



CONTENT MARKETING
TIPS
— FOR 2016 —

A Note From Our CEO

Nearly 10 years ago when Brafton launched as a custom news agency in North America, “content” wasn’t the overarching force behind the internet that it is today. At the time, our small but agile

team set out to test the boundaries of content, evolving from 200-word news briefs to symbiotic strategies that marry design with technology, data analysis with creative, consultancy with results. We’ve become a team of more than 300 country-wide, but our values remain the same: creative, continuous and relentless improvement in everything we do.

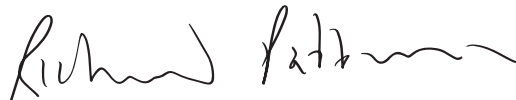
This eBook is an inside look at our experts’ best practices, used in action across more than 800 clients’

digital strategies. Spanning video, user experience, search engine optimization and even good old fashioned writing, our aim through

...our values remain the same: creative, continuous and relentless improvement in everything we do.

this compilation is to provide tips that can be applied to strategies ranging from small business all the way up through large enterprise level.

On behalf of Brafton, I extend our best wishes for a prosperous and successful year of content marketing.



Richard Pattinson
Chief Executive Officer
Brafton



WRITING TIPS

While you may be targeting high-level execs who know the industry minutiae, remember that your online prospect pool is wide. You don't want to cut people out of possible conversations, especially when the most visible content in search targets an 11-year-old reading level.

- **Katherine Griwert**

Writing with SEO/social in mind is all about stripping the fat away to get to the meat of the story, and producing sentences that can easily form the basis of a Tweet.

- **Dylan Cinti**

If we truly understand the subject matter, we more confidently take the lead in conversations. In essence, that's what most businesses are referring to when they ask for thought leadership. But when we confine ourselves to a particular vocabulary, we limit our ability to move with industry conversation, and by forfeiting our own creativity we deprive ourselves of opportunities to help that conversation evolve.

- **Andrew Barks**

Don't let your ego get in the way of providing the voice your client needs. The ventriloquism involved is an art in itself. Be proud that you can step out of your personal style and inhabit the client's voice.

- **Chris Helms**

It might sound crazy, but aim for a middle-school reading level if you want to appeal to online readers. That's the sweet spot for top-ranking content.
- **Lauren Kaye**

There's a temptation to write content in a way that mirrors what has proven to be successful. This makes sense. If you use the same language as successful competitors, you can guarantee an audience - but the trouble is you won't be breaking any ground.
- **Chris Davis**

When considering the direction for a blog article, look at the topic and source and think about how that information ties into the brand and content goals for a unique angle.
- **Quintin Collins**

Don't be afraid of long-form content and longer blog posts in 2016. A well-written, interesting piece can be really captivating and hold someone's interest for a long time.
- **Matt Kaplan**

Write confidently without sounding like a cheesy salesperson. Every "should consider" or "could help" or "might" or "maybe" adds up and drags on readers, leaving them liable to wander or sense a lack of conviction.

- **Dom Tortorice**

CONTENT MARKETING TIPS DESIGN·UX 2016

Before you hit the publish button, take a step back and preview the screen. Make sure the featured image is attractive and complementary to the article – not competing with it. Use subheads to add structure and bullet points to break up long sections of text.

- Lauren Kaye

~ Play With ~
HIERARCHY
when dealing with **fonts**.
SIZE ^{WEIGHT} & **COLOR**
of your font choice are
CONTRIBUTING
FACTORS
to the order in which
INFORMATION
WILL BE READ.

Alison Eagle

MEDIA DEFINES

Style & Aesthetics.

GRAPHICS MUST BE

MOBILE • INTERACTIVE • SCALABLE

and *STILL* tell a *Compelling Story* ~

Vince Strube

CUSTOMIZE THE CONTENT EXPERIENCE

COLLECTING INFORMATION ABOUT SPECIFIC BUYER PERSONAS WILL ALLOW YOU TO

BETTER DELIVER ANSWERS

TO YOUR CUSTOMERS' EXACT QUESTIONS.

Robin Javadi

Succinct stories with fewer data points make more successful graphics. Infographics need enough facts and figures to make a compelling argument, but the numbers can't be plugged in at the cost of a clear and visual narrative.

- Molly Buccini

Peel back the layers and find the ultimate core of a story. Once you have the most basic concept, find an engaging and parallel metaphor and tell a fun story. Just make sure that whatever metaphor you choose, it relates to your audience and is smartly engineered so readers can easily connect the dots.

- Brittany Cornell

The average site visitor's patience is not what it used to be. Make sure when redesigning or starting fresh on a site that you design for the end user, not yourself.

- Andy Walters

Consider contrast when designing. Whether through size of font or images, or with color, contrast will bring more visual interest to your graphic.

- Alison Eagle

Tell real stories in a fun way that real people will be compelled to watch and share, even when they're not at the office. You want to catch people when they're on their lunch break, at night or on the weekend, so they have some time to enjoy your content. And for people to want to consume your videos at those times, your content has to be fun.

- Colin Campbell

Think about your audience first. Great video content makes an immediate, up-front connection with the viewer, and lets them know you understand the problems they face.

- Jesse Mack

Stop trying to script interviews verbatim. Your team lives and breathes your company, so let their passion for what you do show through on camera.

-Tim Griffin

Dare to be funny, dramatic or even shocking. You're not just trying to get your message across, you also want the audience to have an emotional response to the video. Nowadays, your audience is used to seeing a lot of videos, all fighting for attention. You have more creative wiggle room than you think.

- Perry Leenhouts

When writing a video script, never forget that someone has to read your words aloud. Proper grammar and very little repetition of words will make for a better clip. And the on-camera talent who has to read your work will sweat a little less under those hot studio lights.

- Chris Hassan

Don't be afraid of humor. Even if you see your brand as buttoned-up, video is a great medium to let your customers know you can let loose.

- Jesse Mack

Preproduction is the most important part of making videos. This can range from meeting to discuss the topic in depth with the videographer, to getting more involved with storyboarding, shot lists and meticulous schedules. While not all projects will necessarily require the latter, there isn't a single project that wouldn't benefit from extensive discussions and planning beforehand.

- Jacob Beizer



VIDEO PRODUCTION TIPS

Create content that introduces your brand and products in a fun, but educational way, so viewers will want to share with friends AND colleagues alike.

- Colin Campbell

promotion & engagement tips



Kyle Gaw

@KyleGaw

Social media marketing is a long-game about nurturing interest, entertaining and educating prospects until they can't resist anymore and decide to buy from you.



Sumit Sharma

@vasishath56

Social advertising is not optional: In 2016, set aside a budget for social media ads to help your posts get the impact they deserve.



Sumit Sharma

@vasishath56

If you are struggling with proving social ROI, chances are you are not asking the right questions.



Molly Buccini

@mollybuccini

Not all punctuation is created equal on social. Posts with exclamation points actually decrease social shares, while titles with question marks get more shares.



Dylan Cinti

@brafton

If you want to get traction on social media, then your best bet is to interview an industry expert. Having original subject matter expertise lends credibility and originality to a piece, which directly appeals to the professional community on LinkedIn.



Bob McHugh

@brafton

Resist the urge to craft vague, click-bait style tweets that force the user to click on the link for clarification. A click now is not worth irritating your followers in the long run.



Molly Buccini

@mollybuccini

Create a LinkedIn strategy that's professional and informative, without being boring. Custom graphics, info stats and YouTube video embeds can help your brand stand out from the crowd - and visual posts historically see the most engagement.



Rayna Gamble

@Rayna_Gamble

What's the best way to set your brand apart on social media? Personality! Don't be afraid to step outside the box and give your brand a unique personality within your specific industry.

CONSULTANCY

CONTENT OPTIMIZATION • ANALYTICS • SEO

Feel like you're running out of ideas for new content? Try re-purposing some of the older, top-performing content on your site. Be creative and transform an article into a video, animation or graphic. Or convert a video into an article or graphic. There are lots of ways to create new pieces of content from the "old."

- *Lauren Kamb*

Always be answering a question people are asking and make the answer easy to find. Be succinct. Be creative. Be entertaining. Use data. That is content marketing.

- *Matt Levy*

Get to know your audience: Develop buyer personas & create relevant, engaging content for each persona along every stage of your sales funnel.

- *Gwen Slattery*

If you're looking for quick wins or corner-cutting ways to rocket your website to the top of search result pages, content marketing isn't for you. You should be investing in content marketing because you understand your audience. Every audience, in some capacity, is online, and you need to be there to tell them what you do and why they should trust you as a business partner.

- *Colleen Grogan*

Build analytics infrastructure. Optimize your site and content for SEO purposes. Create incredible content. Share it on social media. Go back and see what you've accomplished in Google Analytics because of the infrastructure you've built. Adjust. Rinse. Repeat.

- *Matt Levy*

Unless someone knows your company by name and navigates directly to your website, they're going to have to search for you... or more likely, search for what they want from you. And you need to be there with answers and relevant information when they come looking.

- *Lauren Kaye*

When it comes to measuring blog readership, prioritize users above sessions. Users can have multiple sessions and you want to know what the individual does across multiple interactions on the site.

- *Dave Behuniak*

Content marketing is like a baseball game, not a sumo wrestling match. It doesn't happen in an instant, and you may not see serious results immediately.

- *Matt Kaplan*

Remember that the early stages of the sales process happen when you are not around. Create content that makes it easier for your supporters to get buy-in from their higher-ups.

- *Marlon Glover*

Make sure landing pages and blog articles follow a breadcrumb URL structure. It is not only an SEO best practice, but will also allow for much more detailed analysis in Google Analytics.

- *Tony Johnson*

Having a calendar that is well thought out is integral to the success of content marketing, but you need to think bigger. Before pen gets put to paper (or a calendar is filled out), lay your strategy out and pinpoint what content types will help achieve your objectives.

- *Michael Bratschi*



BRAFTON

FUEL YOUR BRAND