



# **MINIMUM VIABLE CONTENT**

**MORE RESULTS  
FROM LESS CONTENT**

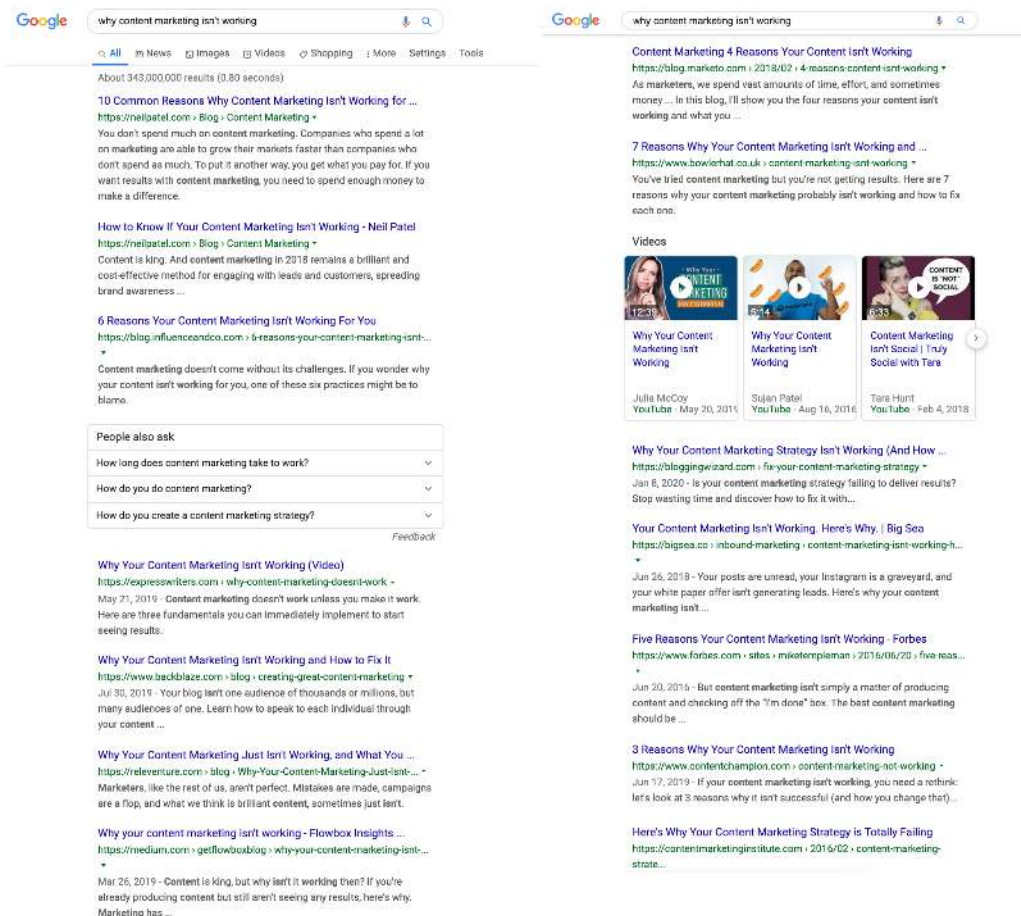



# Introduction: How We Got Here

Content shock. Information overload. Whatever you call it, we've reached it.

There's a ridiculous amount of content available now. Over 4 million blog posts are published every day. Even in a tiny niche, there's far more content available than our audiences want.

We've hit the point where we aren't just publishing similar content – we're now duplicating headlines dozens of times over.





I'm not saying having all this content means that content marketing doesn't work. Content marketing does work. But it is getting harder for it to work, and the way to make it work better isn't to keep pumping out more content.

Brian Clark, Founder of Copyblogger, spoke recently about [how content marketing isn't working like it did before](#). Even writing great posts will barely get you ranked. To rank on page one in 2020, you have to publish world-class content and it has to be backed up with a world-class authority site.

Here's an example of just how much effort is being put into B2B content marketing and how little effect it can produce. [A 2019 study of B2B blogs](#) found that 65% of them had fewer than 1% of their keywords ranking on the first page of search results.

Given that basically no one ([0.78% of Google searchers](#), to be exact) clicks on listings in the second page of search results, if these B2B blogs aren't getting on to page one of the search results, it's safe to assume their blogs get basically no organic search traffic.

It doesn't get much better for the remaining 45% of business blogs, either. That same study found that 85% of the business blogs they analyzed had fewer than 10% of their keywords ranking on the first page of results.

An awful lot of B2B content doesn't generate much search traffic.

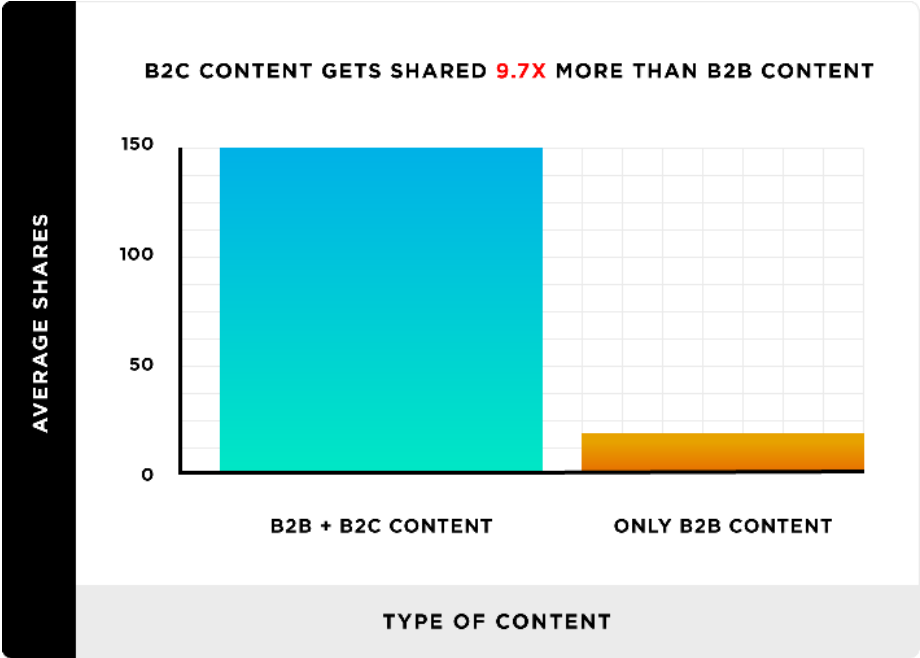
It's not getting much referral traffic, either. [2019 research from BuzzSumo and Backlinko](#) found that 93% of B2B content gets no external links, and only 3% of B2B content gets a link from more than one website.



But what about social media? Isn't that a good way to get people to see your content... maybe even engage with it?

Not really.

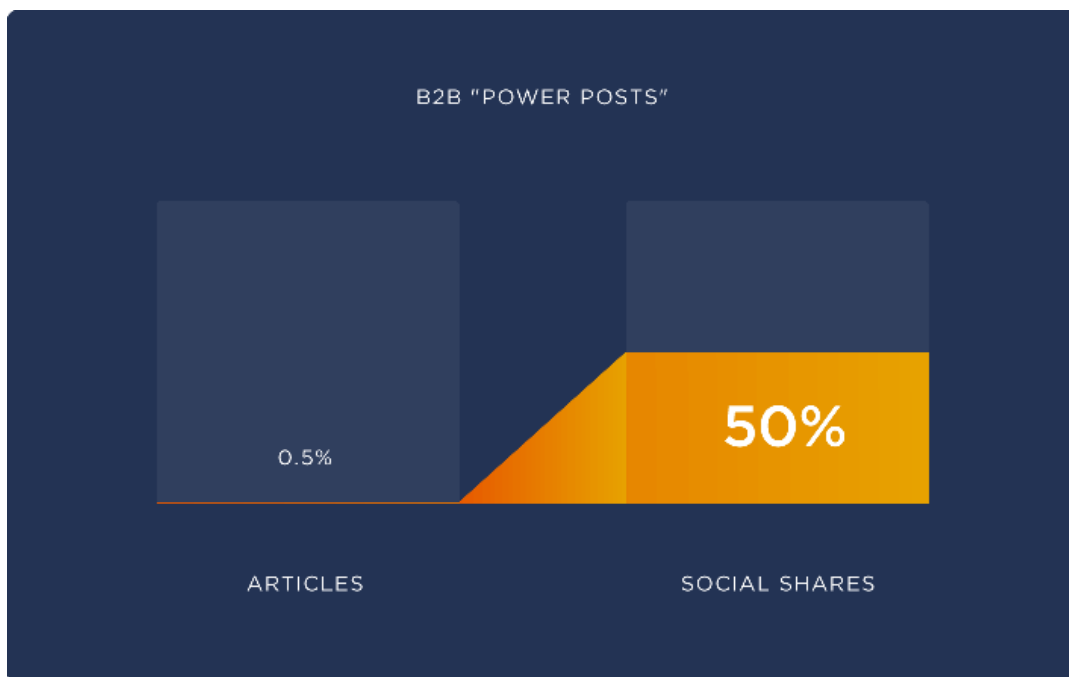
As many of you may have suspected, most of the content sharing done on social media is for B2C content. B2C content gets shared 9.7 times more than B2B content.



But what about social media? Isn't that a good way to get people to see your content... maybe even engage with it?

Not really.

As many of you may have suspected, most of the content sharing done on social media is for B2C content. B2C content gets shared 9.7 times more than B2B content.



Whether it's in the search results, in referral traffic, or on social media, it's a challenge to get B2B content seen.

Part of this is just how content discovery works. Part of it is the overwhelming amount of content our audiences have to pick from.

# More Does Not Always Equal Better

While we've been pouring all this time and money and effort into publishing more and more content, our readers are increasingly tuning out. There's only so much content they can handle.

There's also evidence that publishing more content will actually suppress engagement rates. A [case study CoSchedule published](#) last year showed that both engagement and traffic declined per post when they switched from publishing two posts per week to three posts per week. CoSchedule did get more traffic and more engagement overall by publishing the third post, but it caused their average engagement per post to decline.

Publishing more often can suppress engagement on social media, too. [HubSpot](#) discovered "companies with less than 10,000 followers that post more than 60 times a month receive 60% fewer clicks per post than those companies that post 5 or fewer times a month."

For just one last datapoint, [TrackMaven](#) released a report that showed even while brands were publishing 35% more content in 2015, they were getting 17% less engagement from it.

So none of this is new.

Of course, email marketers have seen this phenomena at work for years. It's called list fatigue. When you start mailing your list too often, people disengage.

List fatigue can trigger an ugly cycle. The marketer knows they're emailing their list too often, and sees the engagement rates and sales consistently decline. But they need the money those mailings generate.

So they keep sending emails out at the same frequency, watching their response rates and income slowly crash, all the while knowing they are strangling the best asset they've got.

This doesn't have to be you. Keep reading to see how to get off the content creation hamster wheel, boost engagement, and get more of the actual business growth that was why you started doing content marketing in the first place.

## Why Almost No One is Reading Your Content

The statistics for content engagement are grim.

93% of B2B content generates no links. Most content only gets **shared 3-4 times**. And even if people do share your content, **six out of ten** of them will share it without even reading it.

Even among the small percentage of people who will actually read a piece of content, **only 20%** of them will actually read the whole thing. **Most people read** "at most 28% of the words [on a page] during an average visit; 20% is more likely."

So just because we've published something doesn't mean anyone is reading it. Or even seeing it. Even with a significant audience, like 10,000 readers, almost no one will see your content if all you do is publish it.

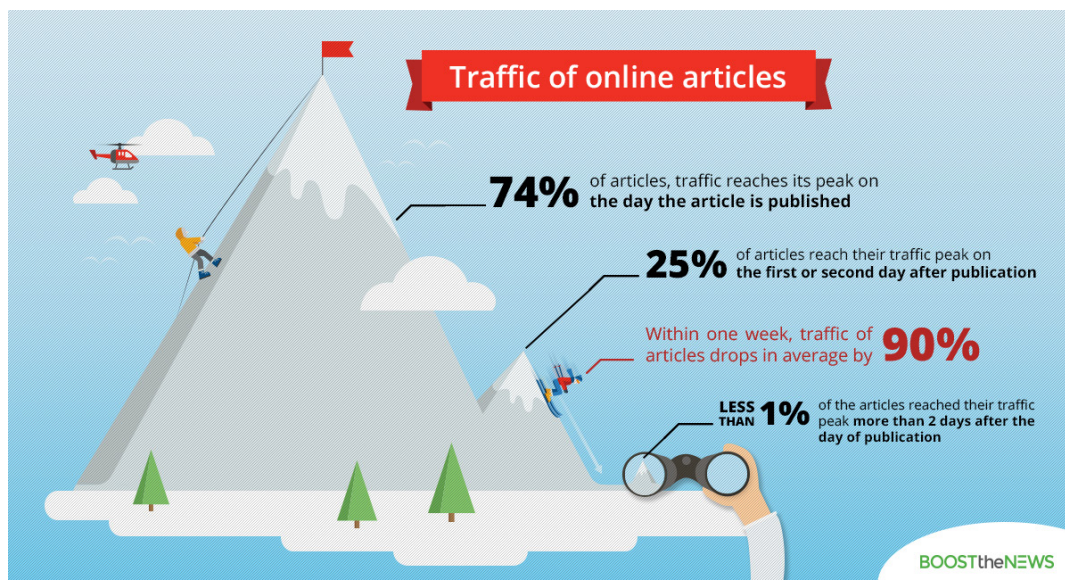
# What Usually Happens One Week After Publication

Here's the #1 reason most content doesn't get seen: The amount of exposure a piece of content gets in its first week after publication is usually all the attention it's ever going to get.

The truth is, most content marketers do far too little content promotion or distribution. Even diligent marketers who follow best practices will usually only:

- send an email notification out about it
- share it a couple of times on social media
- 

This problem is so severe that according to [one study](#), traffic of to online articles drops 90% one week after publication. It drops by 98% one month after publication.





Our problem, ladies and gentlemen, is not that we don't have enough content. Our problem is we're making terrible use of the content we already have.

## How to Keep Your Content from Falling into the Scrapheap of Digital Dust

So if creating more content isn't the solution, what is?

No one thing is going to fix everything, but there are several proven tactics that could turn B2B content marketing around. But only if we use them.

### 1 Reshare Content.

There are many ways to overcome the problem of abandoned content, but the simplest solution is to just reshare your existing content pieces on social media every few weeks. Tools like MeetEdgar, Later, Agorapulse, Smarter Queue, SocialBee, MissingLettr, the WordPress plugin Revive Old Post, and other "evergreen" social media tools make this easy.

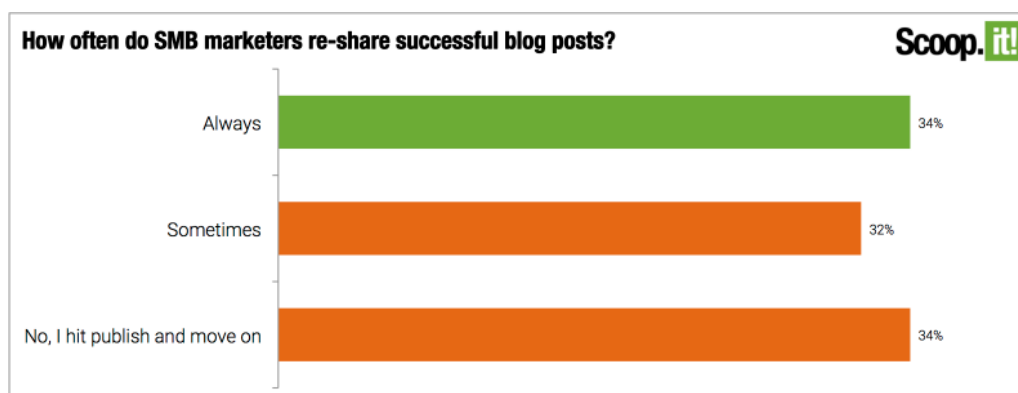
Resharing should give you a nice return for your time, too. There's ample evidence that resharing content will drive more traffic to it.



Even better, resharing your best content (say, your top 20-30% best-performing content assets) will also help to fill up your social media queues.

I haven't seen any recent research on how often content marketers are resharing their content now, but at least as of a few years ago, it wasn't so good.

Several different surveys found that most marketers never reshare their content. A survey by Scoop.it found that 34% of marketers have said they hit publish once, then "move on." Only about 34% will re-share even "successful" blog posts.



If you're worried that resharing your content will bore your audience, it's time to let that go.

We may be focused on our social media feeds, but our audiences aren't. Engagement on Facebook is in the low single digits. It's better on Instagram and LinkedIn, but not by a lot. And it's terrible on Twitter.

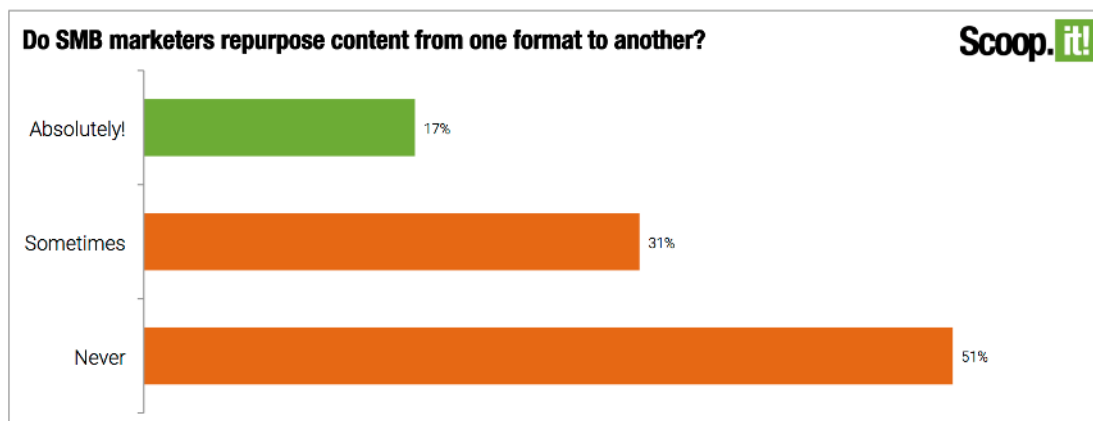
No one is paying such close attention to your social media feeds that they'll notice if you reshare a piece of content every other month or so.

## 2 Repurpose Content.

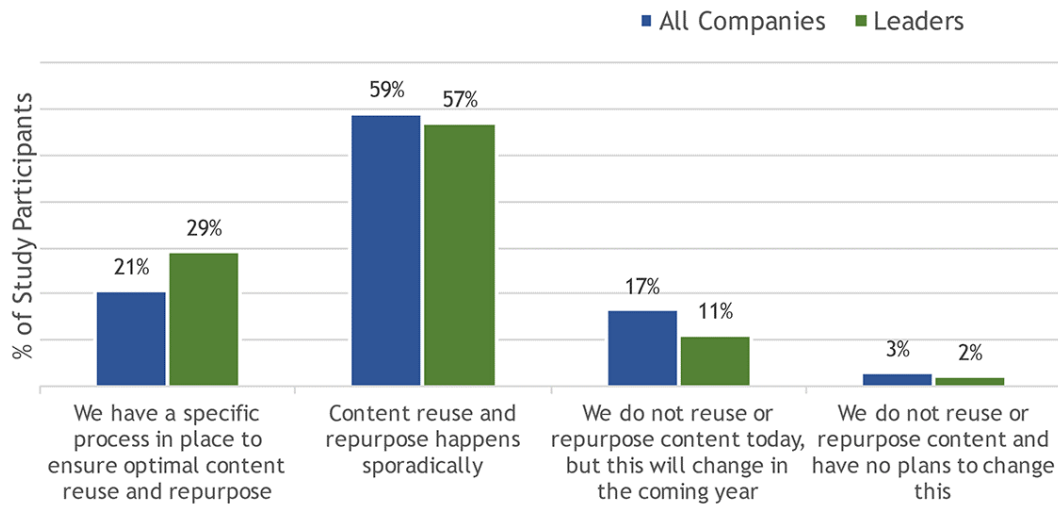
It's important to have your content available in multiple formats. This is because some people like to read, while others would prefer to watch a video, and still others might rather see an infographic or a SlideShare, or listen to a piece of content.

Repurposing allows your audience to consume content in their favorite format, but it also lets you to distribute content on many more platforms. It's also an extremely cost-effective way to expand the reach of your content, especially if you can develop an efficient workflow for repurposing your best-performing content.

Despite all the benefits, most content doesn't get repurposed. According to Scoop.it's 2016 study, 51% of marketers "never" repurpose their content.

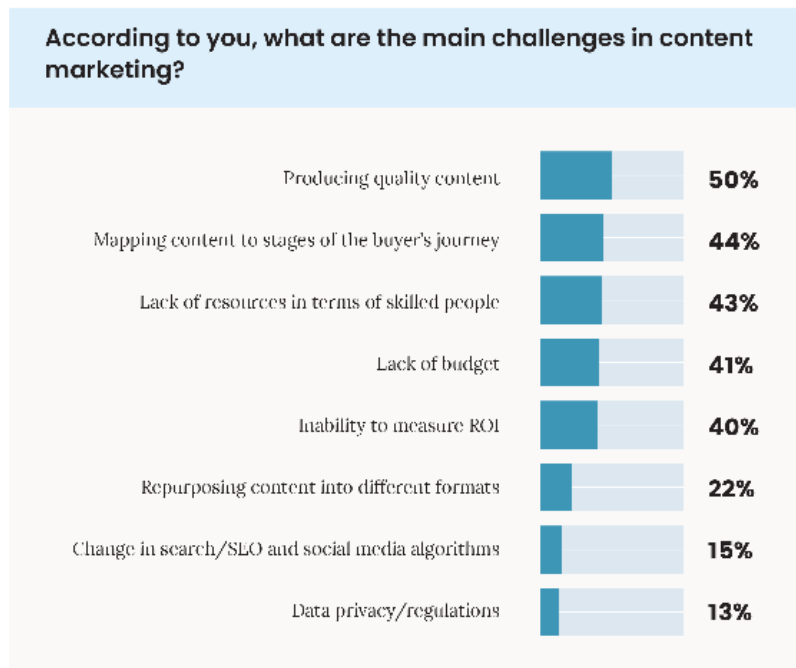


Even when content repurposing does occur, it's sporadic. [Curata found](#) that only 21% of content marketers systematically reuse and repurpose their content.



Curata's 2016 Content Marketing Staffing & Tactics Barometer

Even in 2019, B2B marketers still struggle with repurposing. 22% of the B2B marketers [Regalix surveyed](#) actually named repurposing content as one of their top challenges in content marketing. They even named it as more of a challenge than keeping up with algorithm changes in SEO and on social media.



Regalix State of B2B Content Marketing 2019  
<https://www.regalix.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/State-of-content-marketing-2019.pdf>

This is puzzling, because repurposing content isn't hard, especially once you've established a workflow and an approval process for it. What probably is hard is finding the time to repurpose existing content when we're all chasing overly-demanding publishing schedules.

**There are several easy ways to repurpose content. These include:**

- Using a tool like [Lumen5](#), which will automatically pull highlights from a piece of content into the video. Lumen5 lets you create a social media video summary of your content fairly quickly and easily, usually within 30-45 minutes.
- Asking a designer to take an outline of your content and make it into a simple infographic. This can be done for less than \$100, or you can do it yourself with any one of the infographic creation tools available.
- Recording yourself making a quick introduction to the content, then posting it on social media.
- Making an audio version of the content. WordPress plugins like [Play.ht](#) and services like [Voices.com](#) and [SpeechKit.io](#) make this easy.
- Making a SlideShare summary of the content, again based on an outline you provide.
- Writing a short introduction for a piece of content and sending it to your email list is also repurposing content.

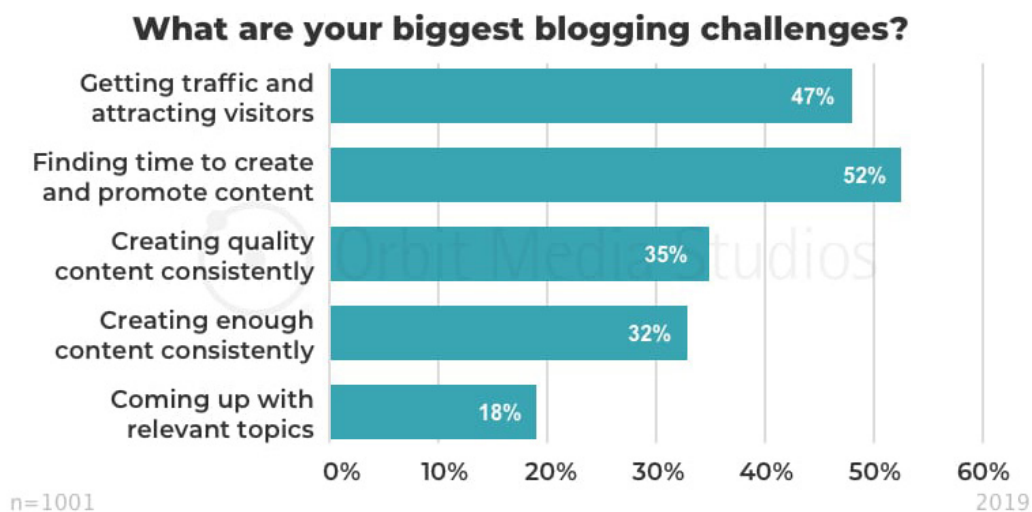
There are dozens of ways to repurpose content, but you don't have to do them all. Pick 3-4 formats you like and get results from, then stop. Also, don't repurpose content that doesn't perform for you. Only 20-30% of your best-performing content assets are worth repurposing.

### 3 Promote content.

As mentioned before, simply publishing content is not enough any more. We have to amplify it after publication. And one of the best ways to amplify content is via content promotion.

Note that content promotion is different than content distribution. Distribution is publishing content across media channels you own or control, like your website, your email list, and your social media channels. Content promotion is, basically, getting other people to distribute your content through their owned or controlled media channels.

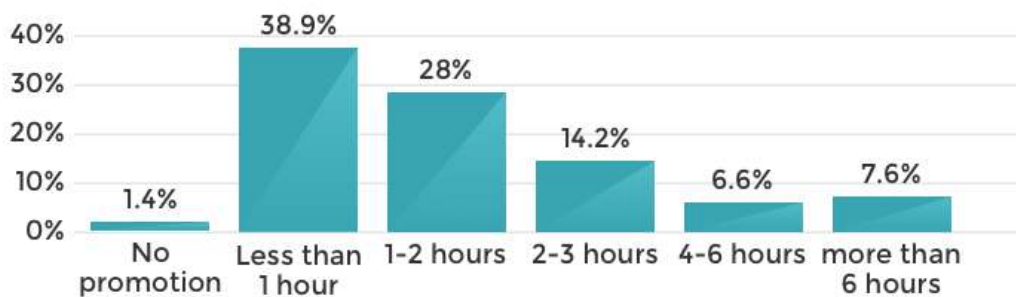
The good news about content promotion is that it's really not all that hard to do (if you've got great content). And yet, [a recent study of bloggers and marketers](#) found that finding the time to promote content is a real challenge.



Stop and take a close look at the chart above. “Finding the time to create and promote content” was named as the biggest blogging challenge for more bloggers than anything else. It beat out “creating quality content consistently,” which has historically been one of the biggest challenges in content marketing. Finding the time for content promotion even beat out getting traffic!

So if it’s hard to find the time to promote content, how much time is this content promotion taking? Not really all that much, actually. Another study found that about 39% of bloggers take less than an hour to promote an article, and 28% of them take 1-2 hours.

### How much time does it take to promote an article?



CODELESS GROWTH RAMP orbitmedia.com

Hopefully, your company has a robust content promotion system in place. But if you don’t (or even if you do), here’s a sketch of what two hours of content promotion might include for B2B content:

- **Submission to [Quuu Promote](#).** This is the companion service to Quuu, which is a content curation service. Quuu will find you relevant content to share into your social media feeds. Quuu Promote is a way to get your content included in the curation service. It costs \$40 for 30 days. Quuu Promote is not getting the same number of clicks that it used to, but some articles can do well. I’ve recently seen articles get anywhere from four clicks to an incredible 914 clicks.

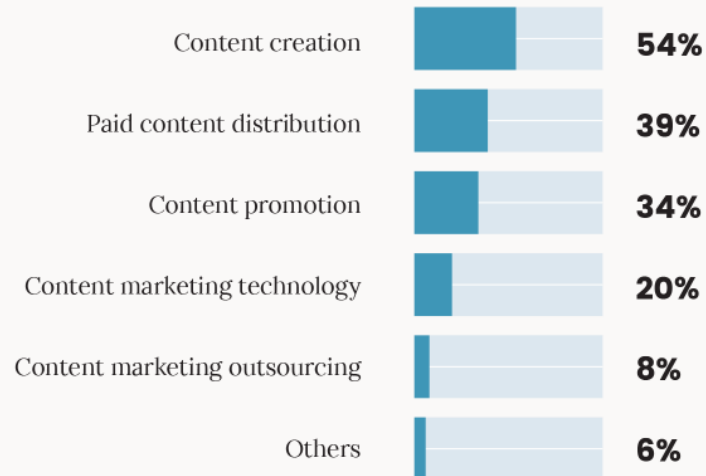
- **GrowthHackers.** Submit your content for free and people will upvote it if they like it. If your content does well, you could potentially get a lot of clicks from this network.
- **Zest.is.** Another platform where you submit your content and other members can upvote it.
- **Taboola and Outbrain.** These are pay per click native advertising platforms.
- **Republish on LinkedIn, Medium, and Business2Community.** Publish your content on your own site, wait a month or so, then publish to these sites.
- **Submit your content to relevant Facebook groups.** Only do this according to the terms of each group. And, if you want to increase your chances of engagement, actually participate in these groups as well.
- **Reach out via Twitter DM to 20-30 people who have shared similar content.** A tool like BuzzSumo makes it easy to find who's shared similar content.
- **Reach out to anyone or any company mentioned in your content.** In fact, go a step further and deliberately mention at least ten people or companies who you can reach out to after publication.
- **Try services like Gnow.it, DrumUp, Triberr, Viral Content Bee, and CoPromote.**

There's evidence that some B2B content marketers will be investing in more content promotion in the coming year. Regalix's 2019 State of B2B Content Marketing survey found that 34% of the marketers they surveyed have increased their spending in content promotion over the last 12 months.

Content promotion, incredibly, actually beat out content marketing technology in terms of what B2B marketers have been investing in recently.



## In which areas have you increased spend over the last 12 months?



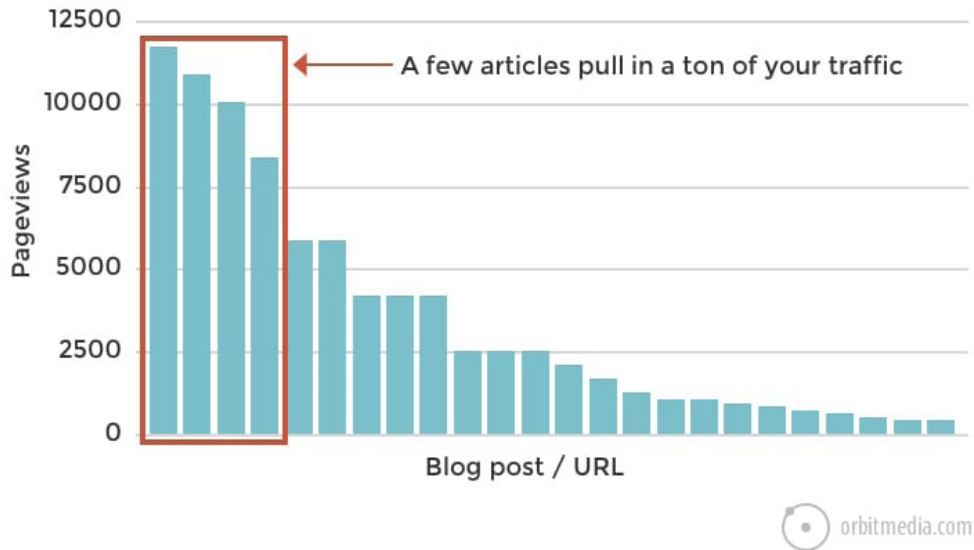
**regalix** State of B2B Content Marketing 2019 – Strategy and Maturity  
<https://www.regalix.com/insights/state-of-b2b-content-marketing-2019-strategy-and-maturity>

## 4 Republish content.

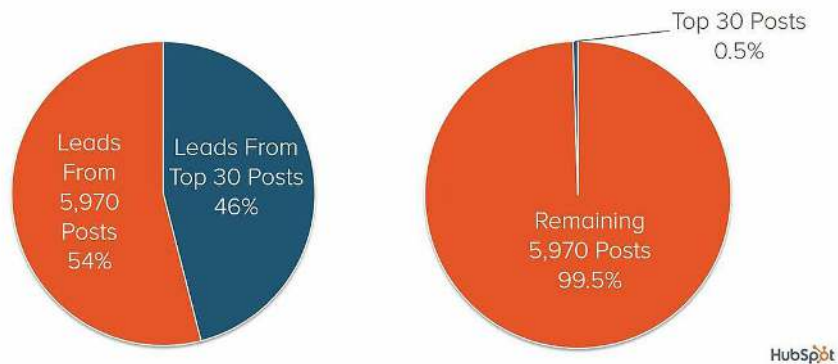
How many pieces of content do you already have? How much of it is doing really well for you?

If your website is like most, a handful of content assets will be driving the bulk of your results, much like [this chart](#) illustrates:

## Monthly pageviews for the top 50 blog posts



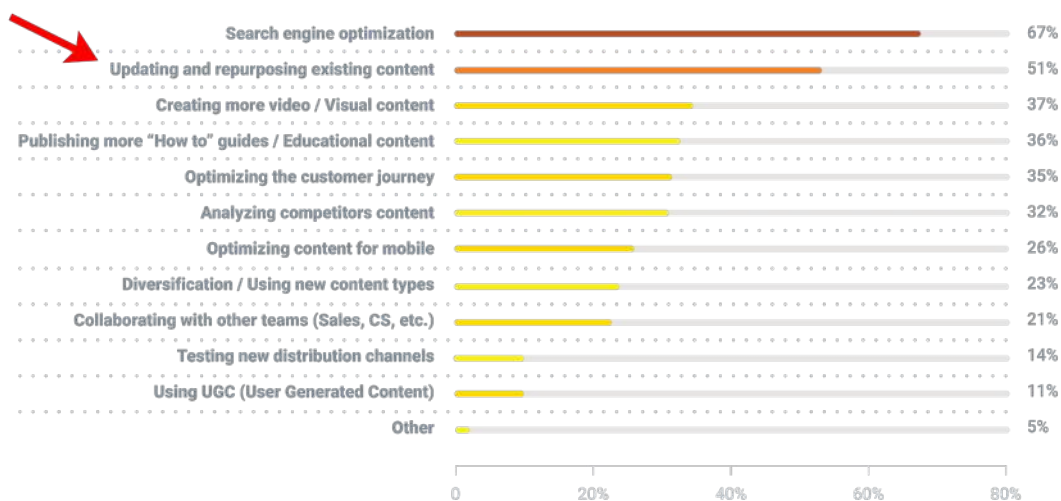
Or maybe your situation is even more severe, like HubSpot's was. They discovered that they were getting almost half of all their leads from just 30 posts. This is after they'd been publishing 300 new blog posts every month, accruing over 6,000 posts on their blog since its launch.



Your own site's handful of top-performing content should be getting extra attention. If it hasn't been updated in a year, or even in six months, make updating it and republishing it a bigger priority than finding new content to publish.

A major 2019 content marketing [study from SEMRush](#) found that republishing is one of the most effective content marketing tactics right now.

#### WHAT ARE THE MOST EFFICIENT CONTENT MARKETING TACTICS IMPLEMENTED BY YOUR TEAM IN 2019?



from SEMRush's *The State of Content Marketing 2019 Global Report*, <https://www.semrush.com/lp/state-of-content-marketing/>

To get started with republishing, pick which pieces of content you want to update. The ideal content will be

- Driving traffic, leads, or sales (ie, driving results, not vanity metrics)
- Over a year old
- Have good opportunities for being expanded, updated, and just generally improved.

Just don't try to update all of your old content. Start with your top 5-10% best-performing content assets, then work down from there. You may want to stop when you're through optimizing your top 30% best-performing content.

## 5 Prune underperforming content.

We've mentioned that more is not always better.

Well, if the "more" on your website is content that's old, thin, or underperforming, you might actually be better off without it. Because having weak content really does hurt your site. And pruning weak content can do some really great things.

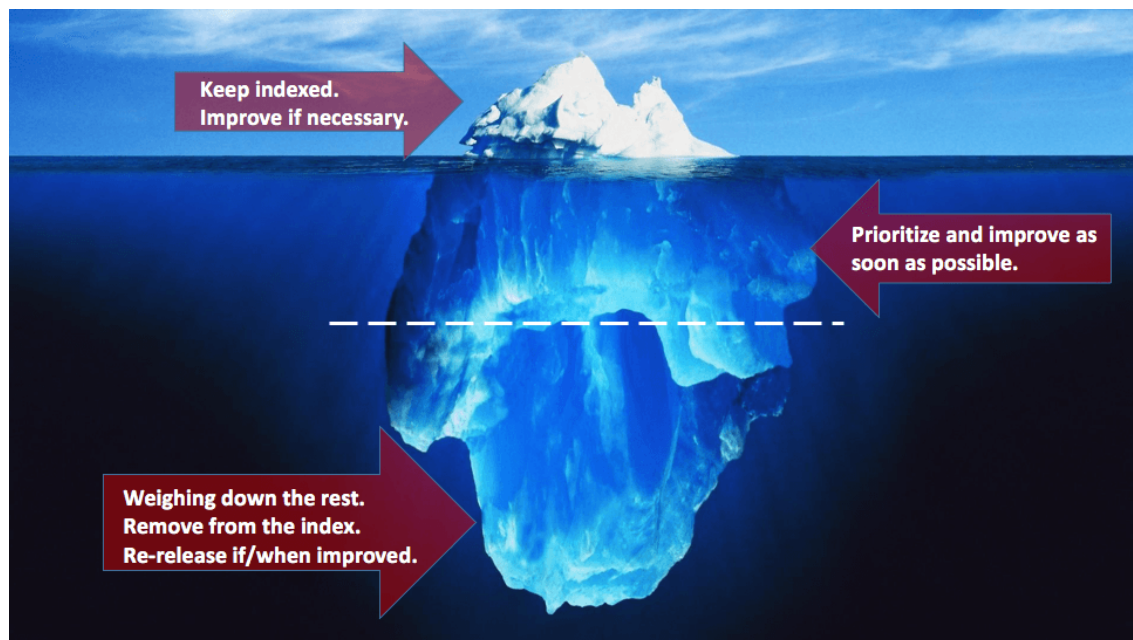
Like increase your organic search traffic by [30-50%](#).

Before you start deleting pages, there are a few critical things to know about content pruning:

- **Do NOT start pruning pages until you've done a content audit.**  
Content audits don't have to take a month to do. Even a simple, one-day content audit will give you enough information to know which pages to prune.
- **Pruning ≠ deleting.**  
You won't be deleting pages with content pruning. You're just going to de-index them. Deindexing is smart because you might also want to come back to some of your pages later on and update them. And de-indexing also lets you screen out pages you actually need, but that don't have any SEO value. Like your email sign-up thank you page, for example.
- **Content pruning lets you focus on your most critical content.**  
If you've been publishing content on a regular basis for years on end, you may have 1,000 or more pages of content. If you're a one-person marketing "team," managing a 1,000-page site is a little daunting, to say the least. Well-researched content pruning can allow you to identify, say, the bottom third of your content. If this weak content is only pulling your site down, and it isn't really worth the time investment to refurbish, then de-indexing this weak content can give back some very

precious time. The pages aren't gone, but you now have much more energy to put into optimizing pages that are worth your focus

- **Content pruning will help your website's overall SEO profile.** By removing your site's weakest pages, your website's overall profile will improve significantly. This graphic explains why:



Proceed carefully with content pruning – there are no guarantees with anything when it comes to SEO. But I heartily encourage you to consider de-indexing the lowest performing 10-15% of your content.

Content pruning and republishing are more evidence that it is possible to have enough content. In fact, it's not just possible to have enough content – it's inevitable. There comes a point when there's only so much content a business can effectively manage. Any extra content doesn't just sit there – it can drag your site's rankings down. It distracts you from higher-value work.

## 6 Content curation

The last tactic of minimum viable content is content curation. As you probably know, “content curation” is curating other people’s content – finding excellent content other people have created and organizing and adding context to that content in a way that makes it more meaningful than it would have been

Content curation has been around for a while. It’s especially helpful for social media content, because your social media accounts will actually be more interesting if you share other people’s content at least half the time.

But that’s only the beginning of what can be done with curated content. There’s an emerging trend in B2B newsletters to have a section of curated content.

Here’s the curated section of AdAge’s newsletter:

### What else we’re reading

**Gucci to step up diversity hiring after ‘blackface’ uproar**

by Alexandra Olson, Associated Press News

**YouTube unleashed a conspiracy theory boom. Can it be contained?**

by By Kevin Roose, The New York Times

**Pinterest blocks vaccination searches in move to control the conversation**

by Robert McMillan and Daniela Hernandez, The Wall Street Journal

**Facebook decided which users are interested in Nazis —and let advertisers target them directly**

by Sam Dean, Los Angeles Times

**Apple, Goldman Sachs team up on credit card paired with iPhone**

by Tripp Mickle, Liz Hoffman and Peter Rudegeair, The Wall Street Journal

And a curated section from the B2B martech company Yotpo's newsletter:

---

## 5. In Case You Missed It

This past week has been a big one for eCommerce trends and data. Don't miss these three key reports:


- [Mary Meeker's Internet Trends Report](#) (cheat sheet: check out slides 16-38)
- [Shopify's State of Commerce Report](#)
- [Glossy's Report on The New Retail Model](#)

There are entire newsletters made up of curated content. Maria Popova's Brain Pickings is one of the best known, but there are thousands of other examples. There are also quite a few apps and tools that make it easy to curate a newsletter yourself.

Content curation can also be used in blogs, and it's a clever way to expand the exposure your content will get. Anytime you're quoting another source, using an image, or mentioning someone else's work, you're curating. And so most of the blog posts around are at least partially curated.

After publication, if you reach out to anyone whose content you've included in your post (or in your ebook, or in your video, etc), they are likely to share your with their audience as well.

This is always what's made blogs and the best thinkers online interesting – they weave information cherry-picked from other sources into what they're talking about. This adds depth to what they're saying. It adds proof. It shows they're connected to what's going on.



Content curation is even more valuable now, when content promotion has become more essential. Embedding references to other people's content in your own content gives you a ready-made list of people who are extra-likely to promote your content once it's published.



# It's possible to have enough content

Content is not an end unto itself. It was supposed to have a purpose.

The purpose of all this content – the point of content marketing – was to drive revenue by building an audience.

Having an audience allowed you built an affinity with them. So when they were eventually ready to buy from you, or had a need to buy from you, your company would be the most familiar and trusted option. Your earned audience would buy from you without hesitation, because people buy from companies they know, like, and trust.

This strategy still works. But you don't need an unlimited amount of content to do it.

## It's possible to have enough content.

Publishing content is not one of most businesses' core competencies. That doesn't mean they shouldn't do content marketing, but perhaps they should not just keep publishing new content indefinitely.

This is especially true if they have a small team of content marketers. There's only so much content one to three people can reasonably manage.

Perhaps businesses should instead define what would be enough content to do what they need to do.

If you:

- pick topics that are mostly “evergreen”
- thoroughly answer your audience's questions
- target your content directly to the people most likely to buy
- and develop a body of content for your existing customers

... what more content does your company really need?

This is a new idea in content marketing: That there actually can come a time when you do not have to keep churning out a brand new piece of content every week or even every month, much less every day.

And yet, in study after study after study, when content marketers are asked if they will be creating more content in the next year, the vast majority of them say yes.

It's time to stop this. It's time to make better use of the content we already have.

## So What is “Enough” Content?

The specific number of content assets required to attract, convert, and retain customers will vary from business to business. And in a few moments, I'll show you how to figure out what might be enough content for your business.

But here's an example of a dramatically reduced content inventory that is enough for a solo professional, a small agency, or a bootstrapped SaaS startup to get by on.

If they wanted to stay in touch with their potential and current customers, and they aren't a content creation machine or don't want to embrace the business-as-publisher model, they might be able to do just fine with content marketing with...

- 26 blog posts
- 3 ebooks/lead magnets/white papers
- 24 emails with 200-300 words of unique copy
- 156 social media posts
- One piece of interactive content, like a quiz, calculator, or an assessment

### **Here's what that amount of content can achieve:**

- Enough content to publish (or republish) a blog post every two weeks. This keeps your blog current and lets you build better and better content over the years. You improve each content piece every year when you "refurbish it" and republish it.
- A new piece of content to announce to your email list every two weeks, which is enough to keep them engaged enough, but definitely not so often that they're likely to complain about getting too many emails from you.
- A short piece of 200-300 words of unique, can't-get-anywhere-else content for your email updates, so they're more valuable to your readers.
- Enough social media posts to post three times a week all year long.

- The three opt-ins/lead magnets allow you to convert website visitors into email subscribers. These also help you move people through “the buyer’s journey,” aka your sales funnel so other pieces of your content can nurture them toward becoming customers.
- The three opt-ins allow you to offer a reasonably relevant “content” upgrade at the close of every blog post. This makes all your other content marketing work turn a better profit. It puts a revenue driver behind any content promotion or distribution you’ll do, including your social media and SEO work.
- The piece of interactive content gives your website a link magnet to attract inbound links with. And if you offer an enhanced version of the interactive content, you can also use it to build your email list.
- Done correctly, the piece of interactive content will also let you learn more about your audience and potential customers. Over time, your interactive tool can gather a body of data about your audience that can be used as original research, which you can use in your other content assets to make it more unique and valuable.

So does this give you a vast content library that you can use to spread content all over the web with?

No. And that may be good news.

Given that nearly half of all B2B content marketing “teams” are actually **one person**, having less to manage can be a good thing.

## B2B Organizations' Content Marketing Team Size (Full-Time/Dedicated to Content Marketing)

	All Respondents	Small (1-99 Employees)	Medium (100-999 Employees)	Large (1,000+ Employees)
11+	4%	0%	3%	12%
6-10	5%	2%	4%	14%
2-5	35%	25%	40%	49%
1	24%	29%	27%	13%
0 (no one is full-time, dedicated)	32%	44%	26%	12%

Base: B2B content marketers.  
2020 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs  
[https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2020\\_B2B\\_Research\\_Final.pdf](https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2020_B2B_Research_Final.pdf)

Having less content to manage will give over-worked content teams more time to do some of the best practices they've been wanting and needing to do, but haven't been able to do because they've been slaves to their publishing schedules.

# Strategic content

There is one thing... these 26 blog posts you're going to have? They have to be great. "Great" as in high-quality. "Great" as in high-value for your readers. "Great" as in generating high returns for you.

You can have minimum viable content, but that content will have to perform. It will have to be:

- Tailored to the buyer personas you're targeting
- Tailored to different phases of the buyer's journey
- Optimized for the search engines
- Easy for your audience to read and useful for them

In other words, it will have to be strategic. Minimum viable content won't work with "random acts of content."

Honestly, 26 blog posts may not be enough for you. Or it might even be too many. Every business is different. The point is that if you create your content strategically it is possible to have enough content. How much content is "enough" will depend on how you answer these questions:

- How much new business do you want from your content?
- How many personas do you need to create content for?
- How many phases of the buyer's journey do each of those personas need content for?
- How much retention business do you want from your content?

Here's how to answer each of these questions for yourself.

# How much new business do you want from your content?

We'd all like massive amounts of new business, of course.


But most mature businesses and realistic marketers have targets. Just like salespeople have quotas, marketers have an idea of how much new business we're aiming for. For example, a solo agency owner will have a radically different new business goal than, say, a company like Moz will have.

If Moz needs to keep publishing every day to hit their new business targets, that's great. The solo agency owner need not feel compelled to publish every day just because Moz does. The agency owner does not have the publishing capacity that Moz has.

So when I ask "how much business do you want from your content," I expect you to be realistic – both about how much content you can generate and how much business that content can generate. We don't have an unlimited capacity to create content, just as we don't have unlimited time or money. Our content plans have to fit into what's possible. It may not be possible for your company to publish more than once or twice a month.

Let's get back to the example of the solo agency owner. If she was committed to publishing a solid, promotion-worthy blog post every two weeks, and she knew certain basic things about her business and her audience, she could hit a realistic new business target with her content.

Let's say she publishes every two weeks. This is enough time to get quotes from influencers, to write a 2,000 word post, and to repurpose it a couple of ways.



Thanks to this work, her blog post gets about 500 social media shares and generates about 150 clicks to her website within the first month of publication. Because she has optimized it well and will continue to promote it, she can expect another 500 shares and 300 clicks from it over the course of the next year as it gets indexed by the search engines.

Her lead magnet or other conversion opt-ins on her site convert 15% of her website visitors into subscribers. So, for her one blog post, she earns 45 new email subscribers in the first month after publication. Historically, over the course of one year, she tends to get at least one client from every 45 subscribers.

She has found that she gets more clients from her content marketing work than she would get from simply buying advertising, though she does also use advertising to amplify the content that converts best for her.

Every time she publishes a new piece of content, she also notifies her existing and past clients about the content. This tends to spur at least one of them into hiring her for at least a small project.

So for every piece of content she publishes (or republishes) she gets about 1.5 new projects. Each new piece of content also fleshes out the sequence of content she uses to nurture email subscribers into clients, and so each piece of content also contributes to 1-2 new projects every year.

She spends six hours creating her blog post, 2.5 hours promoting it and 1.5 hours creating the repurposed elements of it. For those ten hours of work, she earns about 3 new projects per year.

Or, for about every 3.3 hours of content marketing, she lands a new project.



This is a good deal for her, and preferable to the return she would have gotten for advertising or networking.

She can manage five hours a week of content marketing work. Those five hours make up about 10-15% of her working hours.

## How many personas do you need to create content for?

This is much easier to answer.

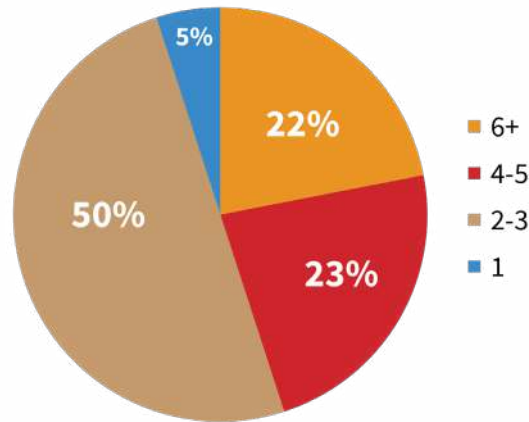
If you don't use personas in your marketing, you should. It helps you create content customized to people's needs. And the more your content addresses the needs of your audience, the more trustworthy and valuable it becomes.

It's smart to limit personas as much as you can, while still using enough of them to have an impact. Maybe that's only two personas for your company.

Maybe it's three, or four, or even five. Just be careful, because while personas are important and helpful, the more you have, the more content you'll need.

Here's how many different audiences or personas other B2B marketers create content for:

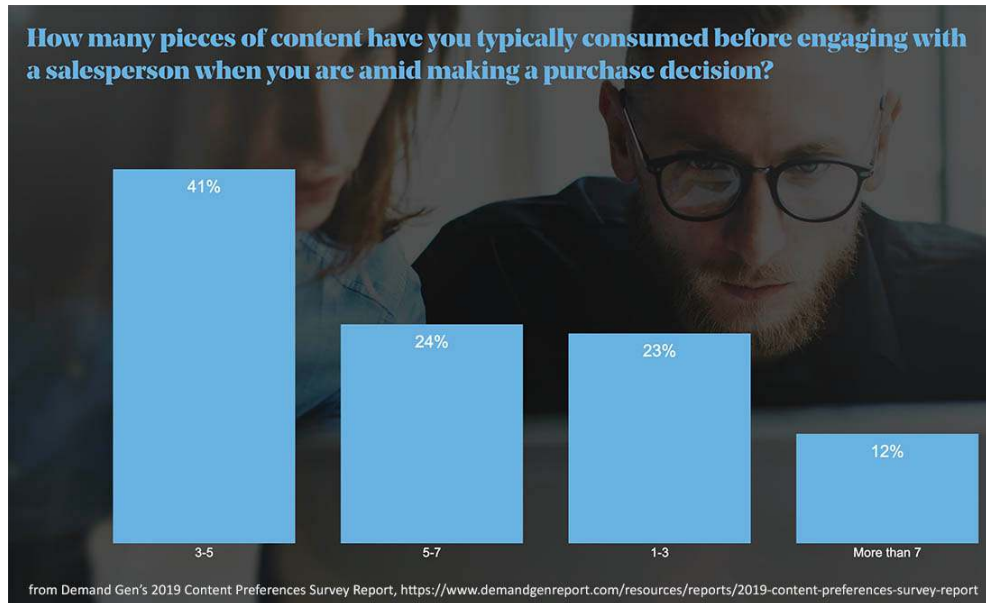
## Number of Different Audiences B2B Marketers Create Content For



Base: B2B content marketers; aided list.  
2020 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs  
[https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2020\\_B2B\\_Research\\_Final.pdf](https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2020_B2B_Research_Final.pdf)

## How many phases of the buyer's journey do each of those personas need content for?

How many "touches" does your average first-time visitor require before they become a customer. According to research from DemandGen, the average is about five touches.



While five touches may work for larger content teams, if you haven't been managing your content according to different phases of the buyer's journey, start with these four phases:

- Top of funnel (TOFU)
- Middle of funnel (MOFU)
- Bottom of funnel (BOFU)
- Retention (RETN)

You could get much more granular than that, but the headaches and complexity it may cause won't be worth the benefits. Four phases of the buyer's journey is plenty.

But please, do plan your content for different phases of the buyer's journey. Marketers who do this are three times more likely to be successful.

	Most Successful	All Respondents	Least Successful
<i>Always/frequently:</i>			
Crafts content based on specific stages of the customer journey	74%	48%	26%

2020 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

# How To Answer “How Much Is Enough Content?”

Once you know how often you want to publish to stay in touch with your audience, how many personas you want to tailor content for, and how many touches it will take to convert people from never-heard-of-you to customers, you’ll know the first half of how much content is “enough.”

Let’s say you have three buyer personas and each one requires about four touches to become a customer and stay a customer. And you want to be able to send customized content to each persona at least once a month.

That would be

$3 \text{ personas} \times 4 \text{ touches} \times 12 \text{ touches a year} = 180 \text{ pieces of content}$

That’s a lot of content, but it’s not much more content than many marketers have already.

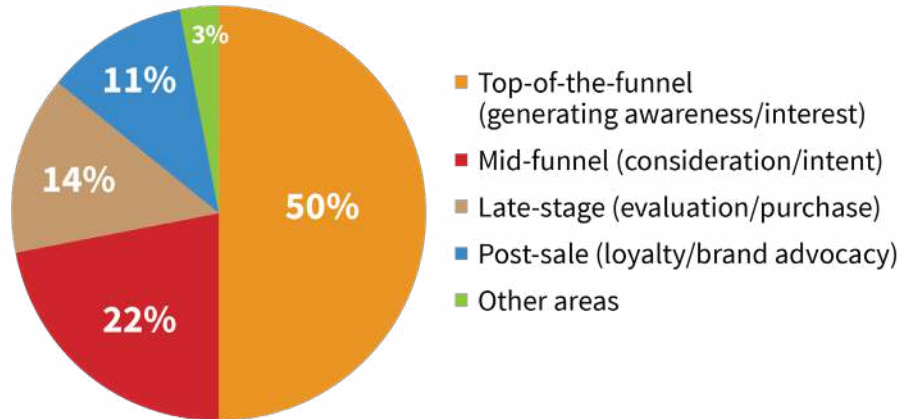
But unfortunately, it’s not enough content. Because we still have another question to answer.

## How much retention business do you want from your content?

Retention marketing is often where companies finally see a profit. They may actually acquire customers at nearly break even. It’s all the business after the first sale that really drives the business.

Despite how important retention is, few marketers create content for after the first sale. Only 11% of B2B content is designed to retain existing customers.

## Percentage of Total Content B2B Marketers Created for Content Marketing Purposes in Last 12 Months



Base: B2B content marketers who answered the question. Percentages were required to equal 100%.  
2020 B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs  
[https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2020\\_B2B\\_Research\\_Final.pdf](https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2020_B2B_Research_Final.pdf)

At least 20% of the content you have should be for retention. So if you had four touches for someone to become a customer, then add one more for retaining them. Which brings our content tally to:

**3 personas x 5 phases of the buyer's journey x 26 touches a year = 390 pieces of content**

Clearly, that's a lot more content than just 26 blog posts. That's a full-scale content marketing operation - a complete content path for three totally different types of buyers, publishing every two weeks, with a piece of content designed for each phase of their buyer's journey, plus a hearty portion of additional content for once they're a customer. But even this, which is more dialed in than about 97% of content operations, has a limit to how much content it needs.

Even a "deluxe" content marketing program doesn't need unlimited content.

## A Word About Content Audits

### How much existing content do you already have that meets these needs?

Even if you do need 400 pieces of content to do what you need to do, the good news is you may already have most of that content. You just need to find it.

This will require a content inventory. You'll need to round up every piece of content you have and figure out which persona it's for and which phase of the buyer's journey it belongs to.

Once you've got your content inventoried, you'll need to review each piece's performance and access if it fits into your new minimum viable content strategy.

This whole process, of course, is better known as a content audit.

Most content marketers don't do as many content audits as they should. And even a few years ago, [37%](#) of content marketers admitted they had never done a content audit.

Content audits can take a month or more, but they don't have to. Even a simple assessment of your existing content is enough to manage your content more effectively.

It's much better to do a simple, cover-the-bases content audit every six months or so than to wait until you have enough time to do a full-scale, month-long content audit. That free month may never come, especially if you're on a tiny content marketing team.

# It's time to get off the content creation hamster wheel.

Our problem isn't that we don't have enough content. It's that we aren't managing the content we do have well enough.

So instead of endlessly pouring resources into creating more and more and more new content, let's use what we've already got. Let's put more work into promoting our existing content; into updating it and repurposing it. Let's tailor it for what our audience wants to read as they progress from website visitor to long-term customer.

Let's start thinking about how we can get more results from less content.

CONTENT  
WONK