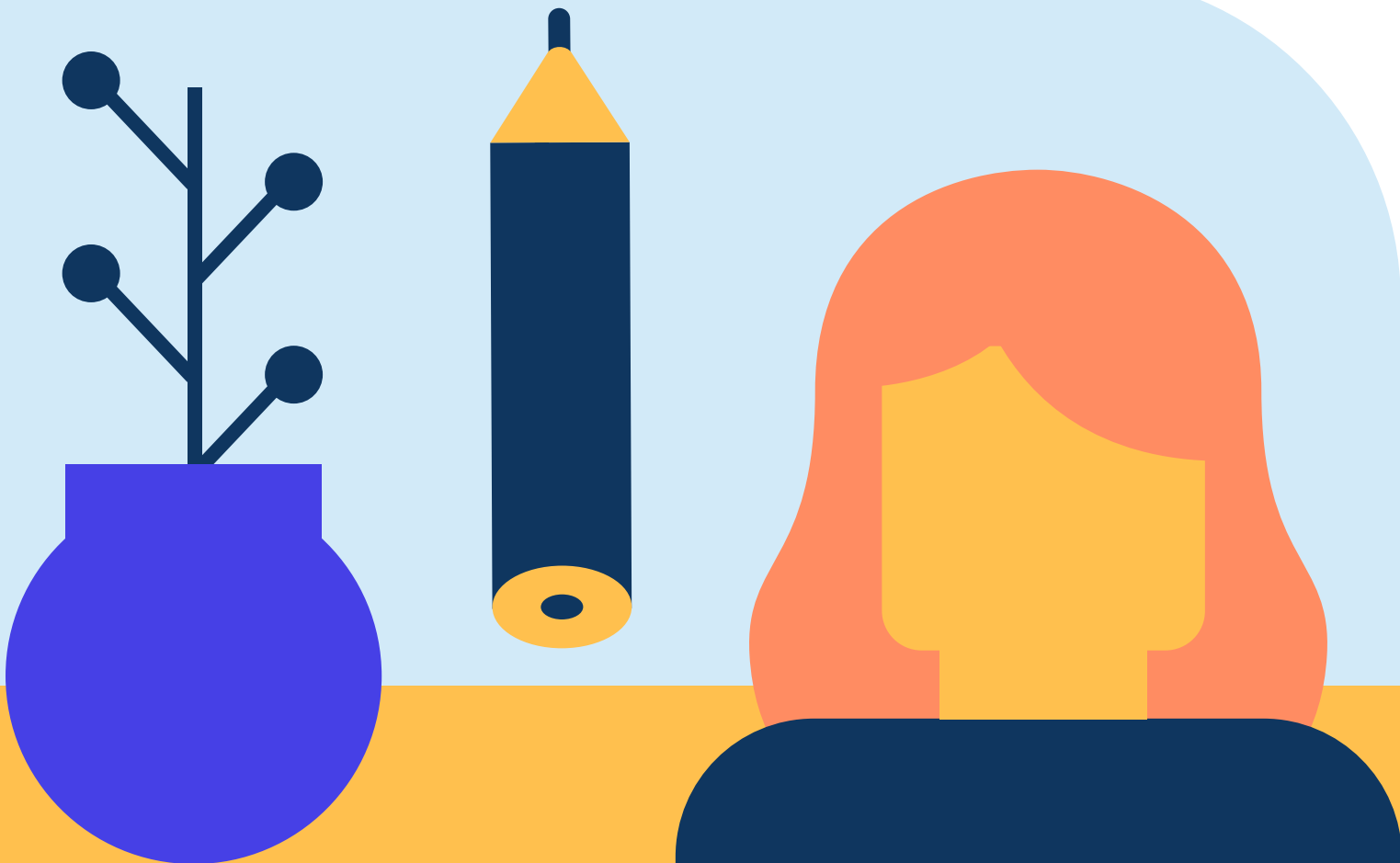
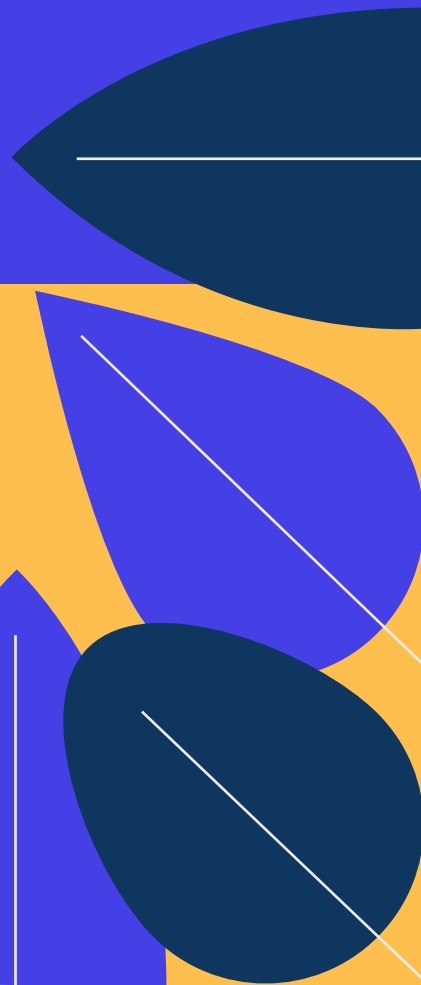
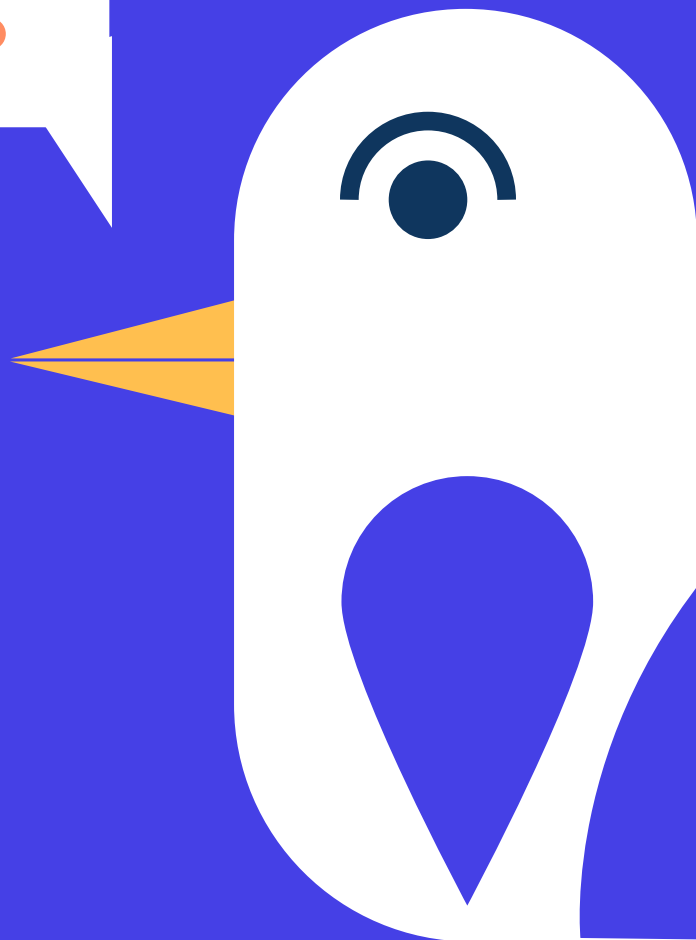
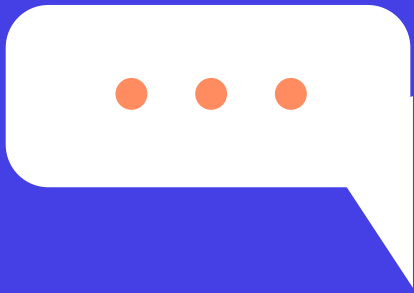


What does a copywriter do?

The B2B content marketing guide [2019]



What does a copywriter do,
and everything you need to know
about content marketing for
aspiring B2B businesses.



Content is the answer to a question, the key to a puzzle, the information station on the road to progress. More than this, content is the backbone of inbound marketing for the B2B world.

‘Okay’, I hear you say, ‘But why is content so important? And why should anyone pay a copywriter to write it?’

Put simply, people and businesses use content to **educate and entertain themselves, and to connect with products and services**. The people responsible for this content are likely to be marketing copywriters, a.k.a. those mysterious types who write the internet. It’s no small task, trust us.

Let’s help everyone find what they need, shall we?

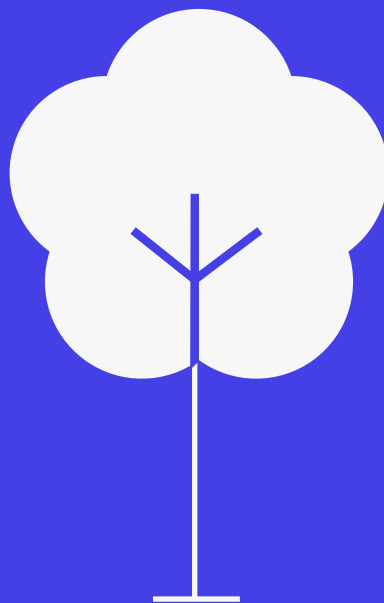
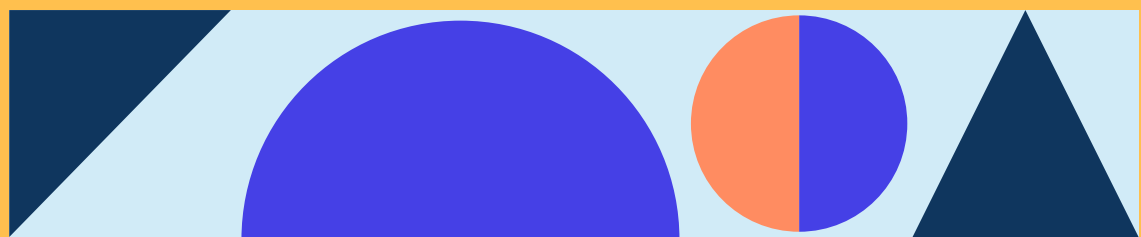
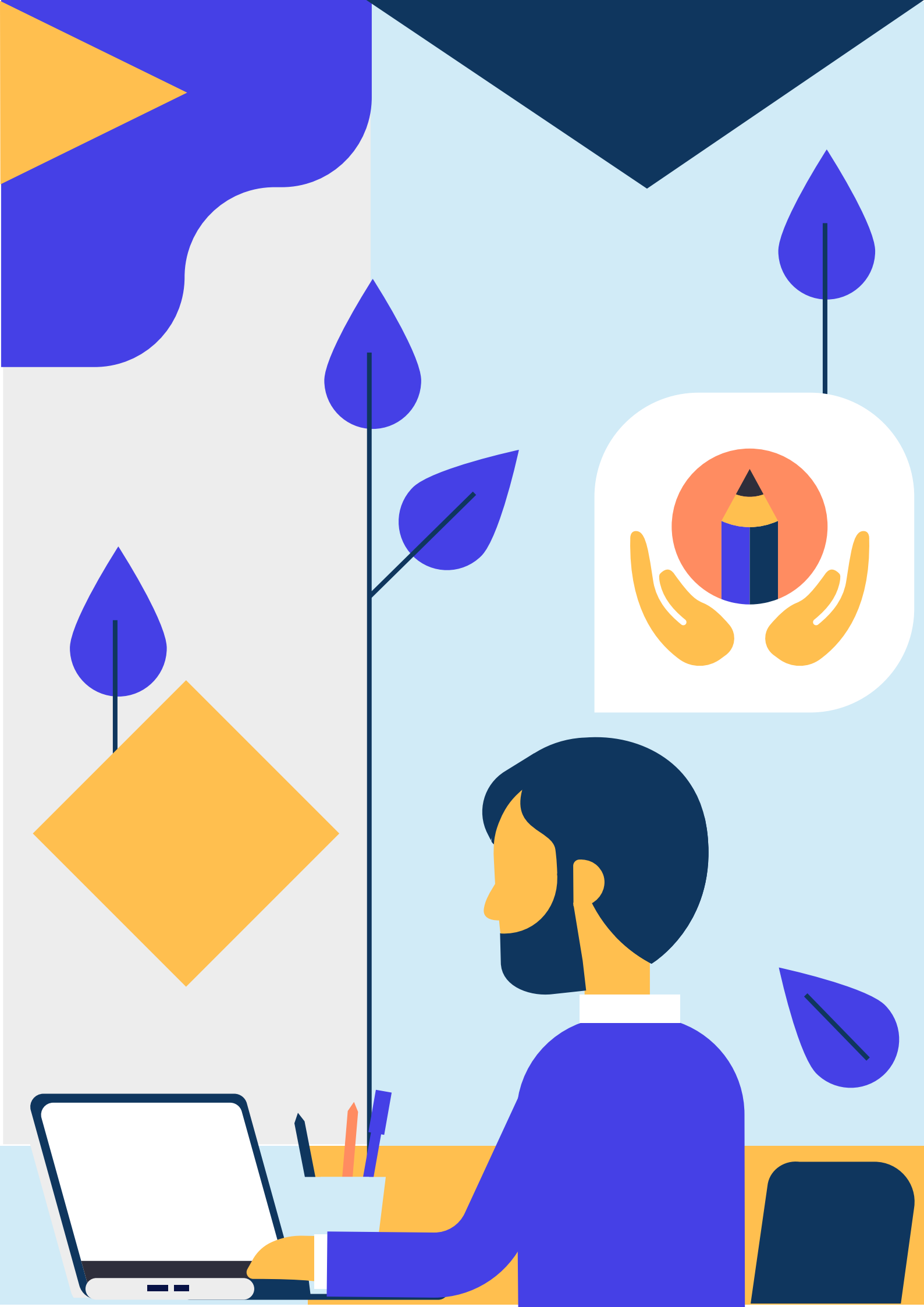




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How we work: what does a copywriter do?

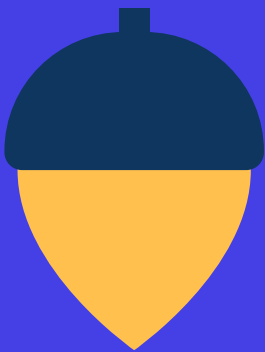
Definition of a copywriter:

A copywriter is someone who writes for the internet. They create informative content for businesses that is designed to guide the reader's own research.

There we go. Sorted. Or is it...



To those of us in the game, the following exchange will be all too familiar:



- So, what do you do?

- Oh, I'm a marketing copywriter. For example, I write for B2B tech companies.

- Oh wow, great.

...Twenty minutes after the conversation has moved on...

*- Sorry, can I just ask - I mean, what is it that you actually do?
I mean what does your job actually involve?*

Let's start with a little catharsis

This guide is for all sorts of people. It's for those totally out of the know; it's for those looking to get into the know; and it's for those in the marketing profession who think they know, but probably make quite a few false assumptions. It's content 101. It's copywriting in a nutshell. It's for B2B businesses and copywriters and marketers and people who staggered onto this page somehow, somehow. Welcome.



(This first chapter of the guide is also for the copywriters in [Team Articulate](#), because we all shed a little internal tear every time the above exchange takes place.)

Misconceptions and misnomers

First thing's first, let's address a few misconceptions:

- Not all copywriters are advertising copywriters. This in itself causes some confusion, as the latter is the more famous (especially after the phenomenon that was [Mad Men](#)).
- Medical copywriters have their own special niche, which we don't pretend to know about or comment on here. Technical copywriting can (often) also be put in this box.
- Copywriting has **nothing to do** with copyright law.

Ironically, one of the big problems in communicating what copywriters do is a lack of clarity around the definition of the word itself. Turns out, like a doctor that smokes, copywriters aren't very good at communicating the nuances of their role.





[Jesse Forrest](#), for example, distinguishes between copywriters, who write to get people to take an action, and content writers, who write to inform. But who's ever heard of a content writer? Here at Articulate [we do both of those things](#), so are we just plain old 'writers'?

No. Because the minute you say 'I'm a writer' people think of novels, poems and perhaps even journalistic articles. It's a linguistic minefield.

We rather like [Iain Broome's](#) answer:

To be a copywriter is beyond definition, but it's fair to say that one thing binds us together: we all work with words on a daily basis.



So, what DOES a copywriter do?



[Warning: reality may differ from advertised image]

Well, to name a few things, we:

- Write (obviously)
- Research
- [Interview](#)
- Edit
- [Proofread](#)
- Manage projects
- Source images
- Plan and implement marketing campaigns
- Measure the wider impact of our work



But, there can be a whole lot more to a marketing copywriter's role, such as SEO strategising, social media planning and even making videos (we do a lot at [Articulate Marketing](#)). A marketing copywriter is a sort of dual role. **A copywriter creates content; a marketer takes content and uses it as a tool** to generate site traffic, and, hopefully, leads. [Leads](#), of course, meaning potential customers who have provided some of their information to the business, such as an email address.

What's important to understand is that, while words are the main output of a copywriter, writing isn't necessarily what we spend most of our time doing. We have to do a lot of research and thinking, tweaking and formatting, and a bunch of other seemingly peripheral tasks. And, a marketing copywriter will do a whole lot more on top of that.

In fact, we often say here at Articulate that for a writing project you should spend [half your time researching, a third editing and only a sixth actually writing](#). Despite what some people think, copywriting is a lot more than just 'wordsmithing'.



Who do we 'copywrite' for?

Unlike fiction writers or journalists, copywriters usually write with an agenda: the [client's](#) agenda and, in turn, their customer's needs. It might be to promote a product, but it might also be to educate an audience or demonstrate expertise.

Written content is used in all sorts of ways by companies, especially with the advent of inbound marketing, which is all about talking to and about customers, rather than pushing a product or service.

This means copywriters have to be versatile, quick learners and have very little ego. [You'll rarely recognise the name of a copywriter](#) - our work usually goes out under the client's name. We also have to make edits that not only keep the client's marketing department happy, but their legal, sales and c-suite happy, too.

We copywriters care about the quality of our work, but we certainly [can't be precious about it](#).



A copywriter's voice

A copywriter will be whoever you want them to be.

What we really mean is that, while every copywriter certainly has their own voice, it is secondary to that of the client. We must adapt our writing style and tone depending on who we are speaking as and who we are speaking to.

There are certain golden writing rules that particular copywriters or agencies will try to adhere to - we have an Articulate writer's guide, for example - but if the client has their own, that comes first.

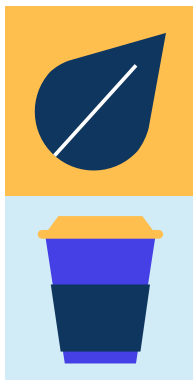


And while not every client has a [tone-of-voice](#) document, they all have a tone of voice. Write something that doesn't sound like it, and they'll soon pull you up and call for edits.

Copywriters have to ask questions and delve into existing collateral to immerse themselves in the voice of the client to write the right project.

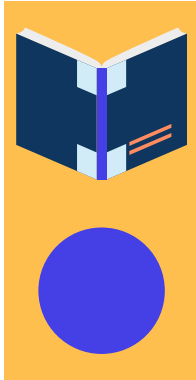
What do copywriters write?

If you want to talk nitty-gritty, the type of things we write include:

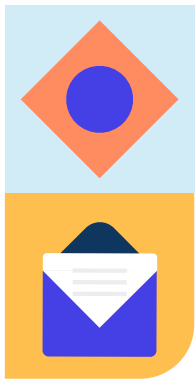


Blog posts. [These can range](#) from around 400 to 1500 words. They're usually a bit more informal or opinionated, but it varies from client to client.

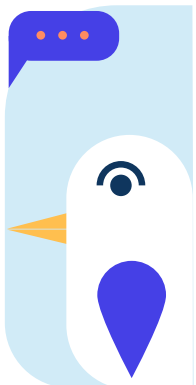




White papers. Not like the government ones though. White papers tend to be 1,500–2,500 words and are informative, educational documents that explain the origins of a problem and how it might be solved. Often that solution will be linked to what the client sells, but the majority of the white paper will be objective and useful. These tend to be gated behind a form, and are used for [lead-capture](#).

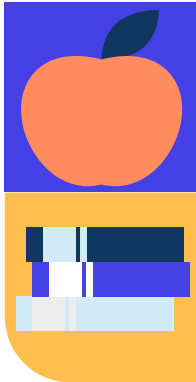


Emails. [Email](#) campaigns are there to pique interest, raise awareness and prompt an action. They have to be short, enticing and informative in order to help nurture leads into customers.



Social media posts. Those limited-character tweets and witty Facebook updates don't write themselves, you know. [Social media](#) requires copywriting, too.





Case studies. These are short articles that explain how a company helped its customers. [Case studies](#) often have a formulaic structure, but a good copywriter can find the story inside it.



Industry reports. Sometimes we have to get a bit heavy and write some hardcore reports. These are based on real research that expands upon a certain issue, industry or trend.



Website copy. Writing for the web comes with [its own set of rules](#) and guiding principles: it's a whole other skill set, but one many copywriters have up their sleeve.



Of course, aside from all that copywriting magic and mystery, we also do a bunch of job stuff that everyone else does: admin, management, emails, training, client wrangling and looking at Facebook when you're, ahem, between deadlines...



Copywriting tips for B2B companies, from professional copywriters

Whether you're a seasoned copywriter, new to the job, or someone who's just trying to improve their business's website copy to get those clients in through the door, why not take some advice from the experts? Here are ten tips to instantly improve your online content.

123

1. Prioritise information. It's widely known that humans are about as useful as goldfish: we only have a few seconds' attention span before we want to click on. So, position your main point at the beginning of your content or your audience may never get to it.



2. Highlight important information. Make key words and phrases noticeable by using bold text. Ensure your headings stand out. Emphasis **helps readers decide** if you are giving them what they want, and it **helps them scan**.





3. Remove [extra words](#). You could say: 'Our program coordinates services to create a continuum of progress that will empower small business owners.' **Better to say:** 'Our program gives power to small business owners.'



4. [Speak plainly](#) and remove jargon. You might write: 'The company has commenced a period of formal consultation on its proposals to establish two new amalgamated branches.' Consider saying: 'The company is considering the proposal for opening two combined stores.'



5. Shorten paragraphs and add white space. Learn how [writing and design work together](#). Make sure you have one paragraph per idea and a proportional balance of text and images. The [design of each page](#) deserves extra thought. You want eye-catching, [scannable content](#).





6. Give readers quality and quantity. Don't duplicate words to build up your content. Readers abandon ship if their time is being wasted. If you write an article on 'How to lay the culture foundation for digital transformation,' your article a couple weeks later on 'How to avoid culture pitfalls when implementing cloud technology' must contain **new information**.



7. Make peace with SEO. You want to stock your website and blog with great keywords for search engines. That said, you want to avoid SEO mistakes so make a strong [SEO plan](#). Make readers a priority.



8. Replace descriptions with images where you can. Say your small business offers storage solutions. Don't describe how you organise items on shelves and in boxes (that makes for pretty dull reading). Replace those words with a before and after photo of your work.





9. Check grammar again. It might seem like common sense, but it's important to check your copy again. [Misspelled words and typos](#) change the perception a customer has of your business. So do [other writing mistakes](#).

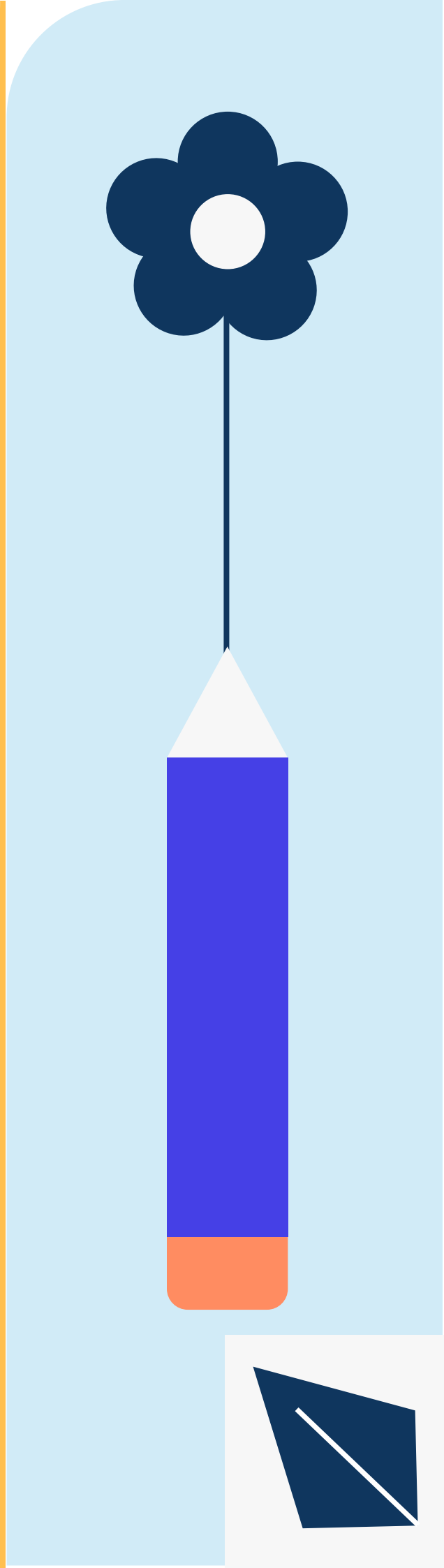


10. Make titles honest. Clickbait isn't what you want to go for. In fact, the easiest way to lose a customer's attention is to [fail to deliver on a promise](#). Make sure the content matches your title on each page.

Don't let your content be anything less than outstanding. These ten simple improvements enhance the experience of your readers. But, remember: however many clicks your page gets, what really matters is the number of people who actually stay there.

Of course, copywriting and content is part of a bigger picture, so, let's talk about inbound marketing as a whole. As a writer or as a business leader, you need to understand how content fits into the grand marketing scheme.





What is inbound marketing?

[Inbound marketing](#) is about answering questions and connecting people to the right information. It's targeted and – ideally – not annoying. Unlike outbound marketers, we're here to inform, educate, entertain, inspire and solve problems. It's not sell, sell, sell.

'Inbound content marketing is the worst form of marketing,' to misquote [Churchill](#), 'apart from all the others.' Although, of course we would say that because it's what we do at [Articulate](#).

It's not just us, though! Research shows that inbound content marketing is cost-effective. [HubSpot](#) reckons that it costs 61 percent less per lead than traditional techniques. That's all well and good, but what exactly is it?



Inbound marketing vs content marketing

Some people differentiate between [inbound and content marketing](#). Usually, these are the kind of people who gleefully point out the one spelling mistake in a blog, as if that invalidates the message of the whole piece. We're looking at you, comments section.

If you absolutely must put neat boxes around these terms, think of it like this: **all content marketing is inbound, but not all inbound marketing is content marketing. Inbound is the overarching term for attracting and converting site visitors into leads.** Although [content marketing](#) is a big part of that, other things, like technical SEO, are part of inbound but are not exactly 'content.'

We tend to use 'inbound marketing', 'content marketing' and 'inbound content marketing' interchangeably. So far, no harm has come of it.



The inbound marketing framework

There are three steps to creating content for inbound marketing:



Step one: create

Create consistent, high quality, engaging, and educational content that solves your personas' problems (more on that later). If the content is targeted, your ideal leads will find this content through search engines or social media and, in turn, visit your website.



Step two: convert

Convert those visitors into leads by asking them to fill in a contact form in return for free content. If the content is of a high enough quality, they will be satisfied with this exchange, and will look to answer more of their questions on your website.





Step three: nurture

Nurturing those leads into more qualified leads via email, social media and more content.

Once a good deal of trust has been established between the lead and the business, they will be far more likely to be show interest in your product or service when they receive a call from your sales people.

This process allows you to not only outflank your competition by positioning yourself as a thought leader in your industry, but to also **take control of your customers' research and evaluation process**. You attract more traffic, create more leads and **build trust between you and your audience (or your client's audience)**, which is crucial. After all, when's the last time you bought something from someone you didn't trust?

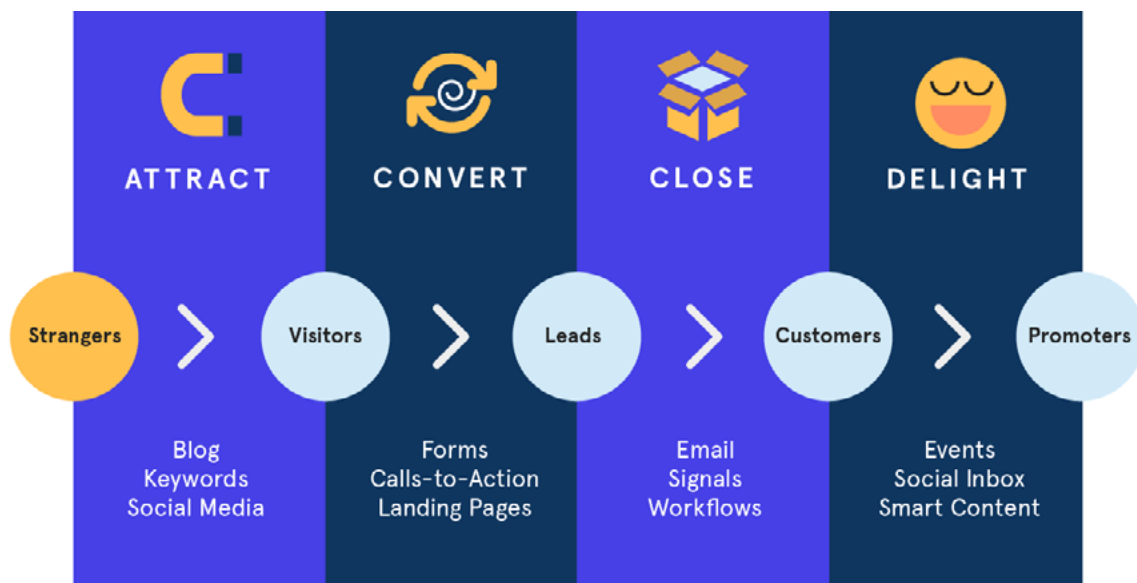


There's a (de)light at the end of the funnel

Inbound marketing helps you engage with people much earlier in the sales cycle. And, it allows you to **extend the sales cycle beyond the actual purchase decision**. The right content can empower your customers to get more from your products. It also encourages repeat business.

If you can delight customers as well as close leads, you can turn them into advocates. Word of mouth endorsement is a very powerful sales tool.

With inbound marketing, the traditional [AIDA model](#) of the sales funnel gives way to the Attract-Convert-Close-Delight model (thanks, [Hubspot](#)).



Inbound by the numbers

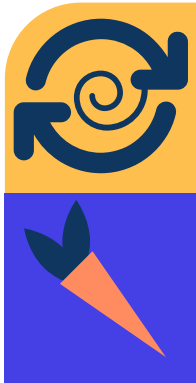
[Research](#) shows that inbound content marketing helps at every stage of the sales cycle. Here's how it works:



Attract

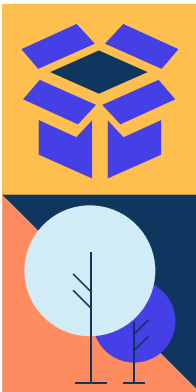
Inbound marketing will deliver 54 percent more leads into your funnel. Long-form content such as ebooks are particularly effective at attracting potential leads as they provide the most value. Furthermore, calls to action promoting them get almost twice the click-through rate as emails promoting webinars. Blogs are also an essential element part of enticing people to your site, with B2B companies that blog generating 67 percent more leads and B2C companies generating 88 percent more leads.





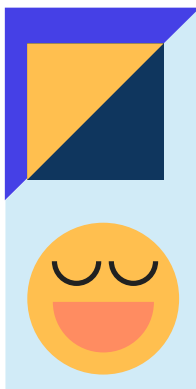
Convert

Landing pages with persona-targeted copy are a smart way to convert leads into customers. And the more you have, the better. Businesses with 31 to 40 landing pages get seven times more leads than those with only one to five landing pages.



Close

Lead-nurturing emails and a drip feed of relevant content helps to convince leads to buy. In fact, nurtured leads make 47 percent larger purchases than non-nurtured leads. What's more, relevant emails drive 18 times more revenue than broadcast emails.



Delight

Social media monitoring and how-to guides can turn customers from 'users' into 'champions'. These evangelists will hopefully be satisfied enough with your services to offer reviews or feedback for case studies. And, of course, they may even become long-term retainer clients.



Quality, not quantity

Successful inbound marketing means spending the time to give your audience content that they *want* to read, listen to or watch for free, *before* asking them to buy.

But you can't crank the reel in too quick – you'll lose them and they won't come back. so, if a visitor downloads their first eBook or white paper, don't immediately bombard them with emails about how they should contact your sales department and what products of yours they should buy. That's likely to turn people off. Instead, you might simply suggest another couple of pieces of useful, relevant content via email.

It's about **nurturing the relationship before and after the sale to build trust, delight your customers and encourage repeat business**, so consistent, high-quality content that [maps to each stage of the sales cycle](#) – awareness, evaluation, purchase, post-purchase – is key.

This isn't a one-off sale; it's a long-term relationship.



Compound interest with content marketing

And it's a long-term relationship that pays dividends.

Inbound content marketing is measurable, meaning you can sharpen your tactics as you go, giving you **more control over your sales and marketing spend**.

But, more than that, it has a **cumulative effect that makes it more cost-effective over time**.

A study by Kapost and Eloqua found that content marketing delivered over [three times more leads than paid search](#) efforts over a period of 36 months. Additionally, their cost-per-lead reduced from \$111.11 from paid search to \$32.25 for content marketing.



Once you create the content, it's yours and it's there forever. It gives you a back catalogue of useful material for your audience to read and share, and a growing keyword footprint that boosts your search rankings. You'll get a steady trickle of sales-ready leads rather than a flurry of unsuspecting strangers that contribute to nothing more than vanity metrics.

Create great content and you'll be **patching up the leaky funnel and nurturing a more receptive audience that's ready to talk**. Done right, it creates a smoother sales process and a bigger boost to business growth.





Why B2B businesses should invest in content

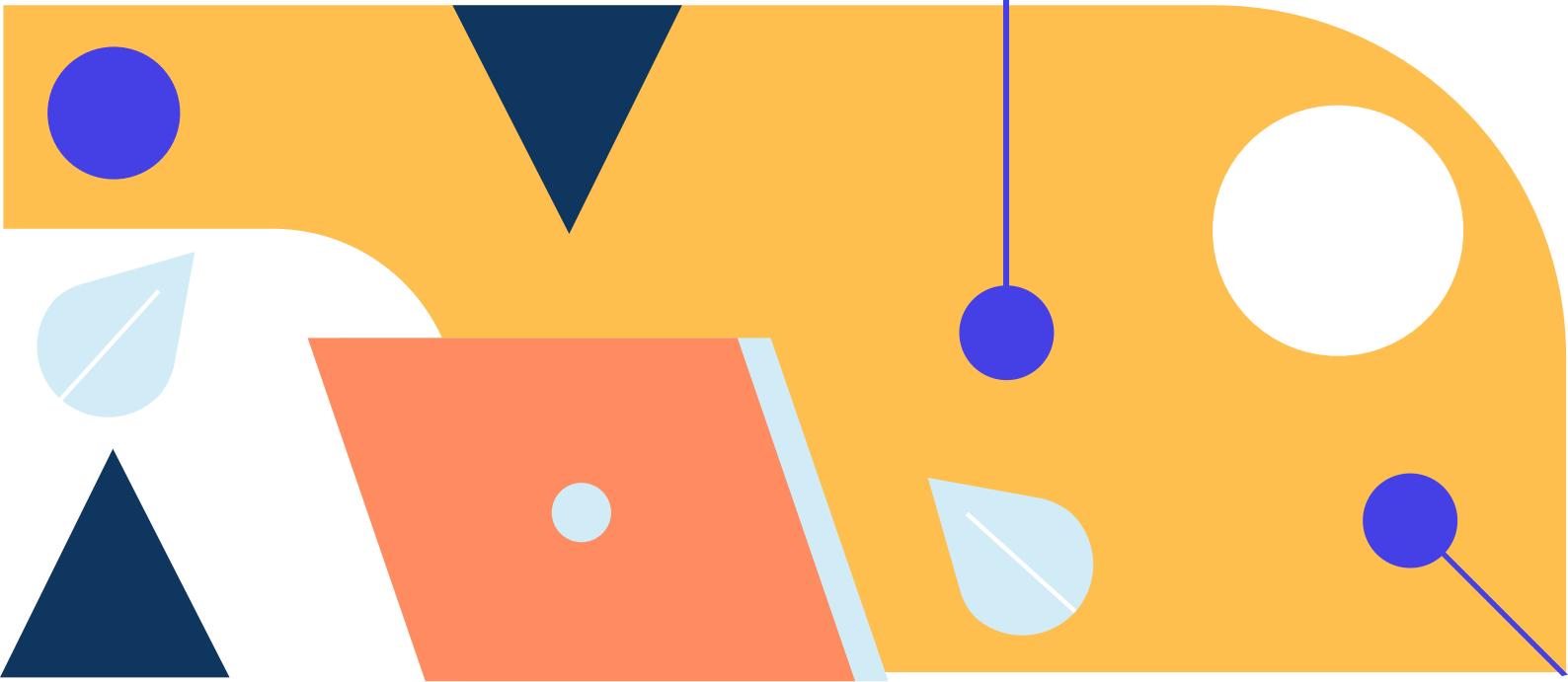
Rebirth of a salesman

Today's customers aren't waiting for companies to tell them what they need to know; they're doing the legwork and seeking out the information themselves online. (Way to steal the sales department's thunder.)

But this isn't something to fear. This just means businesses will have to adapt by investing in a solid content marketing strategy. Marketing copywriters everywhere – rejoice! It's your time to shine.

Content marketing isn't 'arts and crafts' anymore, if it ever was, in the same way that IT isn't 'fix my computer so I can get on with the real work' – it's a key part of the business strategy. Content marketing is the next generation of selling. So, reshuffle some of that budget and give the new kids on the block a try.





Filling the funnel: a top CEO priority

CEOs have always kept a close eye on sales, but their attitudes about how to target their audiences are changing. What's new is their use of words like 'audience', 'content' and 'proving ROI', which means they're all looking towards the marketing department now.

If you're a business owner and you aren't opening the marketing team's monthly analytics reports, then get on the bandwagon and dive into the data.



Tell your boss: traditional marketing strategies don't deliver

Think about your own experience. Would you prefer a noisy intrusion into your day or useful, relevant information when you wanted it? What would you think of the companies that used these different strategies?

Again, the evidence supports the argument for inbound.
Intrusion fails spectacularly.

If you use online advertising, you already know the pain of keyword competition, rising costs and falling conversion rates. Worse, you practically need a PhD in Google Adwords to run a campaign. It's the gift that doesn't keep giving, unless you are [clever enough to use it as part of your inbound strategy](#). Instead:

- Go to where people are – social media, search engines etc.
- Talk about things that matter to them.
- Use their language, not yours.
- Become a trusted advisor.



Cheap content will kill your SEO

Content is important for SEO, right? Yes. The more content the better, right? Yes. But not just any content. And not at any price.

The temptation to trim costs to fit a limited budget is understandable (if short-sighted). Times are tough, yada yada. **You're either investing enough money, or you're not.** If you're not, you might as well not bother. [So, make sure you pay your copywriters well](#), give your marketing team the resources they need to actually make a difference.

Take this example:

One company pays a content mill to write 'keyword-optimised blog content' at bulk rates because 'it's good for search engine optimisation'. They get a load of cobbled-together blogs that attract the attention of 50 people per blog, converting the odd one into a lead. But hey, they're doing content marketing, right?



The other company, whose website gets comparative traffic, goes to an [industry-experienced marketing agency](#). This agency provides them with data-driven insights into the best strategy for producing SEO-optimised content, with background work on copy length, tone-of-voice, personas (we'll still get to that later), keyword research, and much more. This supports the creation of extremely targeted, thought-out content written by professional copywriters.

And, better still, these pieces of quality content drive thousands of visitors to the site every month.

It's about creating some of the best answers on the internet, not a bunch of answers that sit on page four or five of Google. What good does that do?

Top Blog Posts 📌

Actions

Date range: Last month [Report settings](#)

BLOG POST	VIEWS
How to make a financial presentation interesting in 7...	1,572
The top 5 video conferencing apps for remote busin...	1,187
9 management blogs to build your leadership skills	981
Talking to vendors: 10 quick tips for getting it right	735
10 surprising examples of AI in everyday life	696



Marketing Performance 📌

Date range: In the last 90 days | Frequency: Weekly | Compared to previous 90 days

SESSIONS

39,750

▲ 34.83%

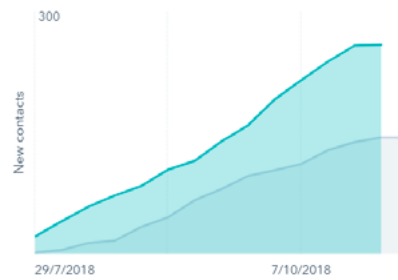
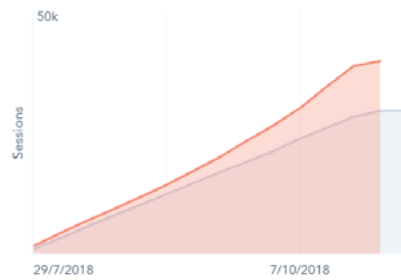
0.65%

NEW CONTACTS

259

▲ 79.86%

4.63%



Cheap content could be killing your brand, destroying your search engine rankings and annoying your customers.

Google is very clear about the importance of good quality content. In its [best practices guidelines](#) it says:

Basic principles

- Make pages primarily for users, not for search engines.
- Don't deceive your users.
- Avoid tricks intended to improve search engine rankings. A good rule of thumb is whether you'd feel comfortable explaining what you've done to a website that competes with you, or to a Google employee. Another useful test is to ask, "Does this help my users? Would I do this if search engines didn't exist?"
- Think about what makes your website unique, valuable, or engaging. Make your website stand out from others in your field.



Lazy copywriting and cheap content will annoy your customers

More importantly, how likely is a cheap blog post to be a good showcase for your business's products or services?

Website visitors – yourself included – have very finely-honed bullshit detectors. We form almost instant judgements about websites. Why? Put simply, we're trained to spot typos, badly-written copy and waffle because there is simply so much of it about. On the other hand, we're drawn to useful, relevant, authoritative, remarkable articles.

[Research into readability](#) by the Nielsen Norman Group shows that if we aren't valuing copywriters and good content, then we're missing out:

'Content rules. It did ten years ago, and it does today. People don't use things they don't understand. Writing for the Web is still undervalued, and most sites spend too few resources refining the information they offer to users.'



How to cleverly invest in content marketing

Here's a note for business owners and CEOs: invest in inbound.

But, you can choose to invest wisely. Here's some tips on making the most out of your budget:



Hiring

Sometimes, you just have to bite the bullet and [hire some new talent](#) to plug a skills gap or enhance your business's marketing efforts.

If you don't have the resources to take on someone full time, consider hiring freelancers with the specialisms you need to create the campaigns and content you want. Just be careful and pick the right people for the job. And give them [a good brief](#). Please.





Outsourcing

What if you just can't take anyone else on, or can't devote any more time internally to marketing? Try outsourcing some of the work to [a marketing agency](#). You might outsource a specific sort of content to the agency – say, blog writing, infographics or video – if you lack the skills internally. Or you might want to outsource entire campaigns/channel if you require an all-inclusive strategy that'll create a bigger impact.





Marketing automation

Marketing automation software, like [HubSpot](#), integrates your website with your blog, social media, search engine and email marketing. [These tools](#) use landing pages and CTAs to nurture leads more effectively and convert them into customers. Integrated analytics allow you to accurately measure the success and ROI of your marketing campaigns, as well as tweak them to improve conversions. Ultimately, this allows sales and marketing to work together more closely, setting and assessing goals based on hard data.

So, if the going gets tough for marketing, don't give up on your team. Identify what the problems are and start working on the short-term and long-term solutions. But on that outsourcing point – why should you consider using professional copywriters and marketers?



Copywriters are professional writers; they're specialists

'If you have budget to invest in your website, I would say, "hire someone to write for you."' – [Rebecca Churt, HubSpot](#)

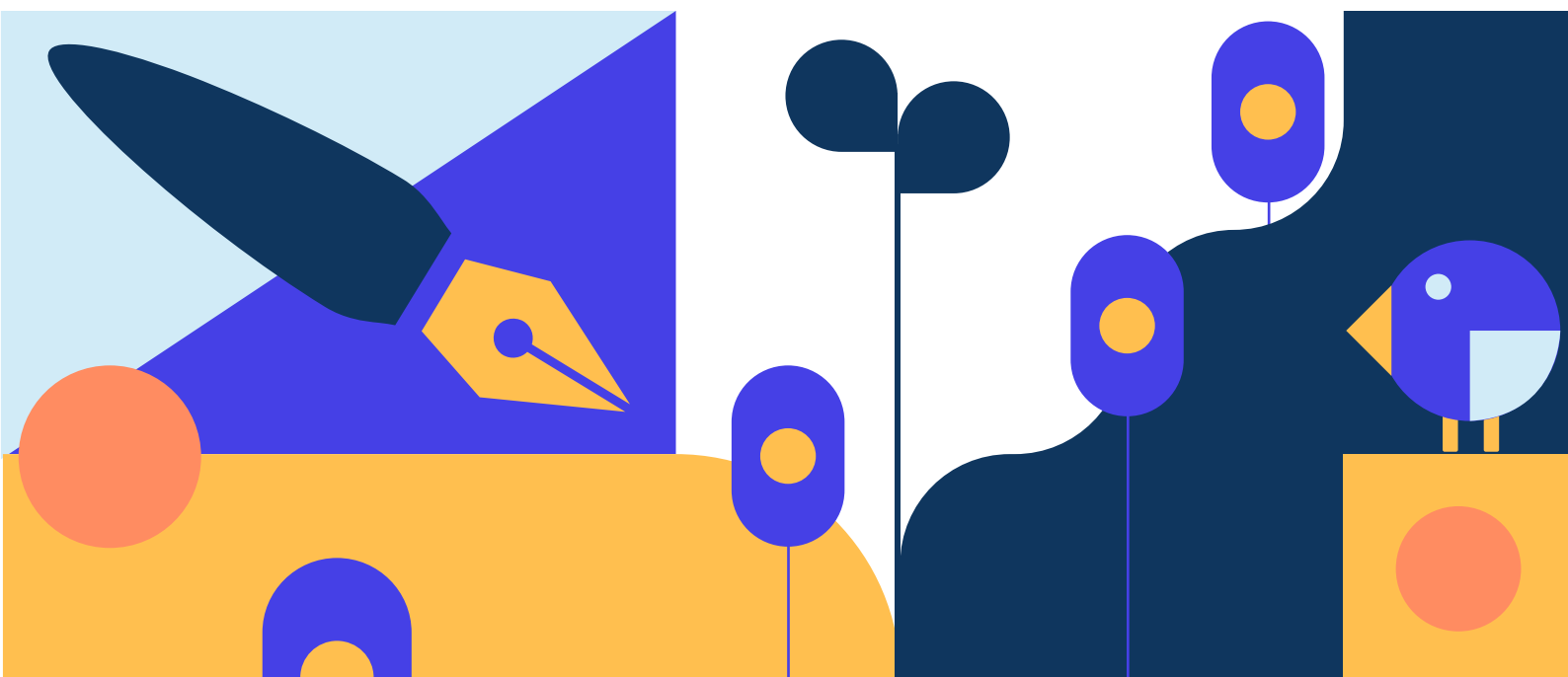
We do have to make a stand somewhere, right? As an [agency full of copywriters](#) (I'll be honest, a copywriter is writing this right now. I know, [spooky](#)), we believe in the power of our work. Professional copywriters help you cut through the noise. They write pithy, persuasive, remarkable content that resonates with your customers and drives up sales. Good writing is at the [heart of great brands](#) and it is the engine of great campaigns.

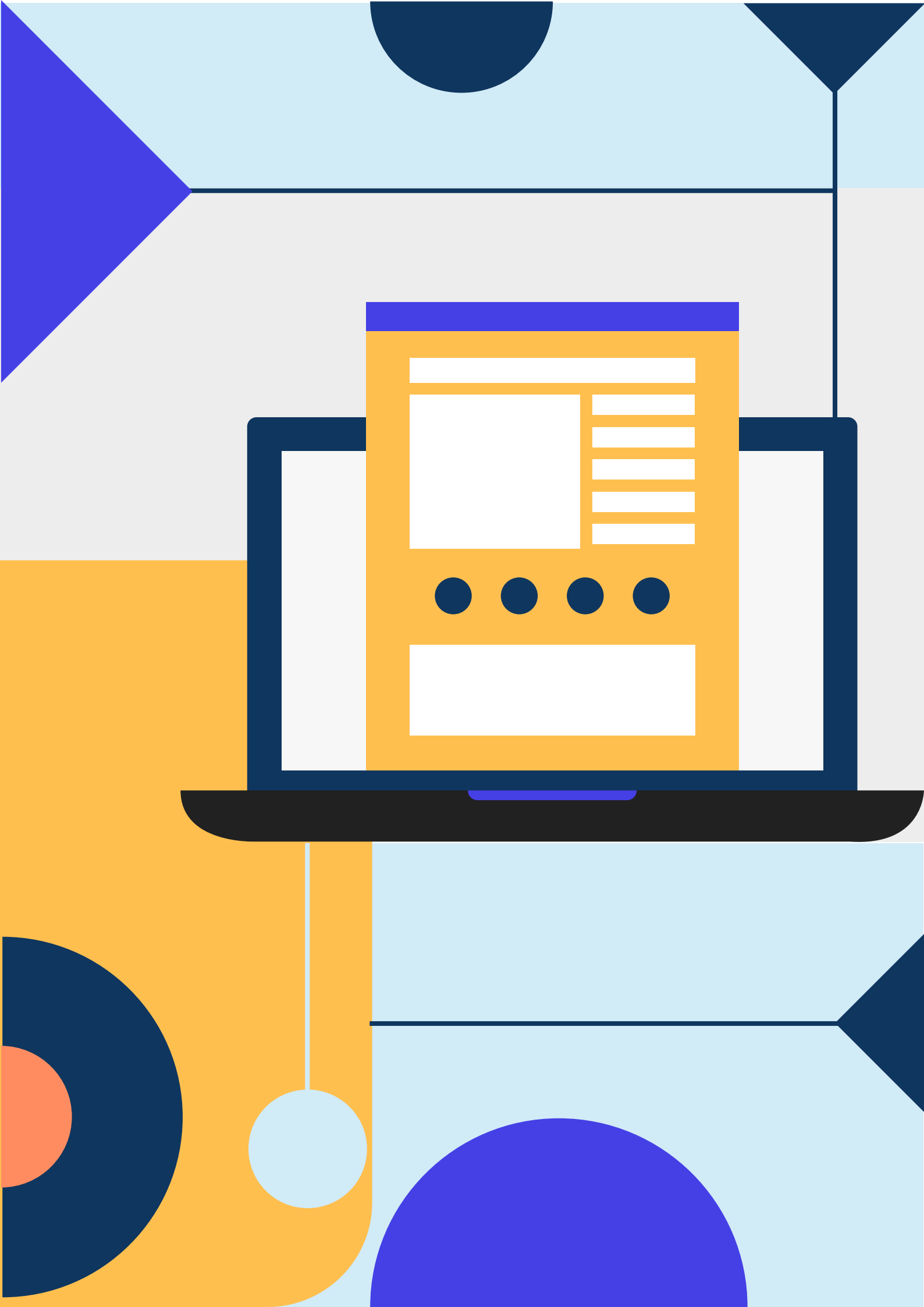
And with the average web user leaving a web page after [less than 20 seconds](#) and reading only [20 percent](#) of the content, first impressions really do count. Therefore, you must get across what you want to say, fast, and say it better than anyone else.



A good copywriter will help you to **clarify what you're trying to say and tell a story that connects with your customers.**

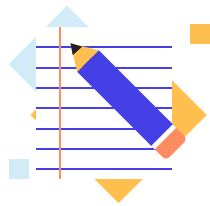
There, that's the quality vs quantity argument sorted. While we're at it, let's debunk some more content marketing myths, shall, we?





Top 3 content marketing strategy mistakes

You hear that? That endless fuzzy murmuring? That's content. Like background radiation and beards, content is everywhere.



1. Thinking 'it's just writing'

Anyone can write, but not everyone's a writer.

It can be tempting to strike out on your own and write your own copy. But if you ut try to do everything yourself, you'll burn out.



Effective copywriting is more than just stringing syntactically correct sentences together. It's about **distilling the features of your product or service into benefits that your customers care about** and finding the right style and tone of voice to get the message across. And, it's about doing that within a strategic framework.

Delegating some of your content creation means giving a writer the opportunity to bring your vision to life, letting you focus on growing your business. Each part of the process, then, is handled by an expert.



2. Leaning on the Apple defence

With 16 years of video uploaded every day on YouTube, 1,879 blog posts published every minute, and 500 million tweets posted a day, you'd be tempted to say we've hit peak content. So, what does this mean? Have we entered a post-content marketing world?

Nope.



Decriers of content marketing will often invoke ‘the Apple defence’. It goes something like this:

‘Apple doesn’t do any content marketing and look how successful they are!’

If you have a die-hard fan base, your products are an omnipresent status symbol, and you have a market cap larger than most countries, then, yes, feel free to not worry about content marketing.

But even given all that, ‘the Apple defence’ still doesn’t stand. [Apple does do content marketing](#); it’s just far **subtler** than their other efforts to get noticed. They focus on **showing what *you* can do with the product, not what *it* can do.**

Apple is selling the benefits not the features. Like Fight Club, the [secret to selling technology](#) is not to talk about it.

A copywriting strategy isn’t a sales strategy in a different form. Rinse. Repeat.



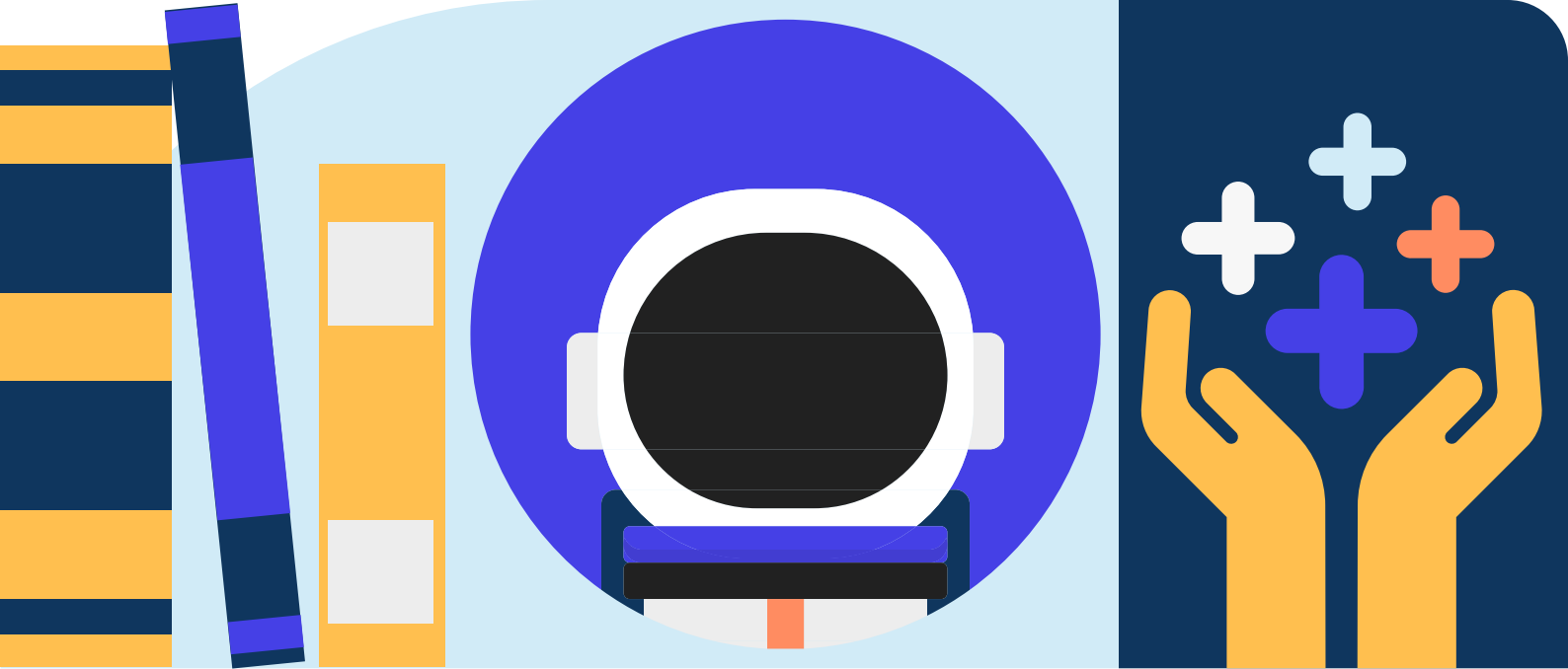


3. Creating content without building up the right foundational strategy

[94 percent](#) of B2B small businesses use content marketing, yet only [nine percent](#) think that their efforts are ‘very effective’.

Your customer has a need or a question and your content allows them fulfil the need, provides the answer and builds trust. **Start with your customers and [buyer personas](#)** (Yes, we’ll get to those – there’s a lot of foundation to get through!). What do they need? What are they searching for? Map out their journey. [Search common questions](#) they might ask on Google and try to answer them.

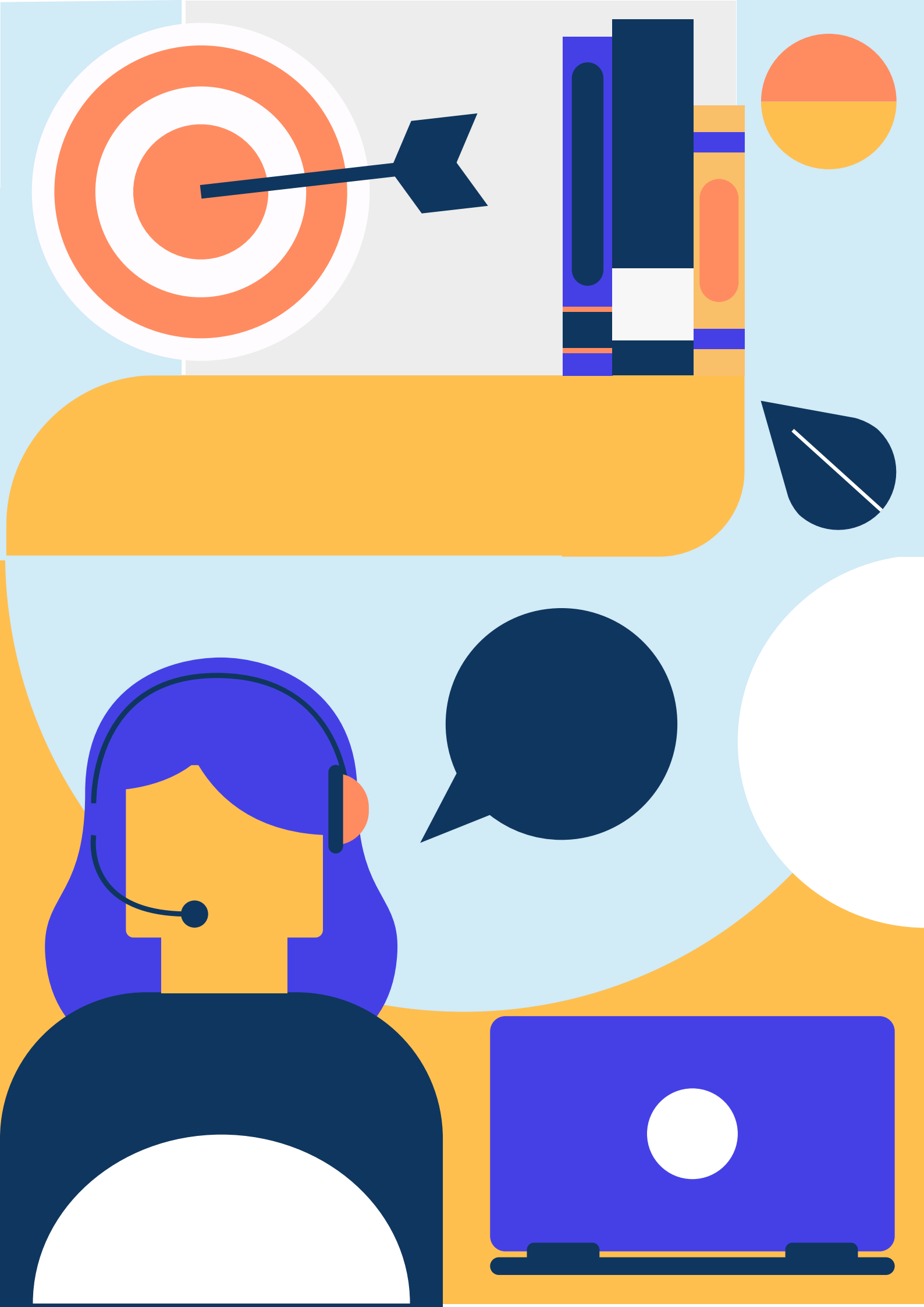




Only [27 percent](#) of B2C small businesses have a documented content marketing strategy. The other 73 percent need one. So start by identifying your goals. For example, if you want to increase website conversions by 20 percent, you'll need to find the most efficient way to get there and track your progress. Use [marketing automation tools](#) and [editorial calendars](#) to help you plan. Have a look at what your competitors are doing and understand how you might outmanoeuvre them.

In the next chapter of this copywriting guide we'll go through a step-by-step process for how to create brilliant content.





How to get started copywriting for business blogs

Writing is a muscle that professional copywriters exercise every day. As a result, they know every trick in the book to help polish up your copy and use it to [increase website conversions](#), boost click-through rates, and, ultimately, drive up sales.

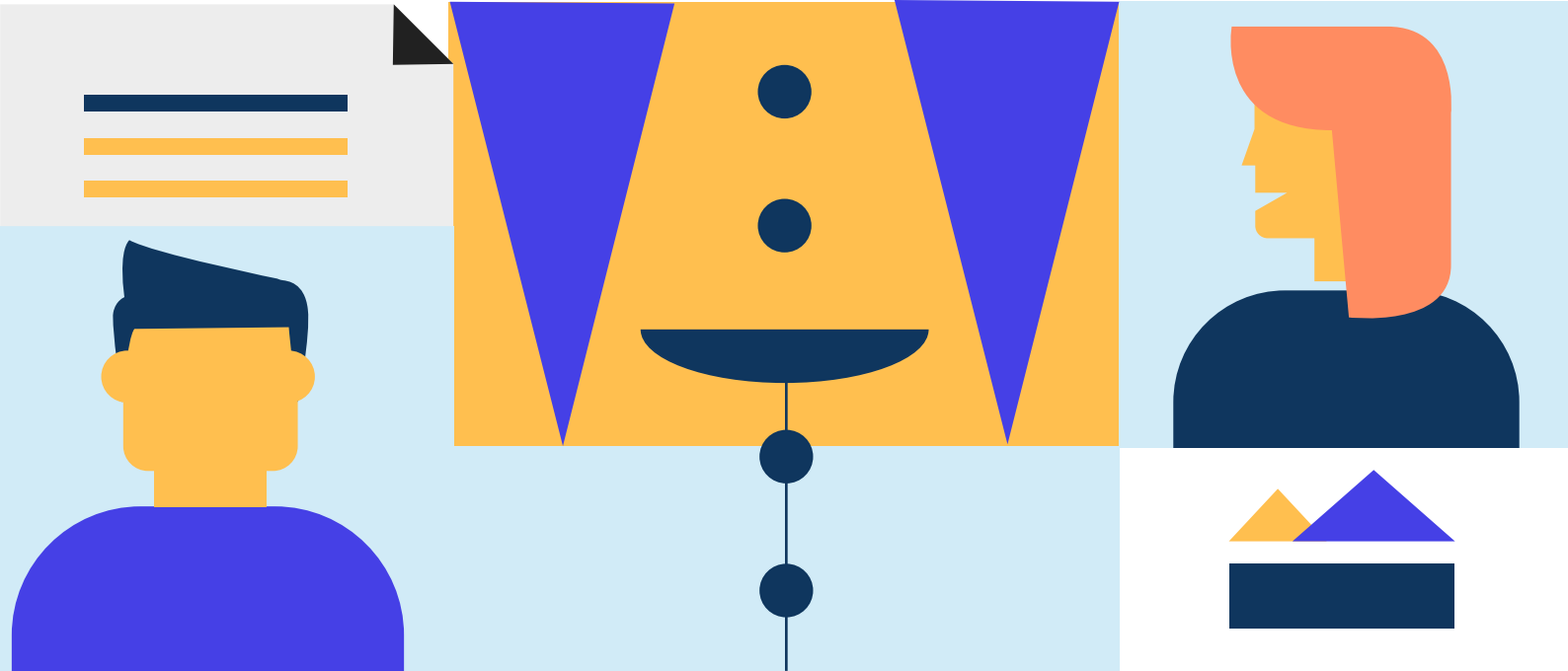
They know to keep it short and sweet, conversational and direct, and they avoid hype, hyperbole and spin like the plague.

So, how do you create B2B content like a professional copywriter? Well, at Articulate Marketing, when we start working with a client, we will go through the following steps. Because we [do so much more than make content](#), this is only part of the overall process. It really, really isn't 'just writing blogs'.



- Do a market survey and research competitors
- Do an SEO audit and keyword research
- Create one or more buyer personas
- Read and emulate the tone of voice (ToV) of the business
- Use these learnings to build content campaigns. A campaign will include:
 - A piece of premium content, like a white paper or checklist, that will be placed behind a form on a landing page
 - Supporting blogs or infographics, with backlinks to the pillar page, and with imbedded call-to-action (CTAs) leading to the landing page
 - [Pillar page](#) content on an iterative basis (such as this one on [SEO for tech](#))
 - Social media and email content





Buyer personas and ToV



Mary the middle manager

Remarkable writing that resonates with your [buyer personas](#) is the heart of the content that gets found.

According to Hubspot:

'A buyer persona is a semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer based on market research and real data about your existing customers.'



Having a persona means you have an idea of the audience you are speaking to. This will influence the tone you present and the context of the content itself. **When writing a blog, imagine you are sat in front of someone in a café, telling them some information that you feel would help them.** How would you phrase things? How would you keep them engaged in the conversation?

The other thing that will determine the direction of your copywriting is your [client's](#) (or your own business') tone of voice. Copywriters have to sound like they're singing from the same song sheet. But, that doesn't mean carrying on bad practices. As marketers, we of course want to sound like our clients, yes, but we also want to make sure our content resonates with the reader first and foremost.

As much as you might love your product or service and revel in all the gory details, **your customers – that cynical bunch – want to know how it benefits them.** They want quality advice and insight, not bigger, better and stronger.



Where do ideas come from?

We've all been there. When it comes to conjuring up blog topic ideas, it can feel like there's nothing new under the sun. Titles don't just come out of nowhere, though. There's a plenty of resources to lean on.

In the comforting words of French author André Gide,

'Everything that needs to be said has already been said. But since no one was listening, everything must be said again.'

Remember what we've said about personas. You're not writing for you; you're writing for your personas, so let them guide you to the sort of topics you should write about. If you rely solely on what interests you, your blog will drift away from the core of your, or your client's, brand. Ultimately, this could alienate potential leads.

But, delve into each persona and their keywords, pain points, influencers, communities and reading material, and you can't go wrong. If they're CEOs, they may visit [ceo.com](https://www.ceo.com), and if they're IT managers, maybe they'll be more inclined to read [Forbes](https://www.forbes.com).



Just because you or the blogosphere have written on a topic before, it doesn't mean that you can't touch the subject ever again. [Originality](#) means more than simply saying something for the first time; **you can also achieve it by setting the old tune to a different rhythm.** Take a popular topic from another blogger and find a new angle or turn your own two thousand-word 'Ultimate guide to content marketing' into a 500-word listicle.

The blog topic bank

If you're still at a loss, it's time to make a withdrawal from the blog bank.

Get used to **noting down ideas whenever and wherever you have them, as well as keeping a list of potential blog topics that's open to all of your content creators.** Then, when it comes to ideation time, you'll have a veritable war chest to play with – just unearth one of your banked topics, dust it off and get writing.



Do keyword research

Use a tool like [Moz's](#) keyword explorer or [AnswerthePublic](#) to find out what people are searching for around a given topic. You might want to write about 'leadership in tech', but a bit of SEO-led research can help to narrow your topic. For instance, you might discover that lots of people want to know about the more specific topic of 'training new IT managers'.



How to use SEO keyword research to refine title ideas

Writing a blog that people will click on is a balancing act. Not only do you need to find a topic or an angle that speaks to the reader, but also one that speaks to search engines and search habits.

For example, here is a persona-focused, ‘click-bait’ style title on the topic of why you need cloud backup for your business:

- ‘Calling all CEOs: Why your business is five minutes away from doomsday’

Yes, it has a clear audience (CEOs), and yes, it’s intriguing. But it doesn’t tell us anything about the topic. As a result, it won’t rank well on search engines, and it just won’t get found.

Alternatively, you could go for purely functional title, like:

- ‘X reasons you need cloud backup for your business’



This works because it's clear what the topic of the blog is about, and who it's for. But it does lack a bit of flair. Let's try one more time:

- 'Avoid a business bust-up: X reasons to choose cloud backup'

An SEO-friendly title with a persona-focused, research-driven topic, will set your blog up for success.

7 tips on writing brilliant blog titles like a boss



1. Promise and deliver

Avoid 'click-bait' - a.k.a. lies, lies and more lies. These types of titles could create more traffic, but people don't like being tricked. Promise your audience something exciting or useful - learning a new skill in five minutes, for example - and then deliver on that promise in the post.





2. Numbers and lists

Everyone loves a numbered list-type post; you know what to expect and you know it'll be pithy. Multiples of five are the standard, but don't be afraid to go unusual: 8, 13, 37. Also, use digits rather than words – '15 ways to...' is better than 'Fifteen ways to...'



3. Trigger words

[Jeff Goins](#) suggests using trigger words like, 'what', 'why', 'how' and 'when'. 'Why' and 'how' are particularly useful – 'Why you shouldn't...' and 'How to...' etc.



4. Teach

Everyone's eager to get smart so promise to teach them something. [Buffer](#) suggests being more specific than just 'How to...'. Use phrases like 'Introduction to...', 'Beginner's guide to...', 'DIY' and '...in 5 minutes'.



5. Write like a human

You'll be read by them, after all. Don't use jargon, excessive punctuation, acronyms (unless obvious, like NATO or the BBC) or overly long headlines.





6. Don't be too clever

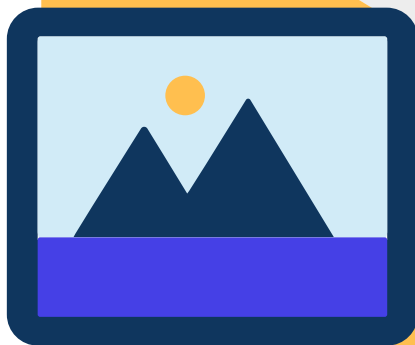
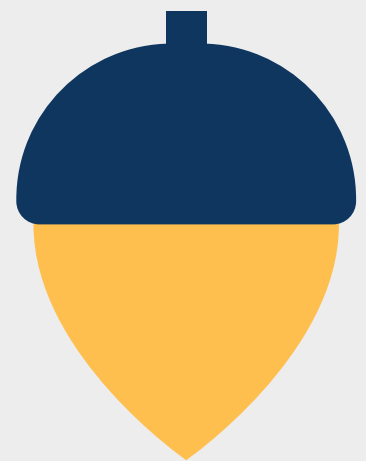
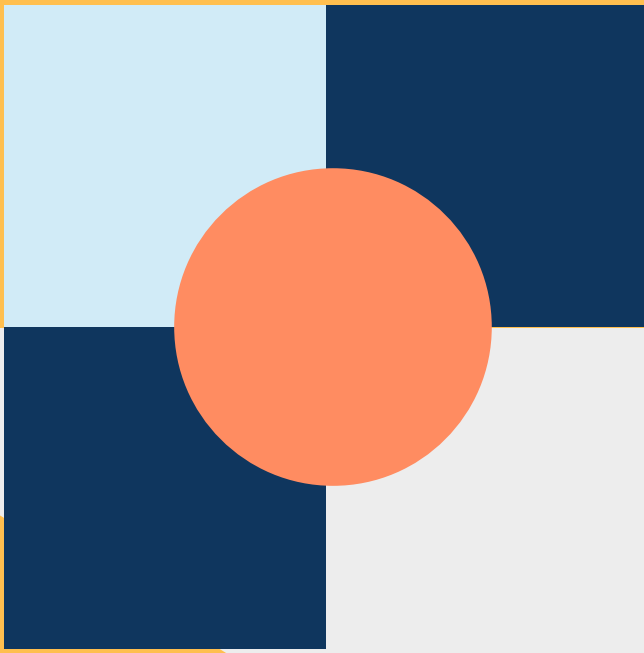
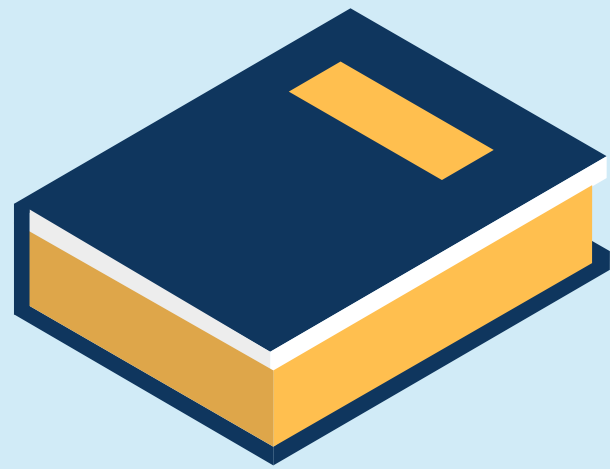
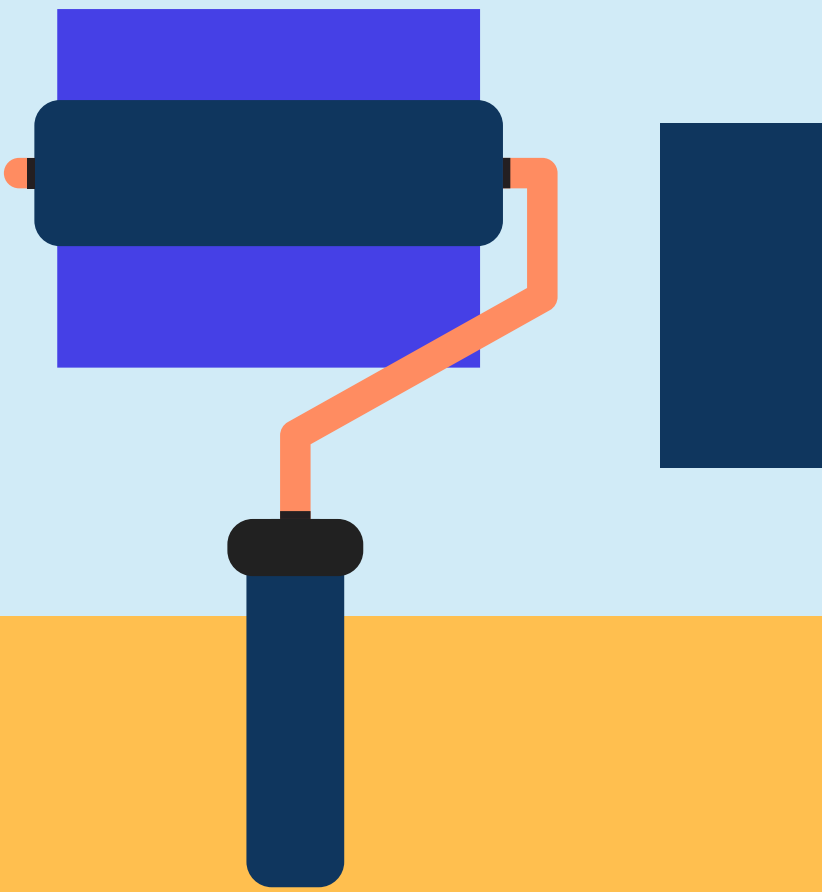
Your headlines should be snappy, specific and informative. Don't be too elusive, vague or 'witty' or you'll give people a reason not to click.



7. A little more action

Use strong, active words and avoid the passive voice. [Verbs and adverbs entice more clicks](#) than adjectives and nouns.





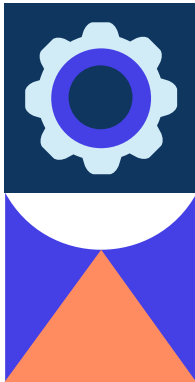
The best content research tips on the internet

Good writing is grounded in what E.B. White referred to as ‘the eloquence of facts’. Whether it’s client copy or personal blog posts, you should always make sure you do your research. Not only will it inform your work, but it will give you the emotional confidence to write well, secure in the knowledge that you have something worth saying. Death to the blinking cursor on the white page.

That said, it’s a tough balance to strike between knowing enough to write with and generating copy quickly and efficiently. We can’t all be world renowned experts. So, find a way to research efficiently.



Here are some suggestions:



Go back to the source

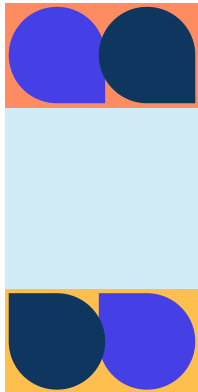
A [good brief](#) will include helpful collateral. Clients will always have some document, brochure or video that they can share. Devour and break down whatever you are given. These briefs will not only tell you important objective information, but also how the client likes to see themselves and their offerings, in terms of tone and attitude.



Ask an expert

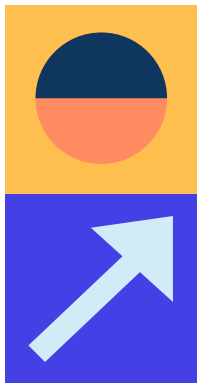
Whether it's a product expert from inside your client's company, a third-party specialist, or a happy customer, there is always someone out there who knows more than you. People love to talk about what they're passionate about, so aim high and try to talk to the best in the field. And remember, [interviews should be guided and informative conversations.](#)





The site you can never cite

[Wikipedia](#) is fantastic for getting an overview of a person, a definition or, well, finding out pretty much anything. That being said, use it to give yourself a grounding, but you should never cite it as a reliable source.

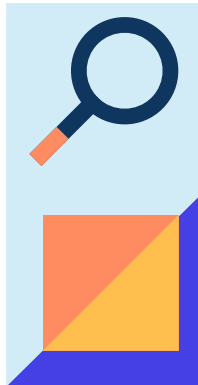


Me, myself and I

For a company like [Articulate](#), who writes a lot about tech, there are plenty of occasions where we get crossover topics. Dig through your archive, you'll probably be surprised what you've written on before.

Warning: never plagiarise yourself, but feel free to use yourself as an informed prompt.





Google it

...Ok, maybe that's a bit simplistic. Try using things like Google Scholar or Google News search. Looking at what comes up in the headlines, and where in the world that topic is buzzing is a brilliant way to tap in to the heart of the current conversation..

Be prepared to wander down the rabbit hole. Some people write well-researched blogs that just happen to get very little traffic, perhaps because they don't do much marketing, or use [SEO best practice](#). But, page four or five of Google is worth a look if you're a researcher and the first results don't offer anything of use.



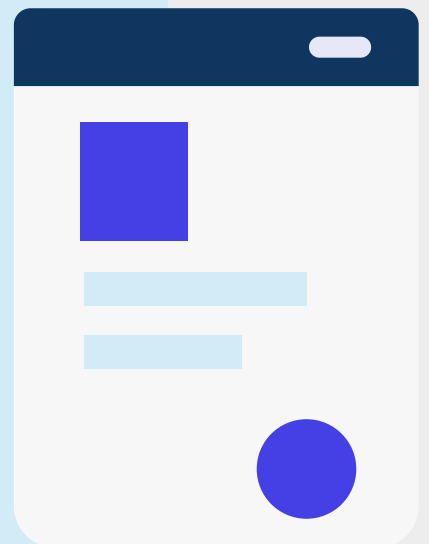
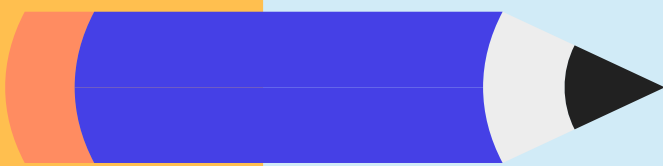
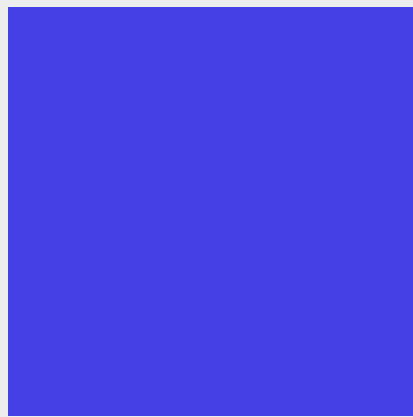
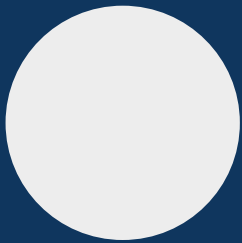


Here's the tricky bit. Now, it's just you and the content you are copywriting. We've given you every tool in the toolbox. You know what a copywriter does, and how; what marketing is for, and the context (for your business, or for you client's business); you know the audience; you know the topic; you have a plan and you've come up with a title. What a copywriter does with that groundwork and information is make something new, creative, valuable, insightful, carefully-crafted and entertaining.

GO DO THAT.

...well done.





What matters for content editing: steps to follow

Brilliant job! You've made content. Let's say you've created a blog. 600-1000 words of blood, sweat and tears. Maybe it was a breeze, on a topic you are super passionate about. Maybe it was a slog, about a topic you struggled to get to grips with. But there. Finally. It's done.

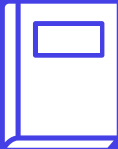
Why you should spend more time editing than writing

The first draft is you just telling yourself the story,' as the late Sir Terry Pratchett said.

Now - granted - some of us edit as we go, tweaking things, changing the structure and so on. Even then, every piece of work will benefit from a few rounds of careful editing. So, allocate your time wisely and give editing the space it's due.



How to edit a blog – advice for clients and copywriters



Do a macro read-through

Read the blog as a holistic piece of content. Think about how the overall structure fits together, and if each point flows onto the next. Consider if there are any sections that feel over or under-serviced, giving the piece and unbalanced feel. Does the introduction draw you in? Is the ending (we call this the ‘kicker’) punchy or attention-grabbing? Make some notes as you go.



Review with track changes and comments

If, like most of us, you’re using Word, then save the document as ‘version 2’ or ‘v2’ so that you have a complete track record of your alterations. Then, turn on ‘track changes’ and make use of the comments tool to record what you’ve done to modify the content. This is as important for your own work as it is for someone else’s.





Do a couple of sweeps through

Start at the top and work your way through the text. Make the bigger changes first, then go through again to refine. Check for the basics, like:

- [Grammar and spelling](#)
- Making sure quotes and statistics are appropriately sourced
- Tone
- Word choice
- Sentence length
- Consistency with the brief



Think like a cyborg

Hopefully, your blog will have been written with SEO best practices in mind. However, it's worth checking during the editing process.

Read through with one eye out for search engine optimisation and one eye out for human readability. These considerations are still important, even as search engines become more and more sophisticated.





Kill your darlings

By this point, you probably know what you have to do. There's something in this blog that sticks out like a sore thumb, no matter how much you edit it. If it's just not working, for whatever reason, don't be precious about it: cut it out.



Check readability

Use apps like [Hemingway](#) to ensure your blog is at the right readability level. This is marketing material, right? Not an academic essay or a technical manual. It's meant to be light and breezy. People are reading this stuff on the commute to work, or in their breaks, or when they're relaxing, or as a Monday morning ease into the day.



Read it out loud

Yes, you might be embarrassed about sitting in a café muttering to yourself, but reading your blog aloud is going to help your editing process. You'll be able to identify long sentences, repeated words, awkward transitions, and all those little stumbling blocks.





Give it a final polish

If you're writing a blog for yourself, give it another once-over or get a friend to look at it before you schedule it for publication. If you work in a team, get someone else to edit your content as well. If you're working for a business client, then have them review the work. Fresh eyes are always helpful.

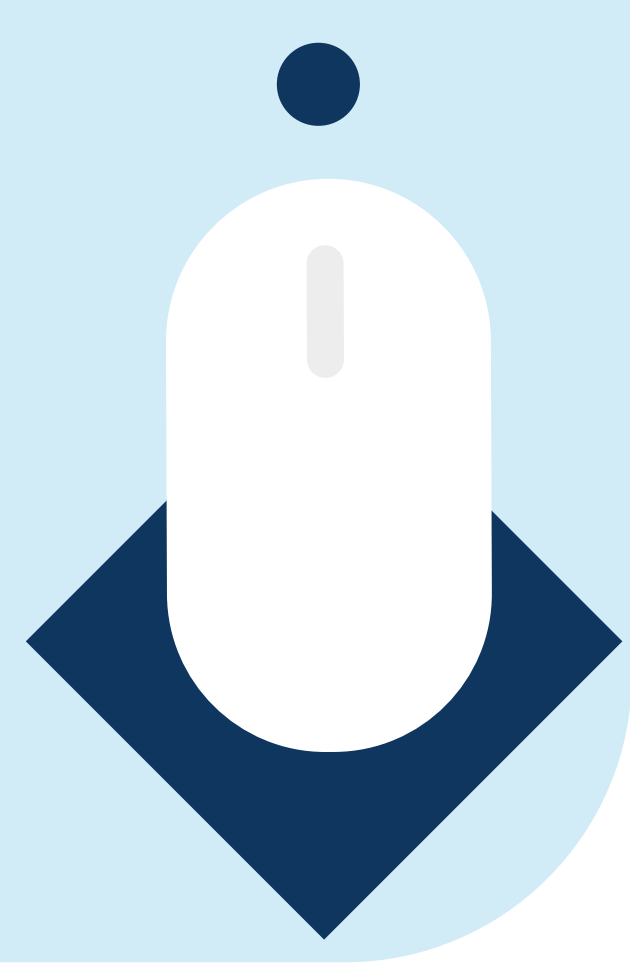
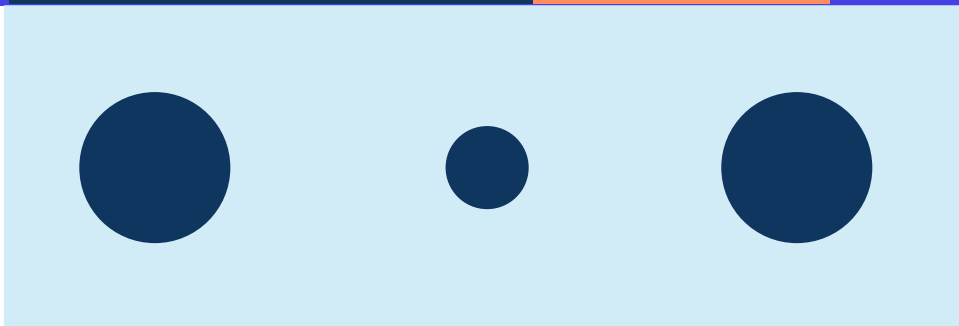
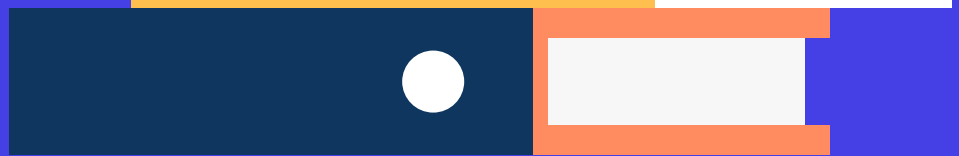
What doesn't matter

There is no point in trying to make the perfect blog post.

Too many people get bogged down in endless rounds of content edits, adjusting the scope of the piece, or wanting to add in extra, unnecessary information. Editing has to be done carefully and without the 'too many cooks in the kitchen' problem.

At the end of the day, if you feel like there's more to add at a later date, you can always update it.





How to share blog posts (and get others sharing, too)

Many businesses with an **online presence** will know that social media is currently one of their biggest [marketing opportunities](#). And it's only going to get bigger. If you're just starting out in this content marketing game, check out this blog post on getting out of the [triple zero club](#) (no likes, shares or comments).

Everything you post on the web is marketing collateral, waiting to be found by your ideal customers [via search engines and social media](#). So, how do you **engage prospects online** and get them to the end of the buyer's journey? Time travellers like [Doc Brown](#) might have a few answers.

At Articulate, just like the Doc, we constantly tweak and refactor our content marketing to make this happen. We set it against data we've gathered from experiments and then blast it into the future.



Getting people's attention

'Great Scott!'

Consumers have more of a choice online, so your content marketing needs to work harder to cut through the noise and shout their name. Here are some ways to spark engagement with your prospects from the very first click:



Hang out where they hang out

Don't obsess over Facebook when your ideal customers are on LinkedIn. Understand your niche and post where they are. **What's more, make sure you optimise your posts so that your customers can find them.** This means using the sort of keywords that your leads might use in their search terms and promoting your content on social media and through email newsletters.





Source good thumbnails for social sharing

People are [more likely to engage](#) if there's a relevant thumbnail image accompanying your social media posts. That being said, not just any image will do, so don't use dodgy [stock photos](#) - these put people off. Images only work if they add meaning and value to your content.

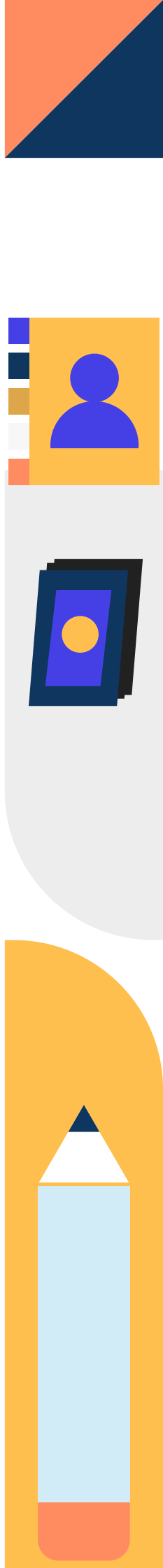
Optimising for initial interactions is crucial because they're the **bolt of lightning** between you and your customers.



Listen to the top trends

If you've got something meaningful to add to current events: say it. It might just be a short tweet, but if that tweet gets retweeted, and retweeted, and retweeted (you get the picture), it will draw people to the rest of your content.

Try to find recent interesting studies that are relevant to your industry, pick a few of the most interesting bits of data and tell your audience why they matter.





Use the right language for the right platform

Different platforms require different approaches.

- Be short and direct on Twitter and make use of relevant hashtags.
- For Facebook, longer content is more acceptable.
- And, on LinkedIn, you might want to ask a question or quote a fact.

Tailor your content for social media in the same way you would tailor a blog for a business.



Be timely

There are [two sharing peaks](#) during the day: between 10am and noon, and between 8 and 10pm. But the best time for sharing varies depending on the platform: it's [7am for email](#), [but 11pm for Pinterest](#), for example.

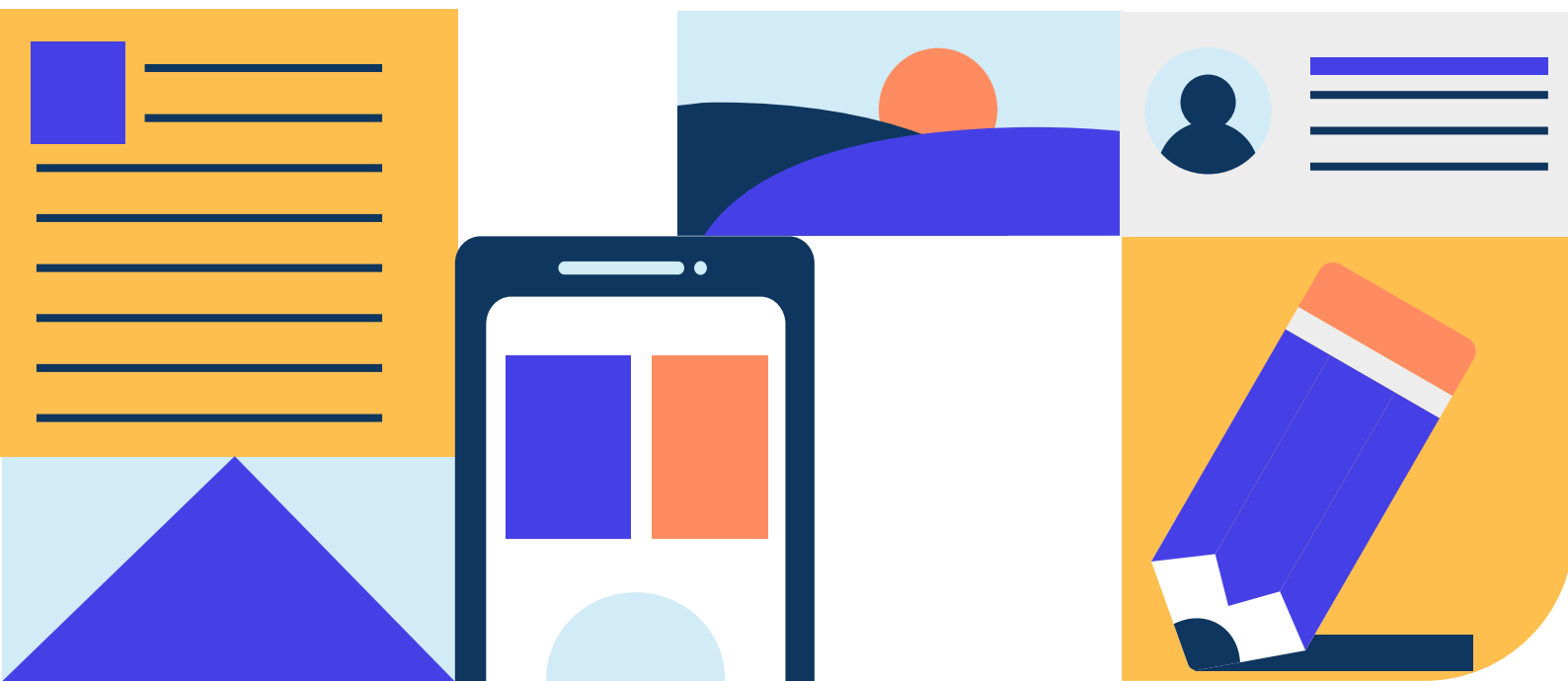




Be human on social media

Don't just share your own posts and expect people to engage. You have to take the time to:

- Reply to comments
- Like other relevant posts
- Follow other people
- Share relevant content from other sources as well. A retweet a day keeps the doctor away.



The hard facts on why people want to share

Marketers are forever chasing the elusive 'social share', but they rarely stop to ask: [why do people share?](#)

'The likelihood of your content being shared has more to do with your readers' relationship to others than their relationship to you,' says [Garrett Moon at CoSchedule](#).

A study of 2,500 online sharers by the New York Times found five of the most common motivations for sharing content:

- 49 percent share content to inform others of products they care about, as well to change opinions or encourage action.
- 68 percent share to define themselves and give a better sense of what they care about.
- 73 percent share to connect with others who share similar interests.
- 69 percent share to feel more involved in the world.
- 84 percent share to show support for causes they believe in.



While there's no way to predict something going viral, producing content that tries to tap into these motivations – content that's useful, relevant and emotionally engaging – will undoubtedly bump up those share button clicks.

Make content worthy of the share button

Not only do you need to reach your audience, but you need them to do the legwork for you. And that means getting them to share your copywriting efforts.

So, to get your prospects past the first click, it's important to use a format they can digest on their lunch break.. Here are some ways to make content [easier to read and absorb](#):

- Your online readers are attracted to content that is easy to organise visually. Chunking information with subheadings, listicles and bullet points works well alongside good web design. Read more about this [here](#).





- **Infographics and slideshares.** According to [research](#) by Xerox, coloured visuals increase willingness to read by 80 percent. Beautifying complex ideas and data will help your readers understand what you're trying to say.
- **'2 min read.' Or 1 or 3 or 10.** More and more websites, such as [Medium](#), display a 'read time', helping readers to anticipate the effort needed to read an article.
- **Reader progress tracking.** This is a neat idea that encourages people to push on through your content. [HBR](#) do it well with slider-bars in their articles, but images work too.



- **Optimise for mobile.** More and more people are using mobile and tablets, sometimes as their [primary device](#), and therefore you must optimise your content for smaller screens. People engage more with [long-form content](#) on mobile. The [sweet-spot](#) for long blogs is around 1,000 words, with a minimum of 500 words for a regular blog.
- **Write like a human.** The robots haven't outsmarted us yet. In fact, [automatically generated content](#) will work against your SEO efforts. And besides, writing like a human is the only way you'll get through to your cynical, modern consumers anyway.

How to turn those shares into conversions

- **Link to other internal webpages** in each piece of content to show a breadth of understanding and to provide your readers with other useful sources. (This also naturally boosts your search engine presence.)
- **Use call-to-action buttons** on your pages to guide people to free, premium content.



- **Create [landing pages](#) for your premium content.** These require people to fill out a form with their email address or other information before they can access the content. This converts [prospects into leads](#).
- **NB:** Never use your leads' information to bombard them with sales calls or pushy emails. People will [actively stop engaging](#) with you and you'll lose them for good.

A share by any other name would smell as sweet

Don't be blindly seduced by the elusive share. Hypnotising as it may be to see the number of share-button clicks skyrocket, **ask yourself why that particular piece of content is being shared.** Who is it being shared with? Are they acting on it? Maybe it's gone viral because you unwittingly made an [amusing typo](#).

The ultimate question with any piece of content is: **would you hit the share button?** And who would you share it with? If you don't like the answers, it's back to the drawing board.



Understanding **how people are engaging with content** (and not just how you think they are) is the key to maximising growth and customer acquisition. If your website is generating leads and conversions – hurrah! If it's not? Figure out why and fix it.

The most important – dare we say exciting? – part of a content marketing strategy is measuring and analysing performance. The trick is to look at the [right metrics](#) from the start and use the best tools to help.

At Articulate, we use [HubSpot's marketing software](#) to collect data on website engagement. We also use Google Analytics and fuel up on Neil Patel's [Quick Sprouts](#) and [Crazy Eggs](#) for information, too.





Quick tips to optimise your blog for UX and conversion

In this section, we'll be discussing how you can optimise your content for snippets, choose (or create) featured images, repurpose old content and write pillar pages to grow your content strategy.

If you were wondering, 'can I do more than churn out blogs and other content?', the answer is yes! Copywriting for marketing is an iterative process. **Like the busy beaver, we're always building.**






Writing for Google's featured snippets

How to increase organic site traffic

1. Optimise for your personas, not **search** engines.
First and foremost, write your buyer personas so you know to whom you're addressing your content.
...
2. Blog away. Blogging is perhaps the most effective **way to increase** your **organic site traffic**. ...
3. Plug into the blogosphere. ...
4. Use long tail keywords.

[How to increase organic site traffic - Articulate Marketing](https://www.articulatemarketing.com/blog/increase-organic-site-traffic) ✓
<https://www.articulatemarketing.com/blog/increase-organic-site-traffic>

 About this result  Feedback



Featured snippets are a copywriter's haiku. Format your writing to answer a specific question in short form, then use the rest of your blog to expand your answer. You can do this with a short paragraph, or by using your titles as a 'how to' list. For example, in a blog about copywriting tips for B2B:

1. Know your personas
2. Do your research
3. Make your writing SEO-friendly
4. etc...

If you land a featured snippet for a keyword, you can guarantee more traffic to your site. People love quick, digestible answers.



Make featured images do more work

Articles with an image receive [94 percent](#) more views. Nice!

However, it's essential to understand that an irrelevant image, or one that is low-quality, [turns the reader off](#) to your message. Here's some tips to finding the right image:



Look for images that [demonstrate the topic](#) and have a strong focal point.



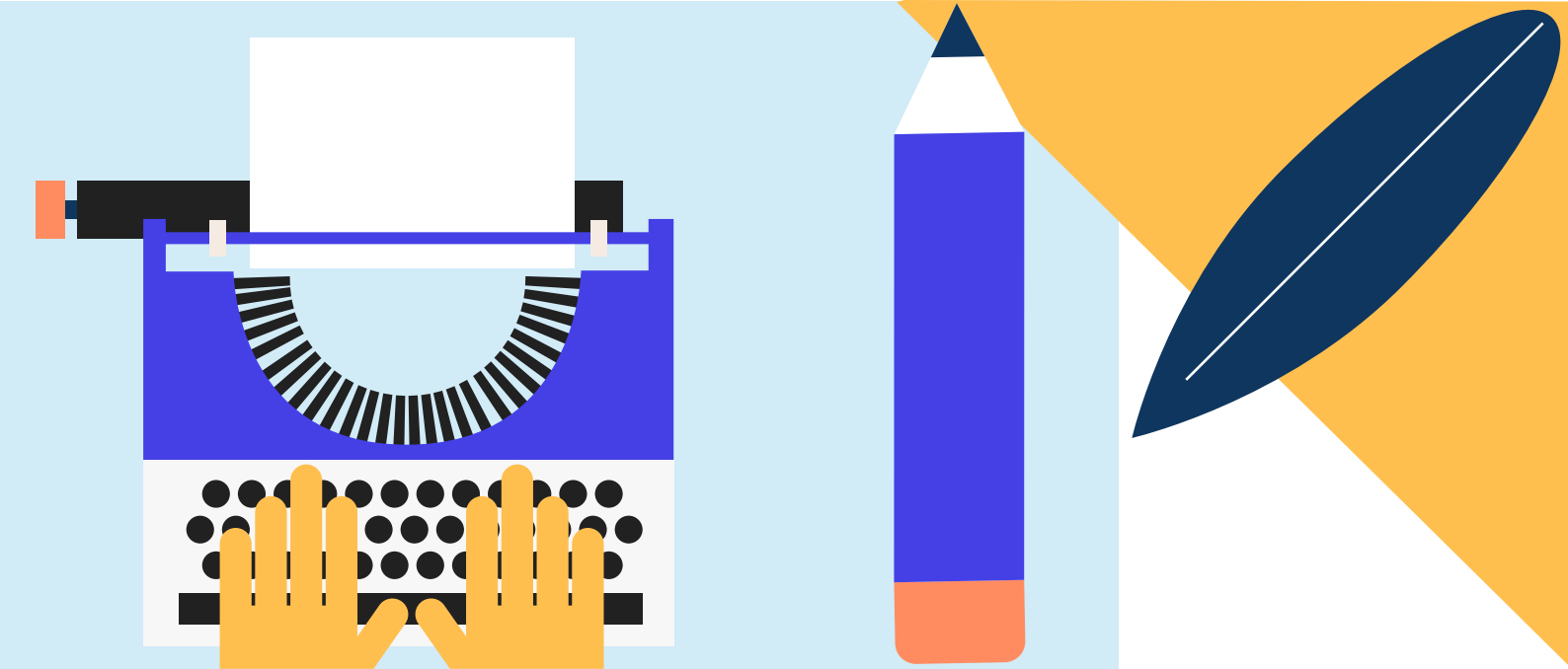
Try to avoid images that have no bearing on your topic, even if they do look aesthetically pleasing.



Steer clear of 'shock value' for the sake of click-bait. Yes, be different, but don't annoy people with misleading information.

If you want to level-up your image game (to match your levelled-up content), try using blog featured images as part of your branding. Use illustrations to tie in every blog with your whole site, giving a consistent, quality feel to the visitor.





Merge, purge and polish – the copywriting clean-up

If you're dealing with quite a mature blog already, it might be time to look back on those reams of clever words to pick out the ones that work, and get rid of the ones that don't.

Merge

Take two or more shorter blogs that cover a similar topic and combine them into one. This will make the new content longer, more valuable and more likely to rank on search engines.

Purge

Kill your darlings. Yes, that one too. Trust us, it won't do any harm. In fact, we do it all the time, and by getting rid of content that is no longer fresh or isn't relevant anymore, we see [increases in traffic](#) and leads.



Polish

Sometimes a blog just needs a little touch-up. Refresh the imagery, update the statistics, add in some content or take something away that isn't adding much to the flow of the piece. This will give it a whole new lease of life.

Pillar pages and content strategy

'What am I reading right now?' I hear you ask. (If you've made it to the bottom of the page – well done!) Well, to answer your question, this is a [pillar page](#). It breaks the rules, baby.

Pillar pages are part of a content strategy that goes beyond blogging and white papers.

The aim of a pillar page is to rank highly for [short-tail keywords](#), by creating a hub of information. Within this hub are links to blogs that are relevant to the key subject, but are focused on more long-tail keywords. This creates a content cluster, with interconnected blogs supporting one another, rather than competing, for that top spot.



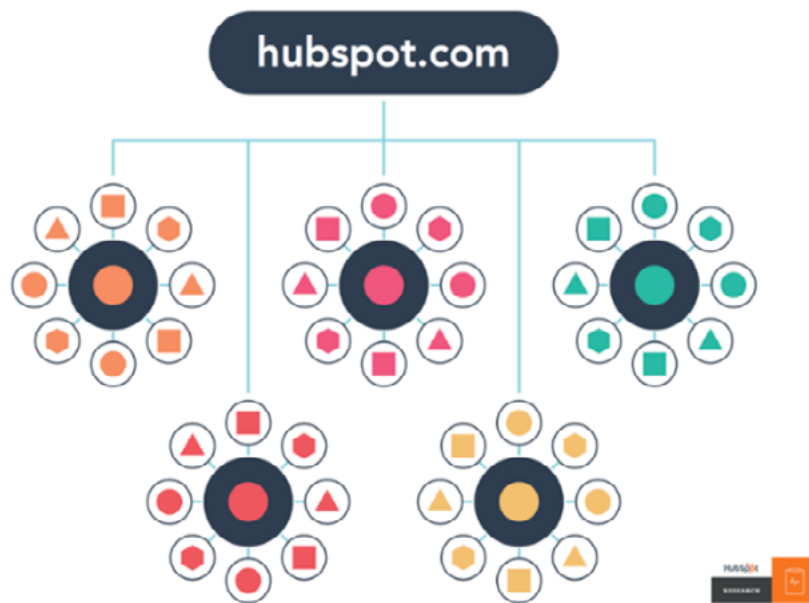


Image source: [Hubspot](#)

Of course, the main aim of a pillar page is to provide the most comprehensive answer to a question on the internet. You might have asked, 'what does a copywriter do?' Well, hopefully, we've enlightened you, in our marketing-speak, roundabout way.

Get in the B2B copywriting game. Make content marketing the priority.

There's worlds in words.

