters more than quantity. Have confidence your quality content will be found, consumed, and followed to your website. Your audience will link to truly authoritative material because it merits recommendation while they ignore extensive spammy dupes. Create more and different curated content rather than wasting effort posting multiple copies in a desperate attempt to gain attention or outdo competitors.

Don't pass up the huge traffic-generating benefits of guest blogging and article marketing out of fear you might trigger a duplicate content penalty. Just determine an effective mitigation strategy and follow it.

Pick and choose the one best location for each item you publish so you can bring traffic to your website and gain links without risking penalties. Share it via links or feeds, and be satisfied. To gain additional exposure, produce more original content like a genuine thought leader. If you're really the expert, your audience has expectations you need to meet.

Protect your content with well-worded copyright notices to help avoid scraping (theft) and related risk of duplication penalties. Byline your original content marketing assets with your real name. Then it will be clear whom it belongs to, who published it first, and where it was first published. Also, when possible, place your copyright text at each location (platform) where you publish content.

Run a plagiarism detection program like [Copyscape](#) periodically to find any duplicates that may be "scraped" (stolen) from your site(s.) Assert your rights under copyright law, or whoever steals your content could end up owning it -- legally, if not rightly so.

Duplication Penalty Avoidance Guidelines

Enjoy the advantages of content marketing, but eliminate the risk. Do not pass up the huge traffic-generating benefits of guest blogging and article marketing out of fear you might trigger a duplicate content penalty. Just determine an effective mitigation strategy and follow it.

These guidelines help avoid content duplication issues:

1. Each time you place content online, first determine if you're about to create a duplicate that will need to be mitigated per search engine guidelines.
2. Never publish the same content in more than one place on the web (like on an article submission site, plus your own site or blog, simultaneously) without effectively mitigating all duplications. Don't "shotgun" by posting your articles to multiple article submission sites. That will generate dupes you can't mitigate.
3. If you absolutely must place more than one copy of some content online, use an approved method to mitigate duplicates, like metatags or exclusion or some other means search engines accept. See references cited above.

4. Delegate technical mitigation of duplicates to your webmaster or another qualified web developer. Have them follow the methods Google prefers.
5. You could rewrite each new content placement, but you never know how different your new version must be. Don't waste your time rewriting just to make some content different when you could be writing more new, original content.
6. Use links or feeds to refer to your content where it resides rather than cutting and pasting it to other locations.
7. EzineArticles.com recommends you publish on their site and feed article snippets back to your site. They provide newsfeeds and a widget (feed reader) for your site. Or use a feed reader script or widget of your choice.
8. Write captivating lead-ins because your feeds deliver the beginning of each article. Keep your feeds short. Use snippet or summary feed settings, not full content feeds.
9. An option -- place short summaries (abstracts or descriptions) on your website or blog to capture attention and interest, then link to the full article's single published location.
10. Don't re-publish content from incoming feeds directly on your web pages in HTML. Use a feed reader to display article snippets or summaries with links to the full versions.

If you move some content from your blog or website to an article submission site or elsewhere, place a snippet at the original location and link to the new location. Then returning or referred readers will find it with one click. This preserves your blog's permalinks and avoids dead ends.

If you've followed along and built out your content marketing system, by now your customers and prospects are viewing your articles when prompted via email. Your expert content is being fed to your social media pages for recommendation by friends, connections, and contacts. Your articles may also be racking up good view and download stats on an article directory of your choice.

Sustain your effort to become and remain a recognized thought leader. Apply your growing content marketing expertise in clever ways. Find and adopt new content strategies. Expand your online footprint with richly meaningful content in different digital formats that your audience prefers.



The Golden Rule can be a powerful path to success.

Content marketing is extensible across many digital formats, distribution methods, and destinations. Any presentation your customers like will work. Any node on the Internet where you can expose your content to potential customers may be a good destination.

Distribute Only Curated Content -- Quality is the primary differentiator when curating content and also when distinguishing between authors. Your author's reputation extends to your brand and company. Never write boring filler or fluff. Research issues before you create content. Contribute some valuable thinking, analysis, and usable insights. Share references. Maximize your content quality so you can become known as a genuine thought leader and enjoy that status and the influence it brings. Go beyond mere relevance. Make all your content meaningful and valuable to your audience. Then it will earn high perceived merit.

Think Like Your Audience -- If you haven't started building your content marketing system, maybe you haven't realized the true purpose is to help make your customer experience easy, comfortable, rewarding, and attractive. Think about the steps you follow to purchase any complex product or service like a car, an entertainment system, tax preparation services, or a legal opinion. Your customers see it as you do. Be true to their agenda. Then they will tolerate yours.

One powerful path to success is to transparently apply the golden rule in all your business practices. Your digital content could be one way you give others what you would want in their place. Reciprocity is not just a moral imperative; it's also winning business strategy.

Do What Works -- There's an overarching best practice for content marketing that has two parts. First, deliver content that helps customers get ahead in business or in life. Second, help customers understand, accept, and acquire what you offer without any marketing hoopla, puffery, or pressure to buy. With content marketing, you get to "print your own money" and even set the value because content is a form of currency you can use to purchase your customer's time and attention to your value propositions.

Follow an Editorial Calendar -- This was covered earlier, but I included again here to remind anyone who may try to launch a content marketing initiative without sufficient planning regardless of advice and cautions. Remember the seven P's -- plenty prior planning prevents pervasive poor performance.

Research and Use Keywords -- Keyword searches are how we find information about our interests these days. Search engines index and rank your content by finding keywords within it that people use in searches. The Holy Grail is to discover the keywords customers use when searching for solutions like those you offer. Then include these primary search terms in context within your marketing content so it will be found. Also, link those words to your website or to other content assets you own to build link authority.

Keyword research is worthy of much discussion. A practical place to start is free -- Google's keyword search tool. You have to sign up for [Google Adwords](#) to use it but you have access to this tool even if you don't run ads with Google. And here's a helpful blog post to get you started -- [4 Ways to Utilize the Google Keyword Tool](#), by Evan Britton.

Quality is the primary differentiator when curating content and also in distinguishing between authors. Your author's reputation extends to your brand and company. Maximize your content quality so you can become known as a genuine thought leader.

Keyword Titles -- Authorities agree primary keywords should be placed within the *first 3 or 4 words* of your article's title. This "title SEO" helps search engines recognize your articles as relevant for those terms. Articles that include them in the beginning of the title have the best probability of being returned high in search results. Of course, you should also use keywords within your body text in a natural sounding way. That will happen easily if you choose keywords well for meaning and relevance.

Use Google Alerts -- Google helps you connect with your audience and keep up with what your competition is doing once you have clarity on what your audience finds interesting. That comes from your market and keyword research. Google has a [notification service](#) that finds new content matching keywords on anything you want to follow.

I set an alert for "Content Marketing Engine." The next day I received a link and a snippet from a relevant blog post. I clicked the link and left a comment on that blog post with a back link to my website. I gained, if nothing else, another link to my website and some possibility of interest from customers who can use what I do.

Google Alerts has also helped me locate content comprising the ongoing conversations in my chosen subject areas. It's like partly automating the research process. I see who the interested parties are and read what they have to say easily and quickly.

Shun Obsolete SEO -- Search engines are far less susceptible to tech tricks that worked in the past to simulate relevance by exploiting the system. Search algorithms are getting sophisticated enough to express real human preferences for relevance and meaning. Before you jump into a tactic, check it out carefully. Assure it's not a "black hat" practice that will get you sanctioned.

Only adopt tactics that are currently effective. For example, you could waste hours "optimizing" for a certain density of particular keywords. Not long ago that was a "killer tactic." Then algorithm designers changed all that because search engines live or die by their relevance to users:

"Webmasters and SEOs today don't view keyword density as it was viewed in the past. Today the best strategy is to *write content for the person who might visit the site* [emphasis added] and not to attain a certain keyword density . . . then top rankings typically follow. "

-- Dustin Williams, in [The Seven Ghosts of SEO](#)

Relevance Is Not Enough -- Keywords help achieve a semblance of relevance, but keyword "relevance" alone is shallow and haphazard because it's not about meaning nor does it incorporate context. It's just primitive word matching. Compelling meaning operates on a far deeper level. Meaning is about expressing human values. It's infused with emotion. It's felt as much as understood.

Make your content truly meaningful to help your content stream be liked and recommended. Right a wrong, help people get ahead in a cherished activity, solve a nagging problem, help people achieve a treasured goal or avoid a feared consequence.

Meaning is also the next frontier in marketing, if you go along with Bob Gilbreath's thesis in his book [The Next Evolution of Marketing](#). Gilbreath is chief marketing strategist at Bridge Worldwide, one of North America's largest digital and relationship-marketing agencies. He admits at home he blocks typical tell-and-sell ads with his TiVo. Rather than hanging tough with old school methods, he's helping Bridge develop newer kinds of ad campaigns that hinge on meaning something or making a difference. They work, and that's no surprise -- they are more like content made for content marketing than like old style ads.

Go beyond mere relevance. Make your content truly meaningful to help your stream be liked and recommended. As Gilbreath suggests, create authentic meaning readers feel strongly about -- right a wrong, help people get ahead in a cherished activity, solve a nagging problem, help your audience achieve a treasured goal or avoid a feared consequence. Reinforce or express values you share with your audience or help customers enrich their own and others' lives.

Your KLT customer experience content is a great place to tell authentic stories about how you help people get what they want -- in website copy, case studies, success stories, recommendations, reviews, and testimonials.

Assert Your Expertise -- This quote offers nuggets on how web syndication helps search rank and how to build links that demonstrate expertise --

"Syndication drives exposure across numerous online platforms. This generates new traffic for the transmitting site -- making syndication a relatively cheap and easy form of advertisement . . . Content syndication has become a highly effective strategy for link building. Links embedded within the syndicated content are typically optimized around anchor terms that will point an optimized link back to the website that the content author is trying to promote. These links tell . . . search engines that the website being linked to is an authority for the keyword that is being used as the anchor [linked] text. "

-- Wikipedia on [Web Syndication](#), with added emphasis.

Establish your authority status with links from primary keywords you place in your content back to relevant content on your website.

Create Hub Structures -- Link all your content assets back to your website to make it a central hub. Also, link your publications and web platforms to each other. The result is a web-like structure that nets attention and builds good will around the clock to capture new business. Hubs pass the interested customer onward, moving ever deeper into your web presence toward becoming a customer.

Track Sales Phases -- John Jantsch outlined the phases prospects pass through to become good customers in his second book, *The Referral Engine* -- "know, like, trust, try, buy, repeat, refer. " Why not adopt Jantsch's brilliantly simple rubric as your business mantra? Offer appropriate content at each stage to help customers move along through their process, step by step.

Avoid Content Duplication -- You don't need to post copies on the web to get attention if you create content customers like and want to share. If you publish the same content in multiple locations, you can draw a serious search engine penalty that could set you back when your intent is to move forward.

Content marketing may be the fastest expanding branch of marketing. Stay informed on what to do and what to drop or avoid.

Good Ratings Matter -- [Google +1 Buttons](#) are showing up all over the web. The +1 icons are clustering at the top of natural search returns. Some experts say +1 and other social consensus indicators are "the future of natural search ranking." They do sometimes indicate meaning as well as relevance. Consider adding the Google +1 button to your web pages and blog and ask visitors to click them. Of course, the same goes for other forms of rating, such as Yelp reviews, Facebook Likes, and all the other social media recommendations.

Stay Current -- Content marketing may be the fastest expanding branch of marketing. Trends change rapidly. New ideas rise and fall. Stay informed on what to do and what to drop or avoid. Keep strategy and tactics updated in this fast-moving medium, squeezing all the juice out of what works best, and trading out any practice that's tired and superseded.

The Best Practice of All -- A good way to continuously achieve better results from your online presence is to find, evaluate, and apply best practices from credible sources to your business and online activities, especially marketing. Of course, you have to think critically about what you find, but search for current best practices from time to time and apply the good ones to your content marketing effort. Do this especially at the beginning of things or when you break into new interest areas. Learn from others who've "been there and done that" so you aren't trying to re-invent the wheel.

Get Beyond Being Found

Paid search advertising aside, what works in Internet marketing today? People tend to think of website page rank first and, of course, they want high organic page rank even if they resist doing what it takes to merit it. High relevance for the search terms your audience uses will always be the most fundamental SEO strategy. So keyword-optimize your entire web presence and each piece of content you publish.

Keep going because there's so much more you can do. Think beyond web marketing focused entirely on search results. The whole object is to *build traffic*. Traffic is the reason your search rank even matters. Advancing your website page rank is only one of many ways to capture more traffic. Many great traffic building methods don't depend on your website's page rank at all -- such as article marketing, guest publishing, blog publishing combined with email marketing, and the other strong content-based attraction approaches suggested in this e-book.



If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

For example, this reference about [content syndication](#) supports reliance on *content SEO* --

"Content syndication is the best way they have found to build authority and keyword links at the same time. Because Google is focusing on paid links so much, old-fashioned techniques like article syndication are working a lot better now than they were 12 months ago."

-- Patrick Altoft quoted by Annabel Hodges on StateOfSearch.com

If you syndicate content, become familiar with [Google's Quality Guidelines](#) and assure you practice safe syndication.

With only 10 positions available on Page 1 of the search results, you may never get there if your market is highly competitive. The world won't end if you don't hit the first page because there's so much else you can do to drive web traffic. By all means, rank high if you can, but don't obsess about it. Follow safe, smart content marketing strategies to help drive more traffic to your web presence. Links and page rank will fall in place naturally resulting from your audience's responses.

Beware the Black Hat

Some SEO companies will sell hard to convince you that SEO secrets exist -- some magic buttons only they control. For a price, they offer to bring you top page rank in search returns while you supposedly avoid the hard work it takes to earn a top position through merit. They are keeping their methods secret for self-serving reasons. Black

hat SEO companies try to sell you a fast, easy path to riches and fame. Don't fall for it. Unethical practices may seem to work for a while, but rest assured, you can't cheat your way to high search rank safely or for very long.

This quote about the "white label SEO" I advocate summarizes my orientation effectively --

"The allure of higher rankings and increased visibility is real for every brand. However, the most effective SEO results are not seen overnight. In time, armed with the right combination of content and links, sites will achieve the sustainable, positive and -- most importantly -- legitimate results that are sure to pay the largest dividends in the end."

-- Jonah A. Berger, Senior Specialist (SEO), and Jason Walker, SEO Specialist, at [Performics](#)

Eventually black hat SEO tricks will turn around and bite you. Companies that used duplicate content, paid links, and other unethical methods to gain precedence are learning about this the hard way through severe devaluations. Trying to get around the need for high relevance and genuine meaning is futile. Even if you were to scam your way into a high page rank you don't merit, in the end you would have to face your customers and answer to them.

Build the value of your brand and let it shine rather than pretend you have equity with your market or audience that you don't actually deserve and haven't merited.

You're better off helping search engines do what they are designed for -- to find the information most relevant to search terms people enter. The better you go with this flow, the more likely search engines will reference your web presence high in the natural search results safely.

Google transparently offers a [free guide](#) (PDF) that tells everyone how to rank high in searches because they want to project an image of fairness. They follow that up with a lot more solid help in

their [Webmaster Tools](#). With this quality of expert guidance, you don't need black hat SEO that attempts to exploit the system and customers.

Build the value of your brand and let it shine rather than pretending you have equity with your market that you don't actually deserve and haven't earned. This orientation is known as "white label," "private label," or "white hat" SEO. Though it takes more time and effort, the extra measure of authenticity, honesty, and safety will position your brand better and much more securely than any devious approach.

The risk and consequences of unethical practices are too great. Your very brand is at risk, not to mention your whole web presence, if search engines peg you as gaming their algorithms. Gain the rank you deserve by safe, non-paid natural methods like those documented in this e-book. Focus on being useful to your audience and let the natural links that result from helping them drive your page rank. Give your audience content they want to share because it's so valuable. Viral lift (friends telling friends) will generate safe new links.

These days, search engines serve genuine relevance better than ever. The people who create and run them have had more than a decade to learn what works, so relevance and meaning are winning out in the battle for attention and precedence. That trend is expected to strengthen as search algorithms incorporate ever more social consensus via mentions, ratings, and reviews on social media. Some predict that soon, through Facebook, Google+, and the other social media, everything that technology users purchase will be rated and reviewed on the

web. Some recent phone apps are already reporting every purchase of related products or services their users make.

Content SEO Guidelines

Currently, the best content SEO strategy follows these general guidelines:

1. Know what works *today*. Shun obsolete SEO methods of the past. Search algorithms continually evolve, so your content strategy must be current to work well.
2. Research keywords and select a set that matches search terms your customers commonly use to find offerings in your categories. Use your keywords everywhere they help you -- in everything you publish online.
3. Publish a copious digital content stream at multiple, interlinked online nodes -- like your website; blog; social media; article collections; and presentation, podcast, or video collections. Go where your customers are and serve their needs.
 - a. Publish meaningful, valuable, share-worthy content in different formats and locations. Use keywords that match your audience's preferred search terms.
 - b. Garner as many mentions on the web as reasonably possible, whether they be called like, friend, recommend, or connect; or if they're a link, rating, review, or something else.
 - c. Publish reference content that people want to share. Permalink it and promote it to your e-list.
4. Build back links to your web presence.
 - a. Author a blog and consume other related blogs, leaving behind comments and links to your web presence.
 - b. Set up local listings on Google and Yahoo unless they don't make sense for your business. If your business is local, this is one of the best ways to get attention, and it's free on both Google and Yahoo. There's a higher level of service available for a fee on Yahoo. Between those two search engines, you cover the majority of the searches done on the web.
 - c. Find and use other legitimate link-building and traffic-driving methods that work for you.
 - i. Register in business directories and place online listings in them.
 - ii. Send out PR regularly via feeds with links to some of your newer content. Issue press releases and announcements from your website. Search engines value rapidly changing, relevant, topical content. Blogs and feeds are favored.
5. Build the largest e-list subscriber base you can. All past, present, and future customers can be included. You can also include everyone with whom you have any form of *business relationship*. Use only appropriate (non-spam) methods to build your list. Search for best practices in e-list building, and put them to good use.
6. Each time you publish valuable content somewhere, announce it with a press release via feeds to social media and to your e-list.

A [recent article](#) following the guidelines recommended above was returned high on the first page while searching on the coveted terms "content marketing system." This approach cuts through internet clutter, increases demand pull for your content, and ultimately increases demand for your offerings. It enables search engines to recognize

your expert status and direct people who want what you offer to your website. It enables you to build a reference content base and an e-list of lasting value.

To sum up, here are some pure definitions from [Kiwon Wang](#) which reinforce key points on SEO --

"First, white label SEO and private label SEO are two different names for the same concept. White label SEO is the practice of using legal, ethical means to properly market your website online in order to raise your search engine rankings. These white label SEO methods include, but are not limited to, submitting your site to the various search engines in question, using blogs and social media to engage your customers, choosing the best relevant keywords to help your potential customers find you easily via web search, as well as a few similar methods. Remember, white label SEO methods are always honest and transparent. If someone tries to up sell you on an SEO method that seems less than ethical, you should probably back away."

Google's Guidelines

This statement excerpted from Paul Roetzer's new book [The Marketing Agency Blueprint](#) may contain Google's best summary guidance on this whole matter:

"In May 2011, Google provided very pointed guidance on how to build high-quality sites, and explained how the Panda [algorithm] change was just 'one of roughly 500 search improvements' they were expecting to rollout in 2011. Their advice to marketers in general, and spammers, scrapers, and content farms in particular, was this:

'Search is a complicated and evolving art and science, so rather than focusing on specific algorithmic tweaks, we encourage you to focus on delivering the best possible experience for users.'"

It's hard to miss the emphasis Google places on *quality in the user experience*. There are no shortcuts, mysteries, or magic buttons. Google tells us straight out how to rank well in searches. I want to emphasize proper curation is the driver of content quality, which in turn is essential to produce the user experience you want to be known for.

If you take full advantage of curated content's inherent power to drive traffic to your web presence, it's doubtful you'll ever need to hire SEO providers to build links or drive page rank artificially by purely technical means. Invest those funds instead in publishing compelling, share-worthy content assets of lasting value for customers. Use that content to drive the web traffic and search returns you want naturally, safely, and ethically.

Throughout the inception of CME architecture in this e-book, the intent is to communicate with a human audience to provide a high-value customer experience in various ethical ways. It's never link building for its own sake or any practice focused solely on gaining precedence in search returns.

A Message from the Author

To My Valued Readers --

In closing this ebook, let me express my thanks for your interest and attention. Congratulations on taking initiative with content marketing. Employ content well so it can help you prosper.

Please contact me through [our web site](#) to provide feedback or ask questions, or to seek our professional help with content strategy, building your CME, or content production.

Also, please enjoy our [Agency blog](#) for even more powerful insights, useful strategies, and updates. And leave us a comment.

Kim Jons, our other Co-founder, and I wish you great success in business and throughout life.

Best Regards,

-- Joseph Riden, Strategic Consultant
Co-Founder, Kim & Joseph's Remarkable Agency