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10 Content types And Formats For Marketers (+Examples)

There's a whole host of [content formats available to marketers](#). These can be grouped into format by Visual, Text, Audio and Review. There's further specific detail on each format later in this article.

Visual content: the web is a visual medium and as such, most amounts of content formats are visually driven.

The most innovation in content comes in the visual format space. Designing visual content to be responsive to the computer, tablet and mobile screens has become an important consideration for all content creators as the user experience in relation to content is an important decider in retaining audiences.

#1 Whitepapers

- These are great knowledge-sharing resources that can help you build thought leadership and credibility in your industry. They're a strong lead generation tool and can be a great awareness tool too.
- Make sure to educate readers by focusing on an industry topic that is relevant. Provide solutions based on research, insights and facts – a badly researched and flawed white paper could do damage. Make sure to keep the look, feel and language on-brand with your business e.g. "We at Coca-

Cola did some research and found..." instead of "I researched..."

- Always include a logical link back to your business or website. For example, if you were a law firm, you wouldn't do whitepaper research on sugar consumption. You might, however, do a white paper on the legal requirements for a business around calorie declarations on menus. Whitepapers can be text-heavy, so make sure to ease the reader's job with interesting and high-quality visuals to break up any potential monotony in reading.
- Leveraging user data like email addresses for mailing lists or a social media endorsement to gain access to your whitepaper could be a consideration. Ultimately this could achieve a lower reach for your content but there is a better payoff for your dissemination of content. There are both arguments for and against. A potential avenue could be sharing part of a whitepaper to bait audiences in and then introducing a gate for the full report.

Typically whitepapers will:

- Focus on customer's pain points
- Demonstrate solutions
- Keep to consistent company branding
- Include links to your website
- Include strong CTAs
- Use clear, crisp visuals
- Publish in. PDF format
- Consider gating content

#2 Ebooks

eBooks:



- These are usually shorter and more interactive than whitepapers. They generally focus on multimedia content and nice “how-to” guides rather than thought leadership pieces that aim to build utility and trust.
- They’re generally easier to distribute than whitepapers. Add a creative commons license for your e-Book to allow for sharing by third parties and make sure to amplify through your social channels.
- eBook formats are more likely to be read as they contain functional benefits that businesses can implement immediately rather than whitepapers which are a little more cerebral and require more dissection to process.

eBooks typically:

- Focus on customer’s pain points
- Demonstrate solutions
- Use of engaging multimedia and graphics
- Include links to your website
- Strong CTAs
- Experiment with formats
- Don’t gate content to help the message travel

#3 Infographics

Infographics:

- Are a great way to use data to tell a story

- More engaging than figures and visually appealing
- Can be used as longform singular content or split into social assets with additional motion graphic elements added.

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Typically infographics should:

- Focus on 8 – 12 pieces of data
- Have references as the footnote on how the data was collated
- Use as many graphic elements as possible rather than just numbers and stats

#4 Blogs

- Allows businesses to journal their activity through long-form text and imagery
- Blogs have the added benefit of increasing SEO ranking when considered keyword dispersal is used
- Blog content also allows reasons for third-party websites to link back to your website which is beneficial for SEO ranking
- Case studies are often featured in blogs to drive thought leadership and credibility in business

#5 Images

- Are an effective content format within any digital presence
- Allows brands to convey a simple message with strong branding
- Consideration around resizing for “no click previews” on social platforms and also file sizes
- Optimum image sizes per platform change all the time so make sure to stay updated on platform changes
- Facebook’s 360 images allow static panoramas to be mapped into a social post and are really effective for content pieces like skylines or cityscapes.

#6 Interactive Content

Interactive Content (Specifically Facebook Canvas):

- Interactive formats like Facebook Canvas allow users to dictate their own journey within a social space
- Limited formats are available for now but results are promising
- Taking over a full mobile screen with an immersive content format has increased clicks within the canvas by up to 500% more than account averages.

#7 Video Content

Video Content:

- Video content is the number one form of content consumed on the web. 87% of content marketers use video in their online marketing.
- More than 50% of video is viewed on mobile.
- Audience retention rates for video content continue to decrease based on the sheer volume of content audiences are exposed to. Generally speaking, 20-30 seconds is the recommended length for brand videos which means:
 - Simple narratives
 - Easy to understand
 - Branding within the first 5 seconds
 - Disappearing or Ephemeral Video:

Snapchat Video

10m videos are viewed on Snapchat a day. However, the format only exists for 24 hours.

The platform allows for full-screen vertical video with additional features such as lenses (CGI animated overlays that interact with user-generated video) and filters (graphic overlays that brand onto a video). Videos are only 10 seconds long, however, they can be stitched together in a series of six videos to create a story on the platform.

If using Snapchat for your content marketing it's worth investigating the audience usage in your market. The platform skews heavily to a youth audience from 16-20 so make sure the platform is right for you. Also, analytics and click-throughs are limited on the platform with self-serve advertising not currently available. Paid media on the platform can cost from \$30,000 upwards for 3 x 24-hour slots for branded filters and up to \$75,000 for branded lenses. Branded interstitials, full-page static video formats, exist as advertising on the platform.

Instagram Stories

Having replicated a number of features of Snapchat stories, Instagram stories sit as a format within the main Instagram app. Each user has a top menu that runs horizontally (as opposed to Instagram's normal vertical feed) for a 24-hour life span and runs at a maximum of 15 seconds.

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Similar filters exist on the Instagram Stories platform as well as full-page interstitials.

Initial reports have shown globally that daily usage of Instagram Stories has overtaken Snapchat as a platform for users so far.

Many have theorised that the reasons for this are easier to place advertising from brands, the existing utility and audience of Instagram and the ability to cross-promote content between Facebook considering the brand is the owner of Instagram.

Facebook Stories

These are the same format as Instagram stories but sit within Facebook in the exact positioning of Instagram stories.

Live Video

Facebook Live, Twitter's Periscope, Instagram stories, Snapchat Live Stories and YouTube Stems have opened up a world of live streaming to content

marketers to allow brand followers insight into the raw real-time activities of businesses.

Key considerations around this though are that the format can't be promoted currently other than supporting posts and in a live context. Planning is crucial to make sure you have high-quality content.

360 Video

Facebook and YouTube both allow for full 360 formats within videos allowing users to see all around them.

This takes a lot of resources and planning to do well but can be a very effective format. Great examples of this include Disney's Star Wars 360 which shows an alien planet.

Key considerations:

Video objective: an emotive brand film that's worth investing in long-form vs short-form short and simple brand message.

Seeding platform: YouTube for longer pieces versus Facebook for 20sec versus Snapchat/Instagram Stories for 10-15sec.

Subtitles: 75% of video is watched in silent autoplay via mobile – consider using these for videos with dialogue.

#8 Articles

Articles are long-form social posts that help to build thought leadership or expertise in a particular area. They are very effective in driving conversation, and gaining additional perspectives and insight from peers within the same vertical.

LinkedIn and Facebook offer the facility to create long-form articles at present which factor in text, imagery and video into their creation.

In the example here I published an article on Instagram stories being launched in late 2016 and the implications it would have for Snapchat's business model.

The statistics visible by the icons next to the author byline allow users to identify views, likes, comments and shares.

- It's important to have a snappy and succinct title
- Articles load pretty fast as the content is mostly plain text so be sure to grab your audience's attention in the first paragraph
- Engage with comments on articles to continue to amplify your credibility and expertise in the subject area.

#9 Templates and Checklists

Templates and Checklists:

These can be handy formats to help your audience and show them thought leadership.

The example shown here from Hubspot is a quick cheat sheet to content optimum sizing per platform. Why do they work for you?

- They add utility to your audience. They're often something that can be saved down and kept for future use. Include branding and they won't forget the brand that helped them out with useful assistance.
- Research what your audience's pain points are so what you're creating for them actually provides assistance and shows true effort on your part to understand the challenges of your audience.

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#10 Webinars

Webinars:

- These online seminars can help you connect to your audience in a human

way by putting a face/voice to your offering. The feeling of dedicated care that an individual can get out of a webinar helps build a relationship with your potential customer.

- Theme your webinars on a specific topic that you are an expert in and use visual aids e.g. videos, animations or PowerPoints over screenshare to talk them through how to solve their business need or educate them in a specialized area.
- Allow time for Q&A and discussion on their experiences. Be warned though, if you aren't sure of the area you're giving a webinar on, a Q&A could be tricky so be prepared in advance.
- Lastly, always provide a takeaway e.g. a follow-up email with the presentation you delivered or an invitation to ask more questions. Webinar audiences are investing their time in listening to your expert insight so maximize this opportunity as much as possible.

#11 Podcasts

Podcasts:

With the rise in online audio streaming from platforms like Spotify and SoundCloud, podcasts have become more and more popular. Globally, listenership has risen to 24% of online users with an audience of 18-54, affluent and educated individuals.

Podcasts are the perfect format to build your thought leadership on a topic. Make sure of the following:

- The quality of audio is high
- Each podcast has a discussion area or a theme
- Invite guest participants to add their insight and have discourse.

Be aware that a large volume of podcasts are consumed on the go e.g. commuting, so provide additional information like web links referenced in a

supporting article that users can access after the show.

Also, there's a great opportunity for content repurposing from podcasts where a 20-30 soundbyte could be transformed into a social object e.g. an image or a particular conversation point could be explored more widely in a follow-up blog post.

Action Point

PS: I know you might agree with some of the points that I have raised in this article. You might not agree with some of the issues raised. Let me know your views about the topic discussed. We will appreciate it if you could drop your comment. Thanks in anticipation.

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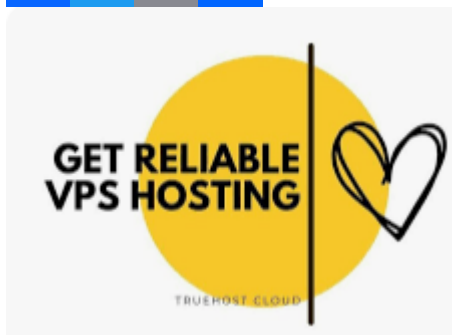
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