

Creative intelligence for  
startups and scaleups

A background image of an office with a teal overlay. In the foreground, a woman with glasses and a man in a white shirt and tie are smiling and looking at a laptop screen. The text 'Content marketing made simple' is overlaid in large white letters.

# Content marketing made simple

Creative inspiration

**SIM**  
Creative Agency

# Right idea, wrong angle?

Every organisation is brimming with enough quality content to fuel a multi-channel campaign for months. The trick is knowing how to frame it...

As a business, you'll have an idea of the messages you want to get across in your content marketing. You'll doubtless want to talk about your USPs, your features and benefits, your team and all the good stuff that makes your customers come back for more.

The trouble is, without a creative treatment, talking about all that good stuff can come across as self-aggrandisement. Or worse still: just plain boring. No one clicks, no one comments, no one shares. And before long, your content marketing efforts are being scaled back because: "No one is interested in what we've got to say," or: "Our services don't really lend themselves to blogs or social media".

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## Power of connection

At SIM7, we believe that all companies can create memorable, engaging and effective content marketing from their everyday operations. In fact, we know it. For example, we work with one national mortgage brand that generates tens of thousands of engagements on its social media channels each month and has even created a vibrant, virtual community. At a more local level, the blogs that we create for a stone flooring company have generated direct sales. Actual money in the till – ker-ching!

With respect to these two lovely clients, neither are particularly unique companies offering what could be described as desirable products or services, but there's a real appetite for what they're saying. Or to be more specific: their audiences are responding to *how they're saying it*.

## Frame the conversation

The truth is that all companies have a story to tell, and conveying that story on a human level will create the kind of connections that drive positive responses. The subject is almost irrelevant, it's how that subject is presented that matters. To use an old advertising saying: sell the sizzle not the steak.

Let's take a fictional B2B tech company as an example. They produce widgets that have some genuinely useful features and, when it comes to creating content marketing for these widgets, the temptation is to focus on each one of these features in turn for a series of videos, blogs, or social media posts.

So far so bad, right? This is precisely the sort of content marketing that next-to-no-one is interested in and will certainly make our fictional tech company feel that "No one is interested in what we've got to say". (Oh, and if you're wincing at the thought of forgoing the features, we strongly believe that they should be highlighted in case studies, data sheets and more targeted marketing assets.)



## So, what works?

On the other hand, the company's content marketing audience would be interested in the secrets of the business owner's success, say. They might also like to read about the eureka moment that led to the development of the widgets, or to watch slow-mo videos of what happens on the production line, or to find out that company's engineers have created and shared a Yacht Rock Spotify playlist. They may well share a video of someone from the company putting the widget's indestructibility (one of the features) to the test. Perhaps with a sledgehammer.

Content marketing is all about telling stories. It's about generating interesting and engaging conversations where your widget's 'genuinely useful features' can be conveyed in more nuanced, creative – or even oblique – ways. An extreme example of this would be the blender manufacturer Blendtec, which demonstrated the power of its machines by blitzing a selection of random objects on YouTube. The 'Will it Blend?' campaign has been watched over 300 million times, and as company founder Tom Dickson explains: The campaign took off almost instantly. We have definitely felt an impact in sales. Will it Blend has had an amazing impact to our commercial and our retail products."

## How it's done

If you're not lucky enough to work with a creative agency that can come up with some winning content marketing ideas or angles for you (ahem – try SIM7 for size!), the key is to embrace creativity. Set aside some time with others in your team and brainstorm, using the content framework below as a starting point.

- Content starting points
- Videos
- Your employees
- Behind the scenes looks
- Contests and giveaways
- Product photos
- Interesting quotes
- Guest takeover posts
- Tips and tricks
- Polls and surveys
- A peek inside...
- Previews and teasers

To reiterate, the above points are your starting point; they're what you use to springboard into a world of creativity and of unique, interesting and engaging angles. And if you're wondering how to make that leap, Simeon de la Torre, creative director of SIM7, recommends the 'Yes, and...' technique to get the best results.

Here's how to use it in practice:

Encourage someone from the team to put forward an idea (based on the above list) and then use the prompt 'Yes, and...?' to try and build that idea into something bigger and better.



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No matter how 'bad' the initial suggestion might be to you, resist the impulse to respond with 'No' and a reason why it isn't going to work. Ask encouraging follow-up questions not to crash test your colleague's thinking, but to help create a collaborative environment that fosters creativity and imagination. Note all the ideas down as you go and see what you're left with.

As an example of this technique in practice, someone on the team might suggest that you ask the MD to take over the company Instagram account for the day...

"Let's ask the MD to take over our Instagram account."

"Yes, and...?"

"She could take pictures of whatever she's doing."

"Yes, and...?"

"She could also take some videos."

"Yes, and...?"

"We could turn them into a 'day in the life' video diary."

"Yes, and...?"

"Or how about we get a videographer to film her next conference speech?"

"Yes, and...?"

"We could edit it into a series of bite-size leadership videos."

Before you know it, you'll have a stack of top-quality content ideas wrapped in irresistible angles that are just made for clicking, liking and sharing.



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