

Getting Started: Using Research to Inform Content Marketing



Content is an essential part of an always-on marketing strategy. To this end, you have invested in creating and executing on a content plan covering all of the buyers journey from awareness and education to consideration and decision-making resulting in a robust library of high-quality blogs, infographics, on-demand webinars, podcasts, videos, white papers and more.

With this in place, you are now pouring over the various metrics from your CRM platform to Google analytics. How many opens does that nurturing email campaign achieve? How many click-throughs? How many page views did that blog obtain? How long did people stay on the page? Where did they go next? What, if any, actions were taken as a result of viewing the content?

This data provides valuable indicators of how content is performing. You may find that some pieces are performing exceptionally well in terms of clicks or time on page, while others barely attracted any attention. The problem is - you don't know why. You don't know why your content is engaging to your audience. Whether they find it useful or valuable in helping them solve a problem, narrow down a solution or learn more about your product.

The problem is - you don't know why. You don't know why your content is engaging to your audience. Whether they find it useful or valuable in helping them solve a problem, narrow down a solution or learn more about your product.

Ask them!



To be a strategic partner to your customers, you need to know what they are struggling with when trying to make a purchase decision and what content would help them navigate their journey. This means understanding their context and learning what's important – and what's not – to them. Asking questions through research helps identify pain points and suggest how they can be addressed, where customers are getting value and where there are gaps, and even just keeping a pulse on an ever-changing landscape.

Asking questions through research helps identify pain points and suggest how they can be addressed, where customers are getting value and where there are gaps, and even just keeping a pulse on an ever-changing landscape.

It also helps identify their preferred content format. Do they prefer to read a short blog or dive into a long white paper? Watch a video, listen to a podcast or view an infographic?

Example: new pet ownership.

At the time of adoption, it may feel as simple as driving to a shelter to choose a dog, cat or rabbit to become part of their family but once home, they find they've a lot to navigate as a new pet owner. This ranges from the type of food (wet, dry food or both), sleeping and hygiene arrangements to vaccinations, pet insurance, toys and beyond. Perhaps everything is easily sorted but they are stuck on food choices or pet insurance options.

Whatever the challenge, the new owner is hungry for information from reliable sources. It is a perfect time for a brand to become a strategic partner and guide them through the exciting new time. Conducting research to thoroughly understand their needs at the different stages of their journey, enables you to provide information-rich content in the most effective formats.

The benefits of this?

Recent research found that over [80% of people](#) make a purchase as a result of consuming content from the brand, so there is clear value for businesses. As a strategic partner, you build trust with prospective customers, they are more likely to buy your product or services, be loyal and become an advocate for the brand.

Four ways to ask



1. Surveys

Surveys are a flexible, quick way to get an understanding of what your audience really wants from your content. They are useful at whatever stage you are in but when first starting out, they are particularly helpful to get a sense of the landscape. For example:

- What type of information do they seek?
- How do they find it?
- Do they have 'go to' sources or channels that they frequent?
- What's their format preference (blogs, podcasts, video, infographics)?
- How often (daily, weekly, monthly) do they seek out this content?
- How long do they spend looking at content?

Be sure to keep your surveys short and focused, explaining why you are asking and, if appropriate, offer to share results as a thank you for participation. You may also consider asking if survey participants are open to joining in additional research, such as online interviews/focus groups and mobile diaries.



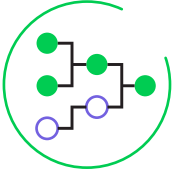
2. Mobile Diaries

As you get to know your audience better, a more in-depth exploration into their daily routines and uses of different channels for different needs is valuable. This can be done through a mobile diary, asking participants to document their content consumption over the course of a few days. Here you'll learn a lot of specifics about them; their routines, preferences and, importantly, context. As this is more time intensive, you'll only do this with a small group of people, but it provides rich texture to the information gathered in your initial survey exploring the landscape.



3. Webcam interviews and online focus groups

Webcam interviews and online focus groups are another good way to obtain richer information about their preferences. It is also well suited for content topic ideation. You may think you know what they are interested in, but it's far better to ask people directly!



4. Usability Testing

Using research to generate content on topics and in formats that you know will resonate is an important step, but research can still take you further. Once you've created those missing data sheets and information check lists, it can be very worthwhile to run some quick usability testing to confirm the information is on the mark and easily understandable.

It is also critical that users are able to find the content that they are looking for on your site, and usability testing is an effective way to understand what is working, what isn't, and identify room for optimization.

Keep Asking

It is important to ask and keep asking your customers questions across the full spectrum of topics. Asking about their content needs isn't necessarily top of mind when it comes to research but it is a powerful way to learn how to help them and in turn, deliver even better more valuable customer experiences. From your side, it means the ability to become a trusted advisor while promoting awareness of your products and services and in the long run cultivating loyalty and advocacy. It feels like a win-win situation.

Asking about their content needs isn't necessarily top of mind when it comes to research but it is a powerful way to learn how to help them and in turn, deliver even better more valuable customer experiences.

From your side, it means the ability to become a trusted advisor while promoting awareness of your products and services and in the long run cultivating loyalty and advocacy. It feels like a win-win situation.

Read how the UK [Alzheimer's Society](#) used FocusVision Decipher to gather feedback from caregivers to create better information for the people that they support.



**To learn more about FocusVision
research solutions:**

visit focusvision.com or
email us at [focusvision.com/contact](mailto:info@focusvision.com)