

The State of Content Marketing

2022 Global Report



Introduction

Culture, talent, and strategy combine to make every business as unique as your thumbprint. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to creating content at scale, organizing processes, or generating quality organic traffic. But building a content marketing strategy and workflow that allows you to deliver on stakeholder expectations is a top priority in 2022.

How you execute your planning and production depends on myriad factors. Indeed, with more tools and tactics at your disposal—and a shifting, uncertain marketplace—it's never been more complex.

The solution ultimately lies in avoiding ad hoc content

creation and case-by-case analysis and instead—building a strategy and mapping clear processes.

We have created this report because we want to share our expertise and industry knowledge to help your business grow better with content.

Inside, you'll find insights and practical advice based on the opinions of industry experts and our own expert analysis of Semrush data. Covering everything you need to know to design a better content marketing strategy this year, this State of Content Marketing report provides a bird's eye view of top content marketing trends and an in-depth manual on how to build your content strategy and workflow in 2022.

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Content Marketing in Numbers: Key Trends from 2021

In this section, we dive into the search trends relating to content marketing itself and show what's growing, what's static, and what seems to be on the decline. We examine the following areas:



Searches related to content marketing



Top content marketing questions



Topic research trends



Cost per click (CPC) trends



Twitter content marketing topics and hashtag trends

Stats to keep your eye on

1

Average monthly searches for “content marketing agency” fell **from 5,400 to 1,900**

2

22% more people asked the question: **“What is content marketing?”**

3

Average monthly searches for “content marketing strategy” fell **by 33%**

4

“How to create content for affiliate marketing” saw **a 366%** increase on the previous year

5

B2B and niche industries appear in content-marketing-related trending topics, globally



Top 20 Google Search Queries Related to Content Marketing

keyword	Avg.monthly searches	keyword	Avg.monthly searches
1 content marketing examples	6,600	10 content marketing course	1,900
2 content marketing strategy	6,600	11 content marketing funnel	1,600
3 content marketing institute	5,400	12 content marketing jobs	1,600
4 content marketing definition	4,400	13 content marketing services	1,600
5 content marketing manager	2,900	14 content marketing tools	1,600
6 digital content marketing	2,900	15 social media content marketing	1,600
7 types of content marketing	2,900	16 benefits of content marketing	1,300
8 content marketing plan	2,400	17 content marketing manager salary	1,300
9 content marketing agency	1,900	18 content marketing quotes	1,300
		19 content marketing calendar	1,000
		20 content marketing platform	1,000

The most searched queries related to content marketing: 2020 vs. 2021

keyword	Avg.monthly searches	keyword	Avg.monthly searches
1 content marketing strategy	9,900	1 content marketing examples	6,600
2 content marketing agency	5,400	2 content marketing strategy	6,600
3 content marketing examples	5,400	3 content marketing institute	5,400
4 content marketing institute	5,400	4 content marketing definition	4,400
5 content marketing definition	3,600	5 content marketing manager	2,900
6 content marketing plan	3,600	6 digital content marketing	2,900
7 content marketing services	2,900	7 types of content marketing	2,900
8 digital content marketing	2,900	8 content marketing plan	2,400
9 b2b content marketing	2,400	9 content marketing agency	1,900
10 content marketing manager	2,400	10 content marketing course	1,900
11 seo content marketing	1,900	11 content marketing funnel	1,600
12 types of content marketing	1,900	12 content marketing jobs	1,600
13 content marketing jobs	1,600	13 content marketing services	1,600
14 content marketing tools	1,600	14 content marketing tools	1,600
15 content strategy example	1,600	15 social media content marketing	1,600
16 content advertising	1,300	16 benefits of content marketing	1,300
17 content marketing blog	1,300	17 content marketing manager salary	1,300
18 content marketing companies	1,300	18 content marketing quotes	1,300
19 content marketing funnel	1,300	19 content marketing calendar	1,000
20 social media content marketing	1,300	20 content marketing platform	1,000

What we did: Focusing on Google searches related to “content marketing,” we found the average monthly search volume for keywords in the period January to December 2021.

Top 20 Questions

About Content Marketing Asked on Google

Questions	Avg.monthly searches	Questions	Avg.monthly searches
1 what is content marketing	14,800	11 what are examples of content marketing	110
2 what is content marketing in digital marketing	880	12 what is b2b content marketing	90
3 why is content marketing important	880	13 how to generate leads with content marketing	50
4 what is content marketing strategy	590	14 what is good content marketing	50
5 how to do content marketing	390	15 how to use content marketing to grow your business	40
6 what is content marketing examples	390	16 what is social media content marketing	40
7 why content marketing	390	17 how much do content marketers make	30
8 how to create a content marketing strategy	320	18 how to become a content marketing manager	30
9 how to create content for affiliate marketing	140	19 how to develop content marketing strategy	30
10 how to develop a content marketing strategy	110	20 what is branded content marketing	30

What we did: Looking at Google questions related to “content marketing,” we found the average monthly search volume from November 2020 to October 2021.

Most Popular and Most Trending Topics

Related to Content Marketing

Top popular topics

Topic	Score
content marketing tools	81
corporate content marketing	75
social media content marketing	71
content marketing trends	64
b2b content marketing strategy 2020	59
content marketing strategy examples	59
video content marketing strategy	
infographic content marketing examples	53
content marketing writing	52
content marketing examples	48
seo content marketing	45
types of content marketing	45
great b2b content marketing examples	45
content marketing personal linkedin profiles	42
content marketing with purpose	41
creative content marketing	40
content marketing strategies	39

Most Popular and Most Trending Topics Related to Content Marketing

Top trending topics

Topic	Score
social media content marketing	99
seo in content marketing	76
content marketing for building products	75
content marketing strategy examples	48
content marketing decisions	41
content marketing examples	40
video content marketing strategy	39
content marketing tools	31
content marketing platform for agencies	30
content marketing small business	30
b2b content marketing strategy 2020	29
content marketing services for business	28
content marketing problems	28
the b2b content marketing blog	27
content marketing for small businesses	25
content marketing roi	24
great b2b content marketing examples	21

Most Popular and Most Trending Topics

Related to Content Marketing

Top trending searches

Topic	Search volume
content marketing plan	673,000
corporate content marketing	110,000
content marketing for building products	110,000
content marketing for architects	110,000
content marketing platform for agencies	110,000
video content marketing strategy	110,000
content marketing strategy examples	62,400
real estate content marketing	60,500
healthcare content marketing	40,500
great b2b content marketing examples	33,550
content marketing examples	33,100
law firm content marketing	18,100
content marketing challenges	18,100
content marketing course online	14,800
content marketing services for business	14,800
content marketing leads	14,800
member of content marketing	14,800

What we did: We analyzed the most queried topics by the users of Topic Research. Each topic in the following table includes a number of keywords. You can also see the total number of searches for the related keywords connected to each topic.

Key

1

Popular topics are determined based on the search volume, as well as backlinks, and shares

2

Trending topics are those that showed the most significant growth of mentions on social media

3

Trending searches are related to the trending topics that generated the biggest search volume

All volumes are presented as a weighted average.

Semrush's [Topic Research tool](#) [↗] helps marketers draw upon thousands of ideas during the content planning stage. It allows you to find popular, relevant topics in your area, see the most shared headlines, discover questions users ask, and find the topics competitors rank for.



20 Most Expensive Keywords

in the Content Marketing Industry

keyword	Avg.CPC (USD)	keyword	Avg.CPC (USD)
1 content marketing funnel	21.55	10 content marketing analytics	9.93
2 content marketing agency near me	16.29	11 b2b content marketing agency	9.61
3 content marketing pittsburgh	16.18	12 content marketing automation	9.44
4 content syndication marketing	16.04	13 content marketing agency chicago	9.37
5 content marketing for law firms	14.98	14 top content marketing agencies	9.16
6 content marketing atlanta	13.08	15 content marketing firm	8.21
7 content marketing solutions	12.08	16 best content marketing agencies	7.32
8 content marketing chicago	10.42	17 content marketing companies	7.25
9 multi channel content marketing	10.21	18 content marketing for nonprofits	7.00
		19 most successful content marketing campaigns	6.90
		20 content marketing calendar	6.89

What we did: We found the most expensive keywords to bid on related to the content marketing industry globally—and then sorted them by average CPC.

Twitter Topics and Hashtag Trends

What we did:

We examined **a total of 217,247 tweets** relating to the topic of content marketing between January and December 2021.

We then examined hashtags featuring **#contentmarketing** in the most popular tweets (5+ retweets) that were published in this time period to establish the top social media hashtag trends throughout the year.

Top 20 Hashtags

Used with #contentmarketing

Most popular 2021 hashtags related to content marketing

Rank	#hashtag	Count	%
-	contentmarketing	3,981	100%
1	digitalmarketing	1,862	47%
2	seo	1,605	40%
3	marketing	1,484	37%
4	socialmedia	849	21%
5	business	654	16%
6	socialmediamarketing	629	16%
7	smm	535	13%
8	content	488	12%
9	ai	381	10%
10	contentstrategy	355	9%
11	bigdata	320	8%
12	growthhacking	317	8%
13	startup	311	8%
14	entrepreneur	268	7%
15	blogging	268	7%
16	100daysofcode	263	7%
17	ppc	261	7%
18	analytics	260	7%
19	startups	258	6%
20	onlinemarketing	248	6%

Top 20 Twitter Topics

Discussed with #contentmarketing

Rank	#hashtag	Count	%
1	content strategy	652	16%
2	seo	650	16%
3	digital marketing	541	14%
4	social media marketing	286	7%
5	content creation	238	6%
6	social media	222	6%
7	growth hacking	167	4%
8	content marketing strategy	159	4%
9	blogging	127	3%
10	content planning	111	3%
11	video marketing	103	3%
12	email marketing	95	2%
13	google	95	2%
14	content writing	83	2%
15	blogging tips	79	2%
16	content audit	75	2%
17	business	71	2%
18	contentmarketing	70	2%
19	blog	70	2%
20	smm	68	2%

Takeaways

Searches related to content marketing

“Content marketing examples” remains static, whereas we see a significant fall in both searches for “content marketing agency” and “content marketing services”. At the same time, there is growing interest in “content marketing platform,” which just now creeps into the top 20. Does this mean we are seeing a move toward in-house content creation? It could certainly be an indication.

Searches on “benefits of content marketing” rise significantly, bringing it into the top 20. We also see a number of searches related to job hunts and content marketing jobs, which remains static, “content marketing manager salary,” which has increased nearly 50%, and “content marketing manager,” which has risen over 20%. More people seem to be looking at taking on a career in content marketing.

Content marketing questions

In 2021, more people asked the question: “What is content marketing?” It suggests more marketers will be rolling out their own content plans this year.

There are a couple of new questions that did not feature in the previous year’s list. These were:

- “How to use content marketing to grow your business”: This shows that entrepreneurs and business owners are keen on finding out more about content marketing—suggesting that more small businesses will adopt the tactic in the coming year
- “How to generate leads with content marketing”: This relates to return on investment and the need for content marketers to generate qualified leads and hit their targets

Takeaways

Takeaways

Topic Research Trends

Popular topics globally

- “Content marketing tools” once again features in the most popular topics globally. Clearly, there is a need for more automation as marketing managers deal with labor-intensive processes.
- “Corporate content marketing” and “B2B content marketing strategy 2020” together indicate that content marketing is a strong tactic when selling to other businesses

Topic Research Trends

Global top trending topics

- “Content marketing plan” evidently dominates social media conversation. Also on the list are “great B2B content marketing examples” and “content marketing examples.” These highlight the need for resources, inspiration, and general support when designing a marketing workflow.
- Niches are also beginning to emerge here: Architecture, healthcare, law, and real estate all feature in the trending searches. This tells us that there is a need for targeted content marketing resources, as well as signaling greater investment in content among certain industries.

Takeaways

Takeaways

Cost per click (CPC) trends analysis

- “Content marketing funnel” comes in at the top with the highest CPC, at \$21.55, underlining the value of strategy. Brands bidding for this term tend to offer marketing managers tools to plan out their processes.
- “Content marketing for law firms” (\$14.98), “B2B content marketing agency” (\$9.61), and “content marketing for nonprofits” (\$7) speak to specific industry niches and the B2B market. The high CPC indicates external content marketing agencies and freelancers working in these areas tend to need specific industry knowledge or expertise.

Takeaways

Twitter topics and hashtag trends

- “Strategy,” “SEO,” and “Digital Marketing” dominate the list of topics, highlighting the clear connection between content marketing, business goals, and search traffic.
- However, we also see Video Marketing in the top 20 list. We see this as an important tactic for content marketers hoping for greater engagement and social shares in the coming year.



2022 Content Marketing Trends: Ask the Experts

We spoke to a number of marketing experts to find out what they believe will be the eight top trends in content marketing in 2022. In this section you'll learn from:

Henneke Duistermaat,
Founder at Enchanting Marketing.

Heidi Cohen,
Chief Marketing Officer at Actionable Marketing Guide

Kathryn Strachan,
Managing Director & Owner of Copy House

Casie Gillette,
Senior Director, Digital Marketing at KoMarketing

Liraz Postan,
International SEO and Speaker, Co-founder and CEO at LiLi Marketing Services

Andy Crestodina,
Chief Marketing Officer and Co-founder of Orbit Media Studios

Amit Panchal,
Digital Marketing Consultant at amitpanchal.com

Adam Connell,
Founder of Blogging Wizard and Startup Bonsai.

Michael Brenner,
CEO of Marketing Insider Group

Trend One:

Content Will Become More Human



Henneke Duistermaat,
Founder at [Enchanting Marketing](#)

1

A huge amount of content is out there and it's hard to stand out.

2

Niching into an area of content is a good approach for content marketers.

3

Originality and being “human” are also key when it comes to creating content that resonates.

The internet is already awash with average and below-average content. With artificial intelligence (AI), this tsunami of low-quality content will only accelerate. The content marketers who will continue to stand out are those with the most intimate knowledge of their (niche) audience. They are the original thinkers, the creative writers, the experimenters, the people with the skills to captivate, educate, entertain, and inspire their audience.

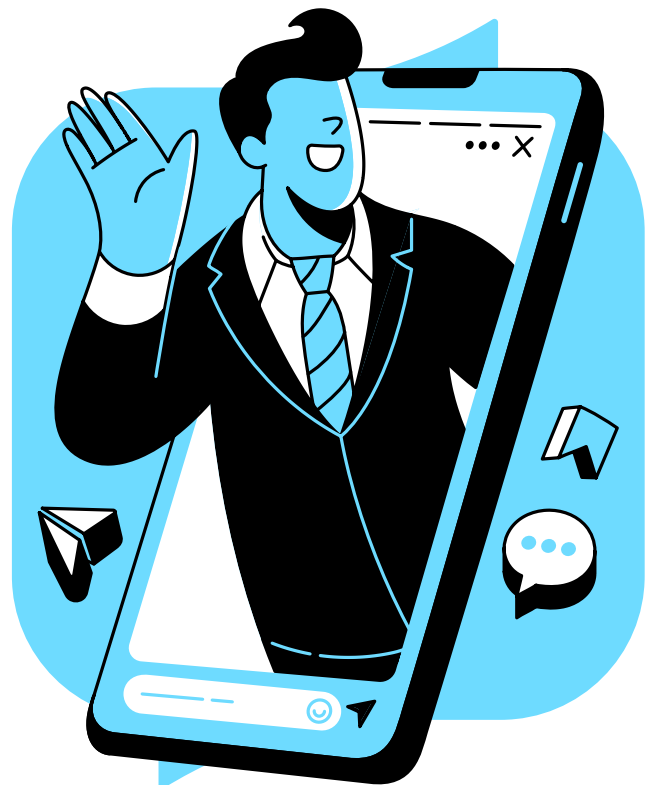
In short, the most human content wins. So, how can you step up and create more human content?

Be original

Don't share the same stuff everyone is sharing. Instead, commission original research, grow your expertise, and refocus your attention by reading beyond what the algorithms suggest. If you read and watch what everyone else is reading and watching, you'll produce similar content too.

Find your voice

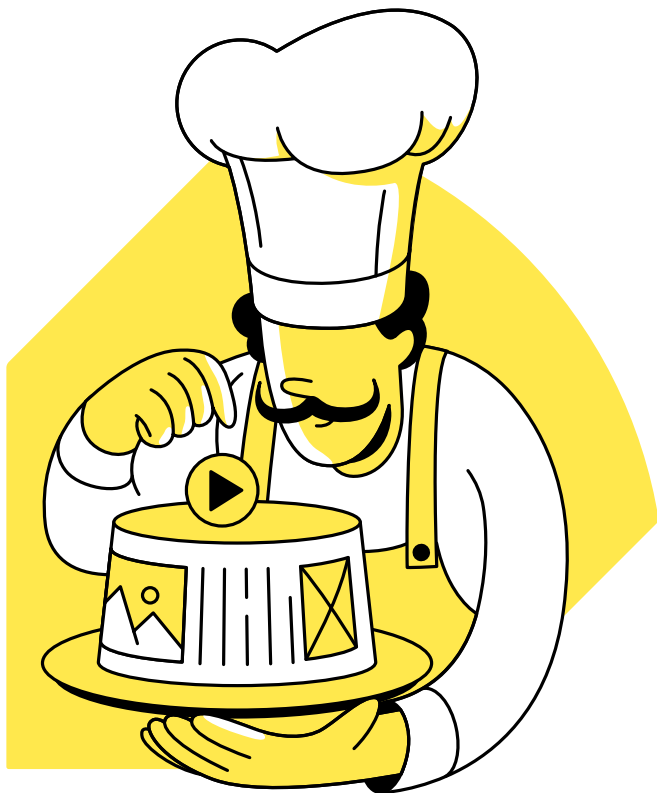
Don't sound the same as everyone else. Treat your content as a conversation with your audience, let your (brand) personality shine through, and weave original stories into your content.



Improve your content creation skills

Don't settle for just above average. For instance, most of us are good at creating scannable blog posts with captivating subheads, lots of white space, pictures, and bullet points that attract attention. But what does it take to get people to read your blog posts from your first to your last word, and then also implement your advice? What helps:

- [Write more clearly and concisely](#) so readers glide through your content more smoothly
- Use examples, share miniature stories, and [write more vividly](#) so readers can visualize your advice
- Learn how to overcome hesitations so readers feel eager to implement your advice
- Being helpful is a given. To stand out, content has to build stronger relationships and galvanize your fans. So, create content that's different, more original, and more engaging. Create content that resonates more strongly with your audience. Be human.



Trend Two:

Your Audience Needs Will Continue To Shift



Heidi Cohen,

Chief Marketing Officer at [Actionable Marketing Guide](#)

1

Businesses have changed their approach to work post-COVID.

2

Avoid talking too much about the pandemic to avoid overloading your audience

3

Think about other forms of content including voice-to-text material in 2022

Your audience and their needs have changed over the past two years. The key differences across businesses are how employees work, their lifestyles, and their use of devices and media consumption. This includes the use of voice-first devices like smartphones and voice assistants.

To ensure your content marketing continues to meet your audience's needs, take the time to talk to them to determine what their hot button issues include.

Based on your finding, update your existing content to:

Remove any excessive references to COVID since your audience likely has pandemic fatigue. Any reference to the pandemic may seem off-putting.

Add voice to text content: This allows you to reach your on-the-go audience who prefers listening to content on voice-first devices.

Transform voice and audio content into text and visual content. Extend the range of existing content to reach more of your audience.

By taking this audit-like approach to your existing content, you can make it feel fresh post-pandemic.

Trend Three:

Content Marketers Will Focus on Customer Empathy and Customer Research



Kathryn Strachan,

Managing Director & Owner of [Copy House](#)

1

In 2022, you'll need to connect with B2B customers on a human level

2

Content needs to continue to be personalized

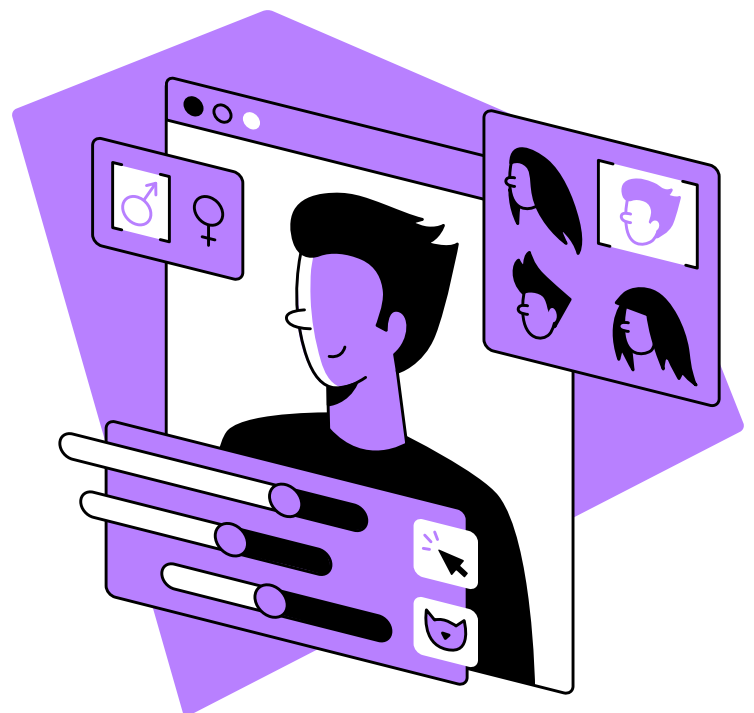
3

Your content should incorporate all stages of the marketing funnel

In the B2B industry, we can often lose sight of the person behind the screen and market towards the business itself. But if the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that it's vital to understand your customer avatar. There are tons of ways to do this, such as digging into their pain points and what's keeping them up at night, then learning how to cater to their needs.

Integrating empathy into your content strategy and researching your customer's needs will help your brand connect with your audience by producing **personalized** content for them.

Did you know that **55%** of marketing professionals stated that personalization increases conversion rates and promotes growth? It's no wonder why it's essential to take time out and dig deep into your customer personas.



So, how can you create personalized content for your target audience?

First thing's first. Research your customer avatar and speak to your ideal customers if you can. This is an important part of learning who your customer is and how to target them.

Here you must look at factors such as their career, lifestyle, hobbies, interests as well as what makes them tick. You must also find out whether they're the final decision-makers, and, if not, who is the final decision maker and how much authority does your customer avatar have?

By picking apart your ideal customer, you can then learn how to best cater to them while ensuring your content answers the questions of the final decision-makers too. By truly understanding what their pain points are and what's keeping them up at night.

At Copy House, we're constantly catering content towards our customer avatars. We do this by understanding

their search intent, creating sound SEO that gets our content out there, and creating relevant content for our customers and clients.

We also use [the content pillar approach](#) to create content for customers at all stages [of the sales funnel](#). This means that because each customer is at a different stage of their buying journey, they require different information.

When creating a content strategy, you need a mix of all three to help push your leads through the funnel and convert them into customers. Each stage requires in-depth research of what your potential customer needs and how you can deliver it to them.

To create this content, you must once again tap into your customer avatar and see their pain points and how to cater directly for them. After all, if you cater to everyone, you'll reach no one.

Trend Four: Storytelling in Content Marketing Will Be Key



Casie Gillette,

Senior Director, Digital Marketing at [KoMarketing](#)

1

Telling a story with your content is equally important for all formats and channels.

2

Being a good storyteller means understanding your audience really well.

3

Talking to the sales and customer support teams in your company can help you gather important insights about your customers.

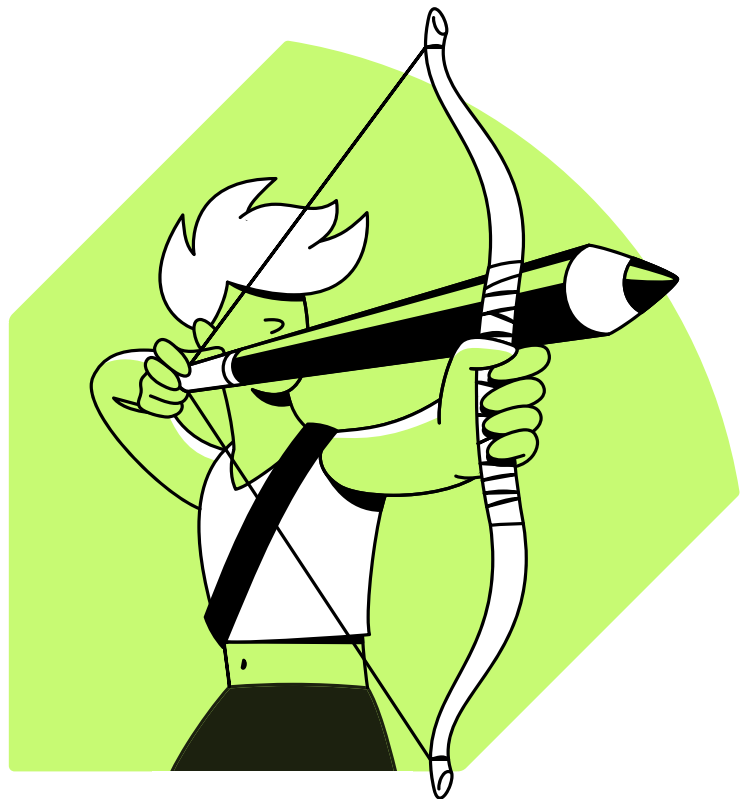
Casie says we must consider [this tweet](#) from digital marketer Matt McGee, which states,

“If you're going to work on one specific marketing skill this year, work on being a better storyteller.”

For content marketers, being able to create something that is interesting to your customers means being creative. It means being able to tell a story. If you are promoting a product, what is it about that product that is interesting? If you are writing ad copy, why should someone click on your ad above the others? So much of what we do is about the customer, but it's also about the story we are telling.

Whether you are creating content for products, for lead generation, for SEO, or for social media, you must write something compelling for your customers. And to be a better storyteller and to be a better content marketer, we have to know our audience. We can no longer just write for a keyword or write for a search result, we need to truly understand who it is we are trying to reach.

That is a big change I have seen over the past few years and something that will continue to play a role in the future. Break down the silos in your organization. Talk to your sales team, talk to your customer support, check out social media to find out who is talking about you and what else they are interested in. By talking to the people who talk to your customers, you can better understand what they want and the story you need to tell them.



Trend Five:

Content will Be Seen as a Revenue Generator



Liraz Postan,

International SEO and Speaker, Founder of [Liraz Postan LTD](#)

1

Small businesses will be investing more in content marketing

2

Content marketing can be expensive, so it's important to set goals and expectations

3

There will be more positions open for talented content marketers in 2022

Since COVID, small businesses have been investing efforts in digital marketing strategy—and competition for ranking is as tough as ever.

Nevertheless, content resources are expensive—and that’s a challenge for small business owners. Since every piece of content requires resources and budget, it’s important to measure our content and create an effective content funnel to ensure we make the most of it.

Here are some top tips to help you do so:

1 Always set KPIs and hold yourself accountable for every piece of content. It doesn't mean that every content piece will always perform perfectly and add to the bottom line, but every piece of analysis will at least help you understand what works and what doesn't.

2 Use tools to analyze content performance. Some potential performance metrics include traffic, engagement, trackable events on your website, conversion rates, leads—even return on investment.

3 Optimize your content plans and your content accordingly. Completing the previous steps will help you make more decisions based on the real user data. Try to remove yourself from the equation, because, at the end of the day, it's your customers who will be interacting with this content, not you.

2022 will be the year we will start looking at our content as another channel. Content will be tied to the user intent and be more detailed. Hopefully, Google will continue to become smarter by analyzing pages that can bring the best content experience. This content includes informative videos, great visuals, comparison tables, and well-formatted content. With that advance, we can pay more attention to the user experience and worry less about article length.

Trend Six:

Click-Through Rates in Search Will Be a Top KPI



Andy Crestodina,

Chief Marketing Officer and Co-founder, [Orbit Media Studios, Inc.](#)

1

The biggest trend in SEO isn't a ranking factor. It's a CTR factor.

2

Beware of topics that no longer generate clicks. Write deep answers to big questions.

3

Creating memorable content is the key to long-term success.

The biggest trend in search isn't the most talked-about trend. It isn't Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness (E-A-T) or Core Web Vitals (CWV). It's much bigger and more fundamental. It's a change that affects virtually all keyphrases. This trend doesn't affect rankings. It affects click-through rates.

When you begin your journey into SEO, you may think about rankings. That's understandable: No rankings means no traffic. But the more you learn about search, the more you realize that rankings aren't really the goal. The goal is a steady stream of qualified visitors. And that means clicks.

Ever seen an account where a top position for a good keyphrase holds steady, but traffic to the page is gradually declining. This is common.

What's an SEO and a content marketer to do? There are a few things.

Target topics for which there isn't a simple answer. Content that provides short answers to quick questions is the least likely to attract traffic. Google is simply providing the answer in the SERP. "How many calories in peanut butter?" No one will ever attract traffic from that one.

On the other hand, when the topic requires a detailed answer with a lengthy explanation, the visitor will have to click to get that answer, and you have a chance of winning a visitor. "How to make homemade peanut butter?" Google can't answer that right in the SERP, can they?

Go beyond text into video. If Google shows other formats in search results, you need to publish in those formats to compete. This could mean images, but more often it means video.

When it works well, it's amazing. It's like a giant TV screen embedded in the SERP. No, it's not going to drive traffic, but brand awareness is real. And if you don't win it, someone else will.

If you put these videos on YouTube, then embed them on pages that are already attracting visitors. Then you have [an automatically successful YouTube strategy](#). You are guaranteed to win.

Create content that is actually memorable. The traffic we do squeeze out of search is typically very short-lived. Your visitors may not be on your site for long (5-7 minutes on average at most) and click-through rates from the landing page to subsequent pages are usually low (10-15% on average at most).

But what happens in their mind during that visit? Were they surprised by the value they found on the page? Did the content challenge their point of view? Did they think back on the information days or weeks later?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, that visitor is more likely to search for you next time using a branded query next time. You have successfully made all of your competitors irrelevant, and declining CTRs don't matter. You are building a brand.

**Amit Panchal,**

Digital Marketing Consultant at amitpanchal.com adds:

Another aspect marketers should look at are the Google algorithm updates, which have always impacted the work of SEO and content marketing specialists. Recently, Google released another major update, the Core Web Vitals update, also known as the Page Experience Update.

It focuses on page load times and user experience and consists of three metrics that score a user's experience while loading a webpage. The score is determined by:

- ★ How quickly page content loads
- ★ How quickly a webpage can respond to a user's input
- ★ How unstable the content is while it is being loaded in the web browser

In other words, if you are struggling to rank your content or see your traffic declining, chances are, you need to improve the user experience on your website. To check your Core Web Vitals, you can head to [Page Speed Insights](#) or use the Core Web Vitals report in the Site Audit tool by Semrush.

Trend Seven:

Short-Form Video Will Increase in Importance



Adam Connell,

Founder of [Blogging Wizard](#) and [Startup Bonsai](#)

1

Short-form videos are engaging and here to stay

2

Using video as part of your content output in 2022 is an important way to grow your business

3

Consider where your audience is and look at your distribution strategy because there are lots of video-first channels to leverage

If TikTok and Instagram have taught us anything recently, it's that short-form videos didn't die with Vine. They are here to stay and they're only getting more popular.

This is because they allow us to reach busy consumers who wouldn't ordinarily have the time to watch longer-form content. It's the quick and entertaining nature of these videos that is generally responsible for their ability to spread like wildfire across the internet. So note that as video length increases, you run the risk of decreasing the shareable nature of videos.

Remember, short-form video isn't just for weird dance moves or fails. You can put them to work in your content strategy and use them to grow your business.

Here are some suggestions to get you started:

FAQs:

Do you or your brand get a lot of frequent questions? Answer them directly in an FAQ video.

Company

announcements:

Do you have news to share? Share it in a short-form video.

New ad types:

Consider using short-form videos in your paid advertising strategy. They're especially effective when partnering with influencers.

Educational videos:

Educating your customer base is important. And it can be an effective growth tool. Try distilling specific concepts down into short and entertaining videos.

Challenges:

User-generated content (UGC) can be extremely powerful. Challenges are one of the most effective ways to encourage your community to create content for you.

Testimonials:

Shine the spotlight on positive customer feedback. This is especially important for small businesses. Instagram stories are especially good for this.

Other social platforms are starting to catch on to short-form video content so you have more ways to share it than ever before. Not only do we have TikTok, Instagram reels, Facebook stories, and Instagram stories, but we also have Pinterest idea pins, YouTube shorts, and more.

Trend Eight:

Content Audits Will Take Center Stage in 2022



Michael Brenner,
CEO of [Marketing Insider Group](#)

1

2022 will be more about focusing on what delivers results than about finding new content marketing tactics

2

Seek out opportunities for improvement in your existing content

3

Finally, content audits and updates will be a principal focus for many marketers in the coming year

In 2022, content marketing leaders are mainly focusing on how to get the best results from existing content marketing efforts. Sure, some will say that video, AR, VR, voice, and probably even AI are the biggest trends in content marketing.

But if you talk to real content marketing innovators, they are looking for those simple 20% of things that will deliver an 80% upside. For us, we're doing more content updating, pruning, and repurposing.

The trick is to find content that performed well in the past. Maybe it had page-one rankings or high traffic, great conversions, or high page authority. But if a page has lost those results, it is ripe for pruning or updating.

Updating this content will become less of a side project and more of the main project for many content marketers. We have seen lost rankings come back, traffic return, and lead-driving results from updating quality pages and pruning (re-directing) some of our non-performing older content.

Explore our step-by-step guide to performing [a content marketing audit](#).



Content Marketing Industry Survey 2021

To truly understand the state of content marketing in 2021, we surveyed 1,500 marketers in companies ranging from one to 1,000 employees or more, across more than 20 industries and over 40 countries. Their answers paint a picture of a marketing industry that truly favors content as a tactic, with 97% of respondents saying it formed part of their strategy.

At the same time, it seems that many brands are just getting started with content marketing. 42% are taking their first steps, 36% say they have fairly developed content marketing operations, versus only 19% that believe they have a mature system.

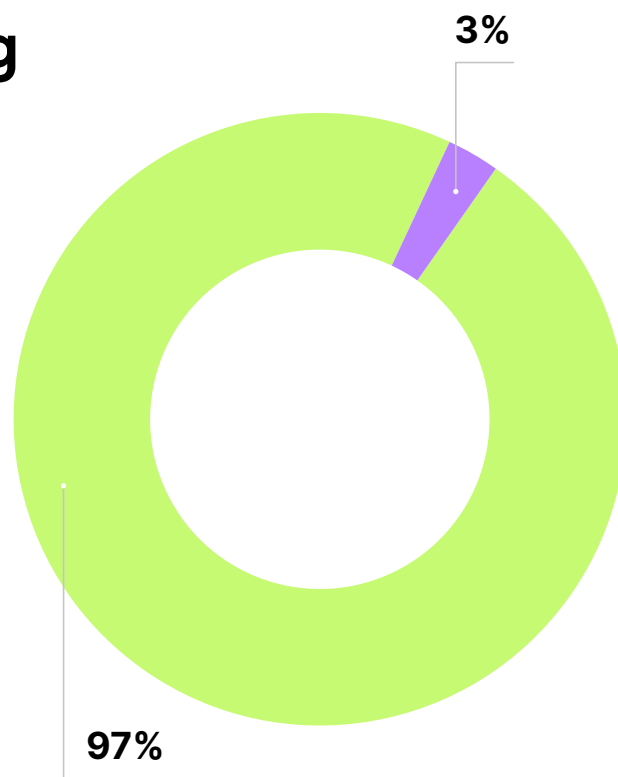
Across the following pages, we highlight some of the most interesting answers and do some deep dives

into what makes a successful content marketing team.

Read on to understand how other marketers are approaching their content strategy. You'll learn how companies of different sizes benchmark and measure progress and see how the most successful content marketers achieve their goals.

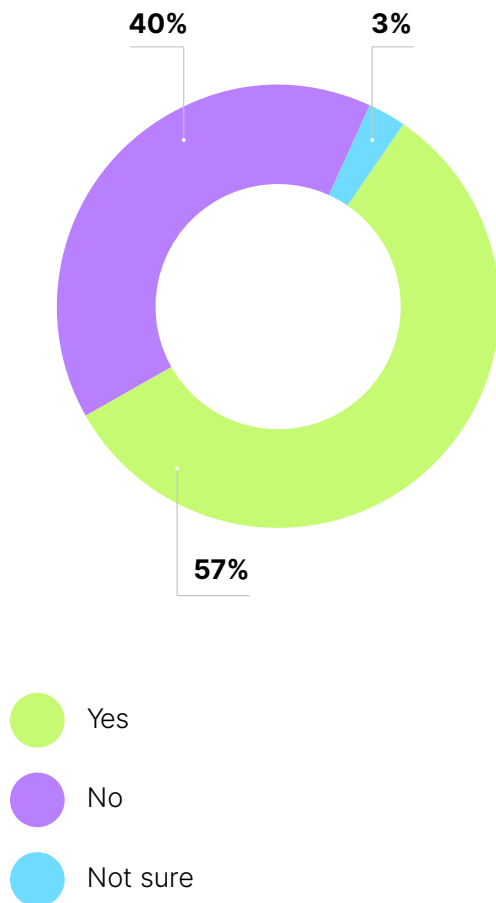
Use of Content Marketing

Is content marketing part of your marketing strategy?

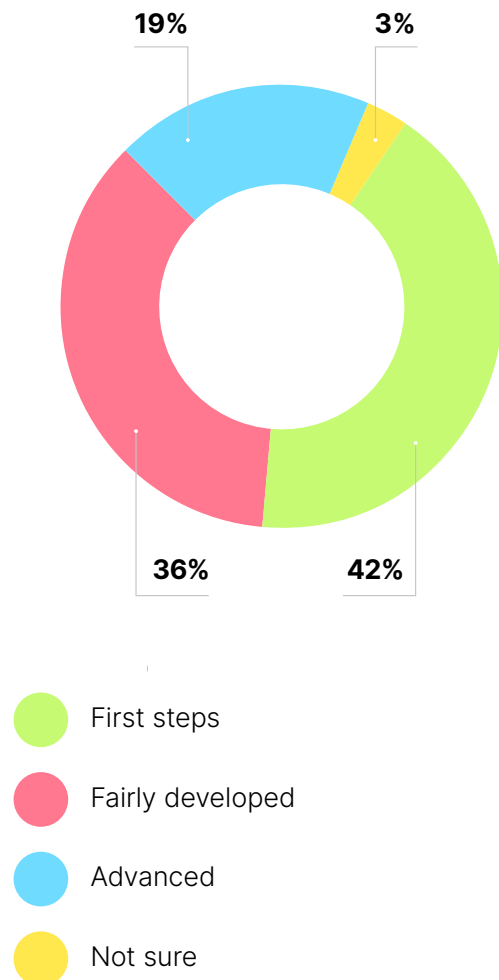


Use of Content Marketing

Do you have a documented content marketing strategy?




How would you rate your content marketing strategy's maturity and complexity?

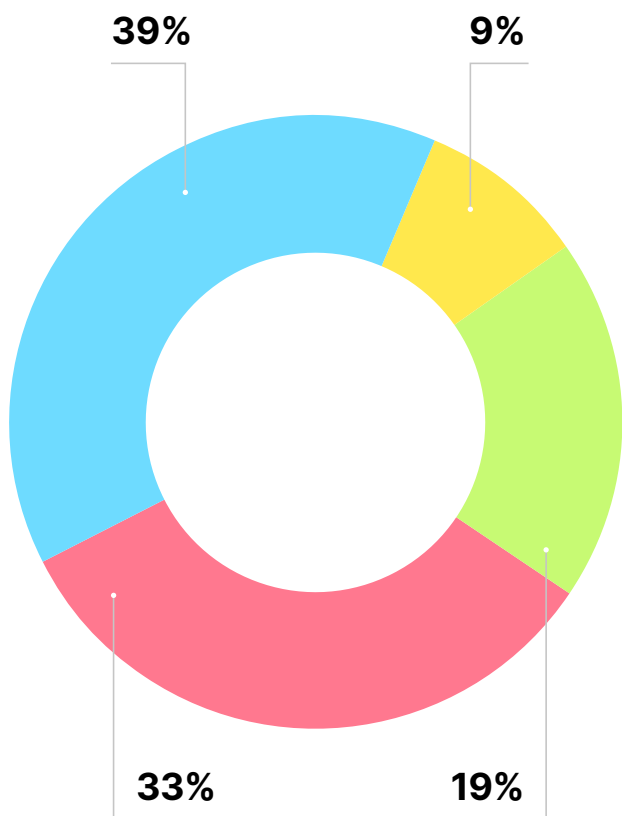


Content Marketing Strategy & Success

In this section of the survey, we explore how content marketing is working for our survey respondents.

How would you evaluate your company's content marketing success in 2021?

-  Very successful
-  Moderately successful
-  Somewhat successful
-  Unsuccessful

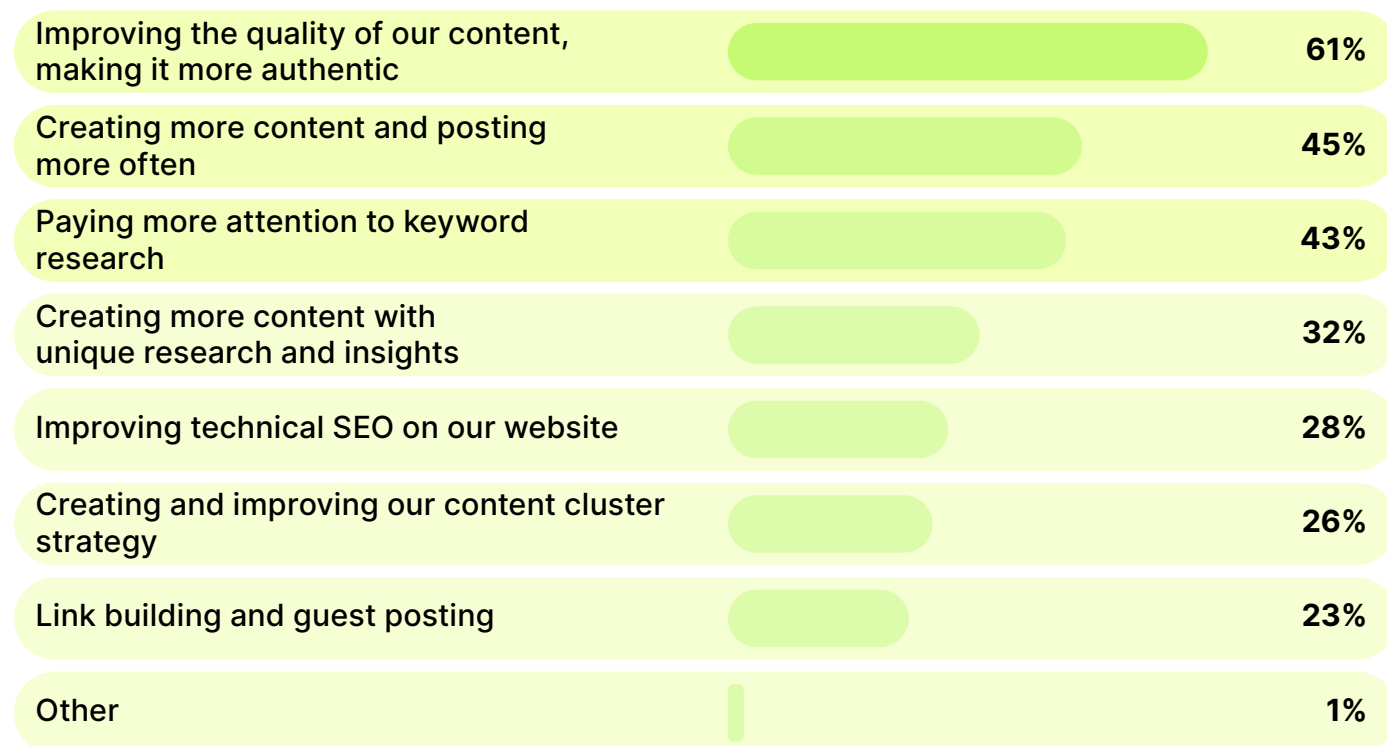


Content Marketing Strategy & Success

Which tactics helped you the most to make
your 2021 content strategy successful?



Which tactics helped you the most with ranking your content organically in 2021?



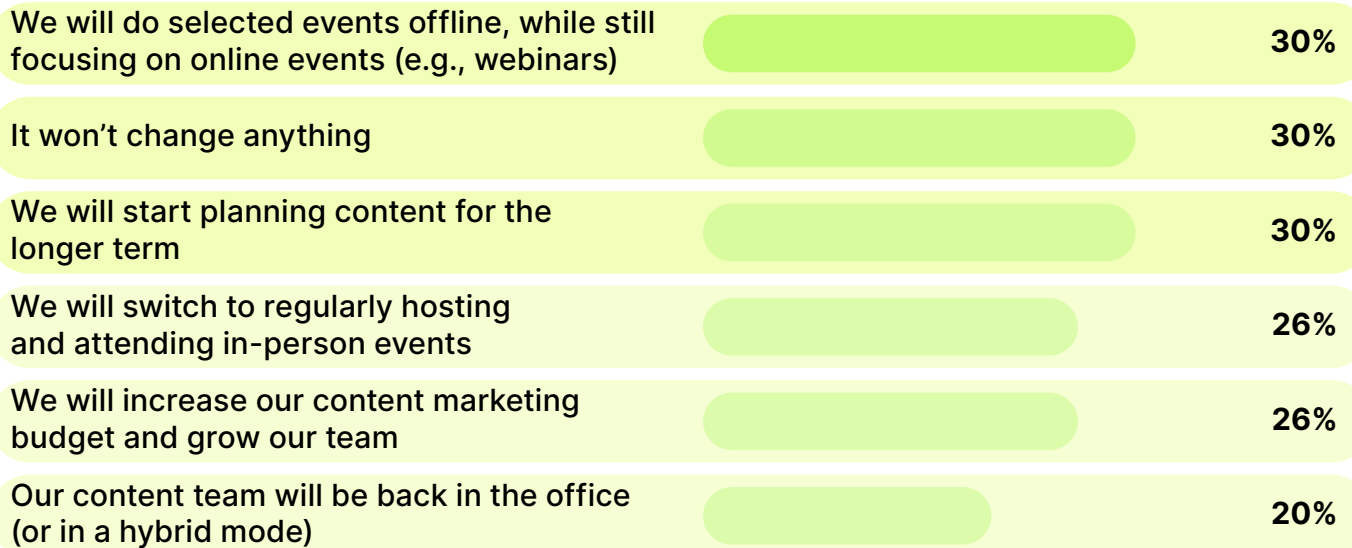
What are your key content marketing goals for 2022?



What are your top content marketing challenges?



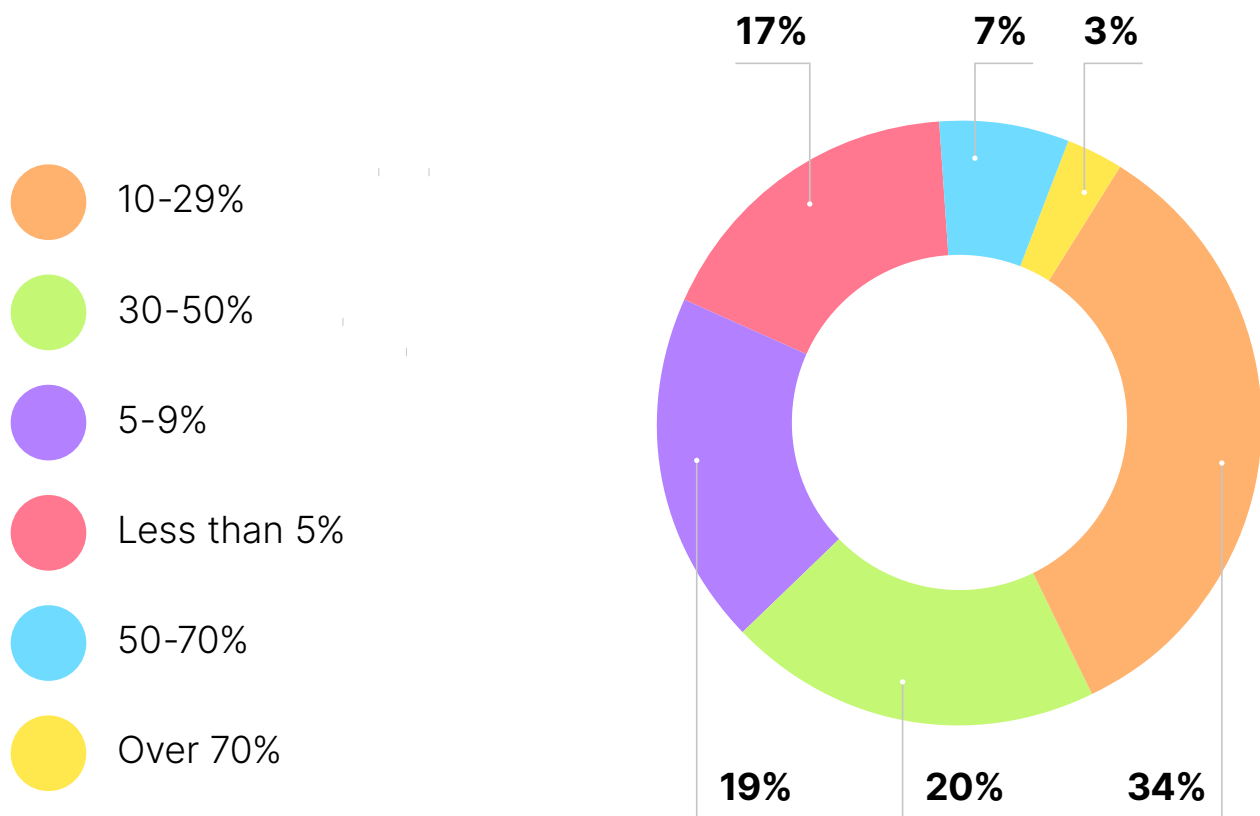
How will COVID affect your marketing operations and plans in 2022?



Marketing Budgets and Content Investment

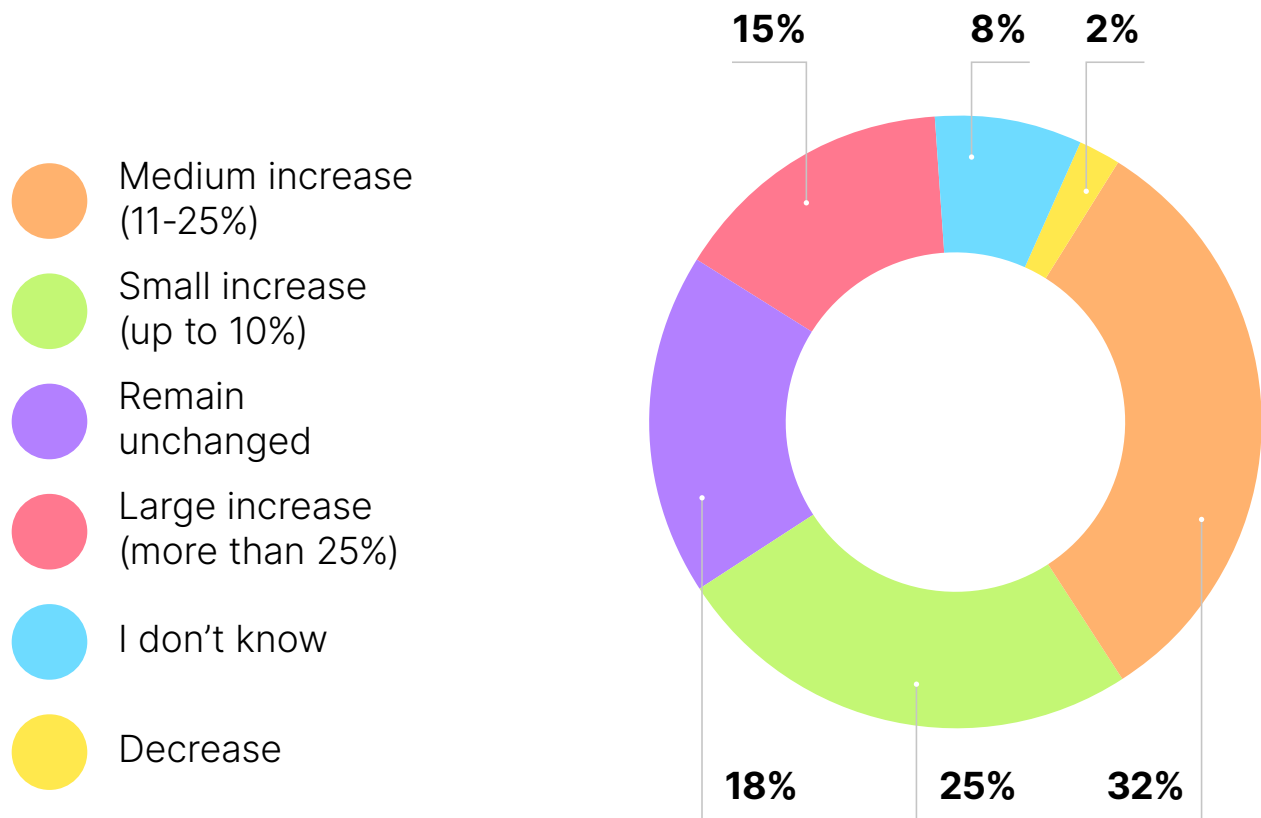
Now let's look at 2021's marketing budgets and how they are likely to shift in 2022.

How much of your total marketing budget did you spend on content marketing in 2021?



Marketing Budgets and Content Investment

How do you expect your content marketing budget to change in 2022?



Marketing Budgets and Content Investment

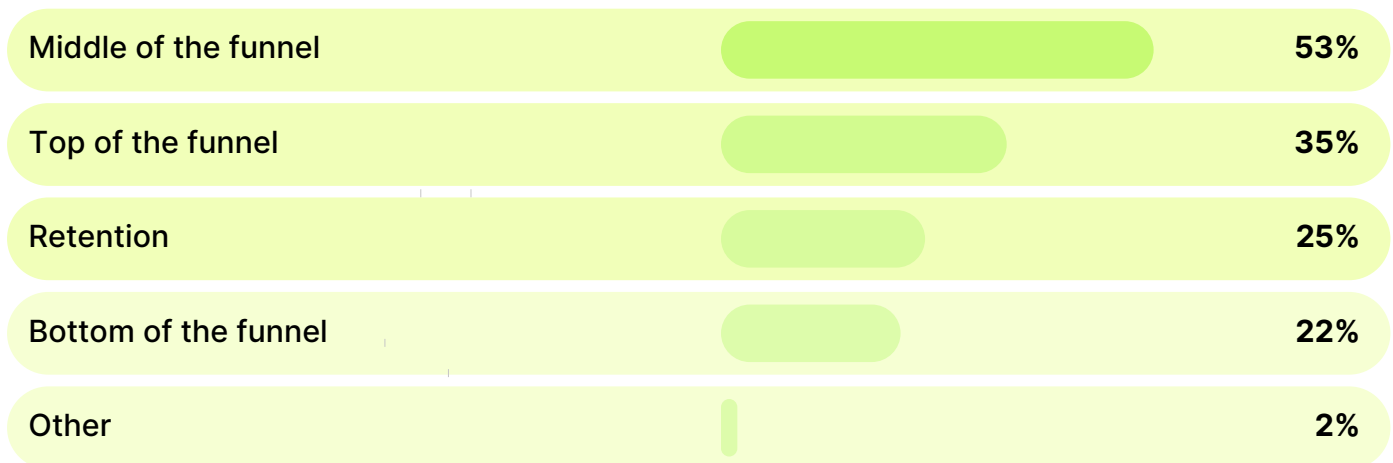
What will be your key areas of content marketing investment in 2022?



Content Creation and Distribution

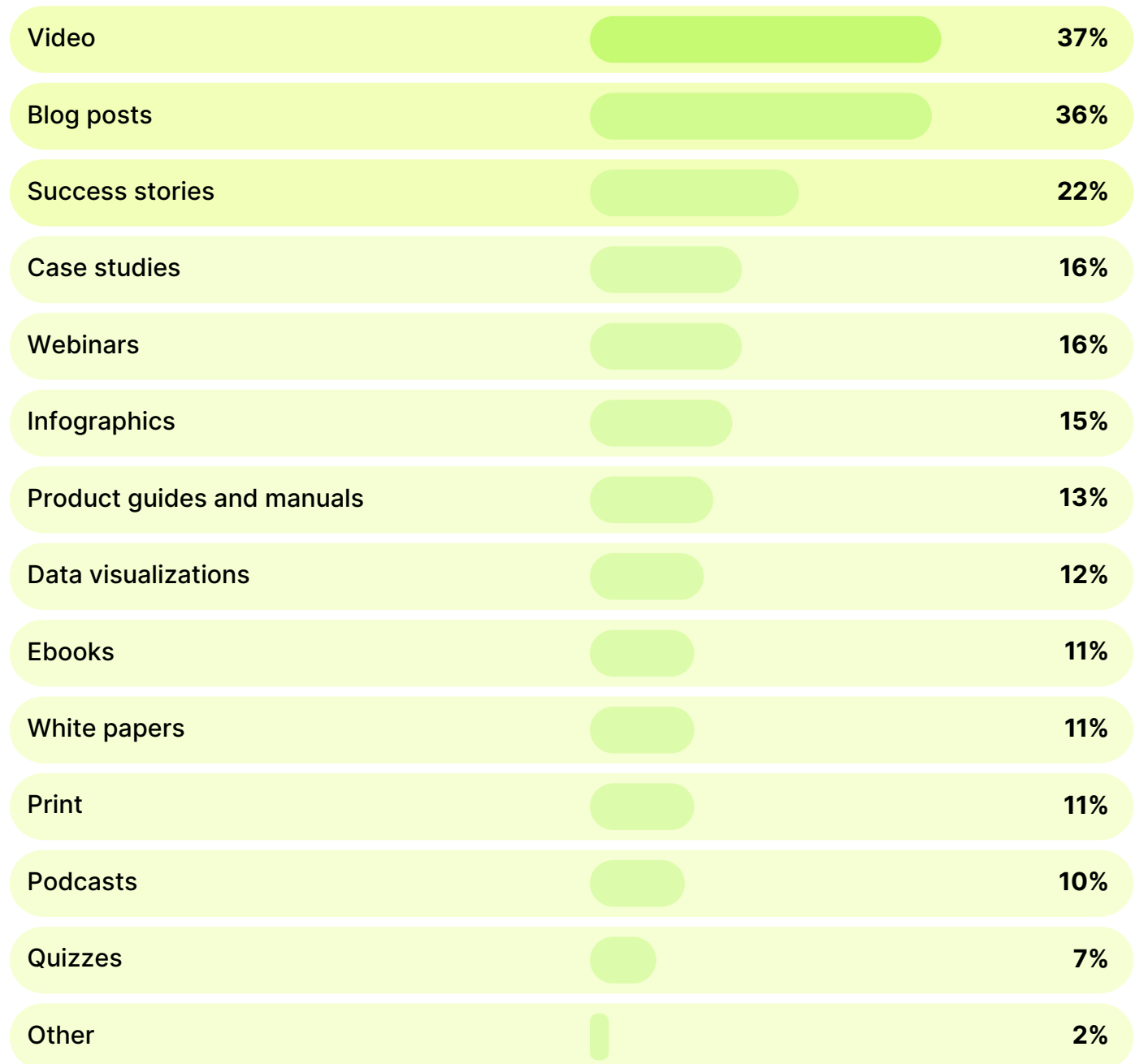
Here's where companies are distributing their content and how they are building marketing funnels with content.

What funnel stages have you created content for?



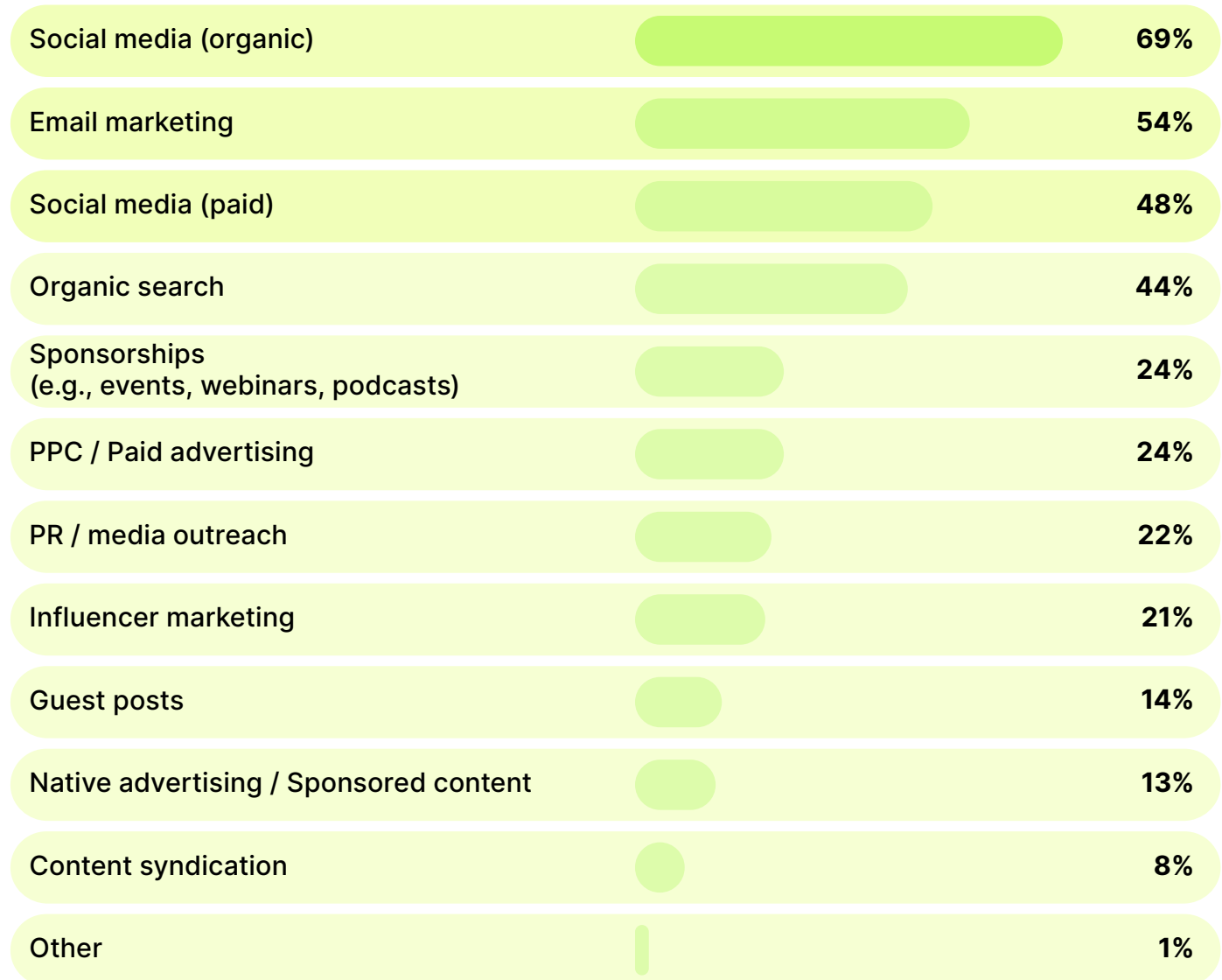
Content Creation and Distribution

Which content formats brought your company the best results in 2021?



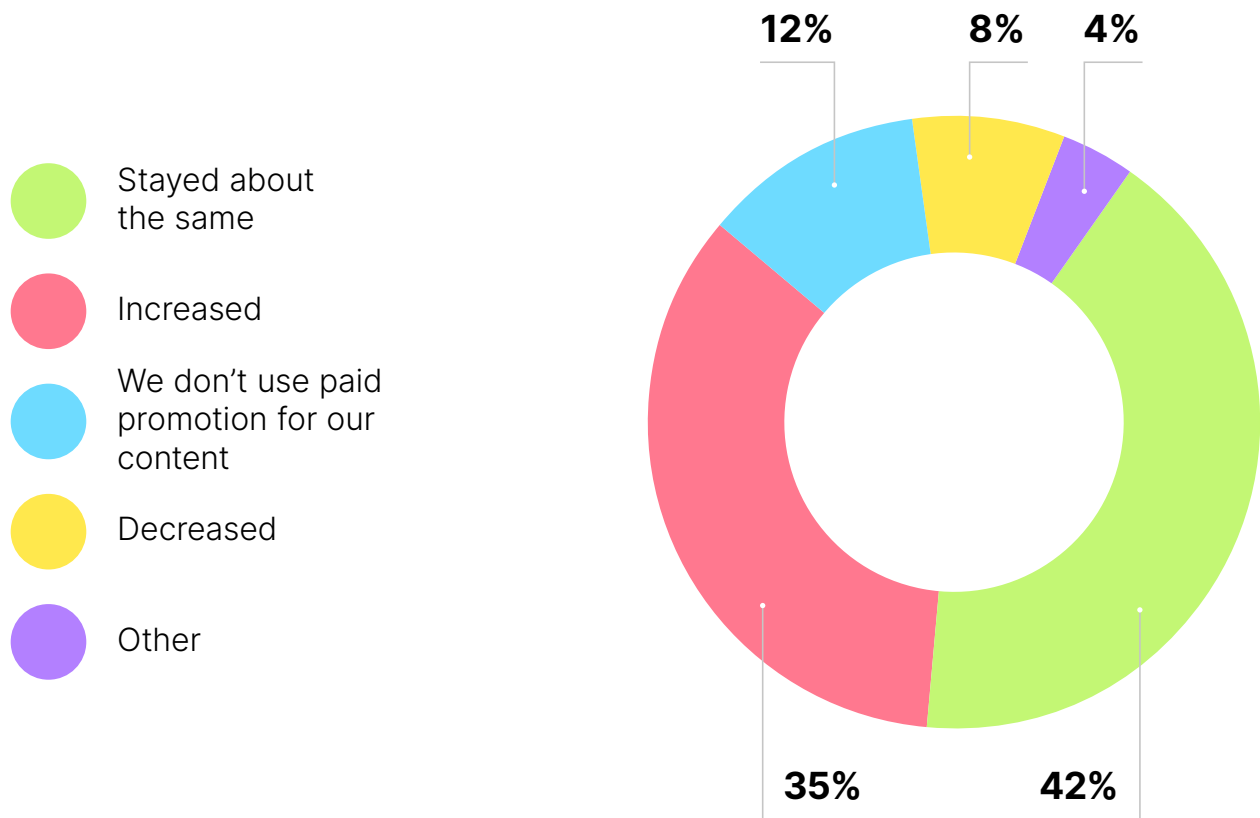
Content Creation and Distribution

Which channels do you use to distribute and promote your content?



Content Creation and Distribution

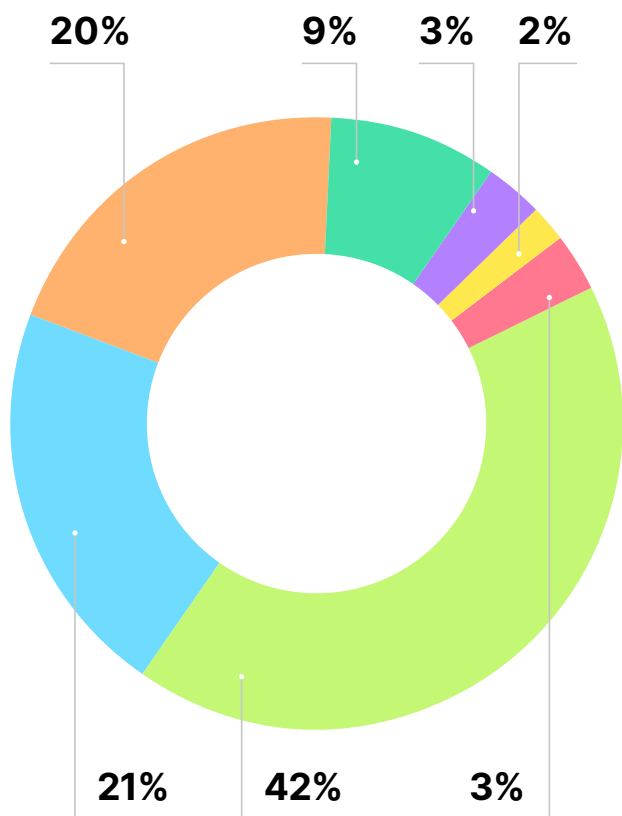
In 2021, how did your **spending on paid promotion of your content change?**



Content Teams

People are at the heart of content marketing. Here's what teams looked like in 2021 and how our respondents expect them to change.

How many people do you have in your content marketing team?

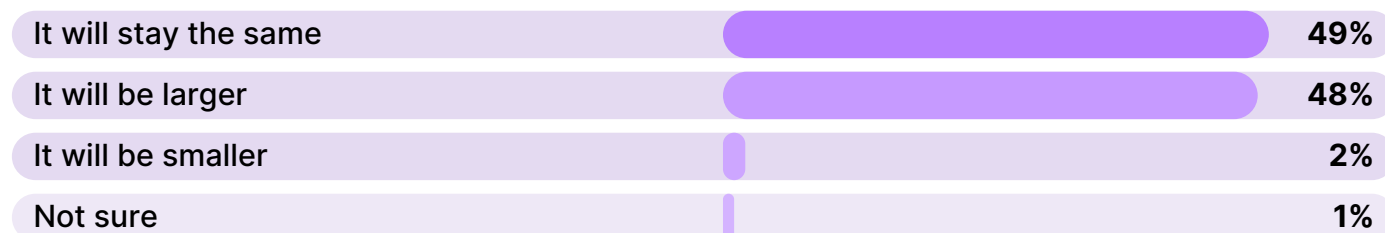


Content Teams

Which specialists are working in your content marketing team?



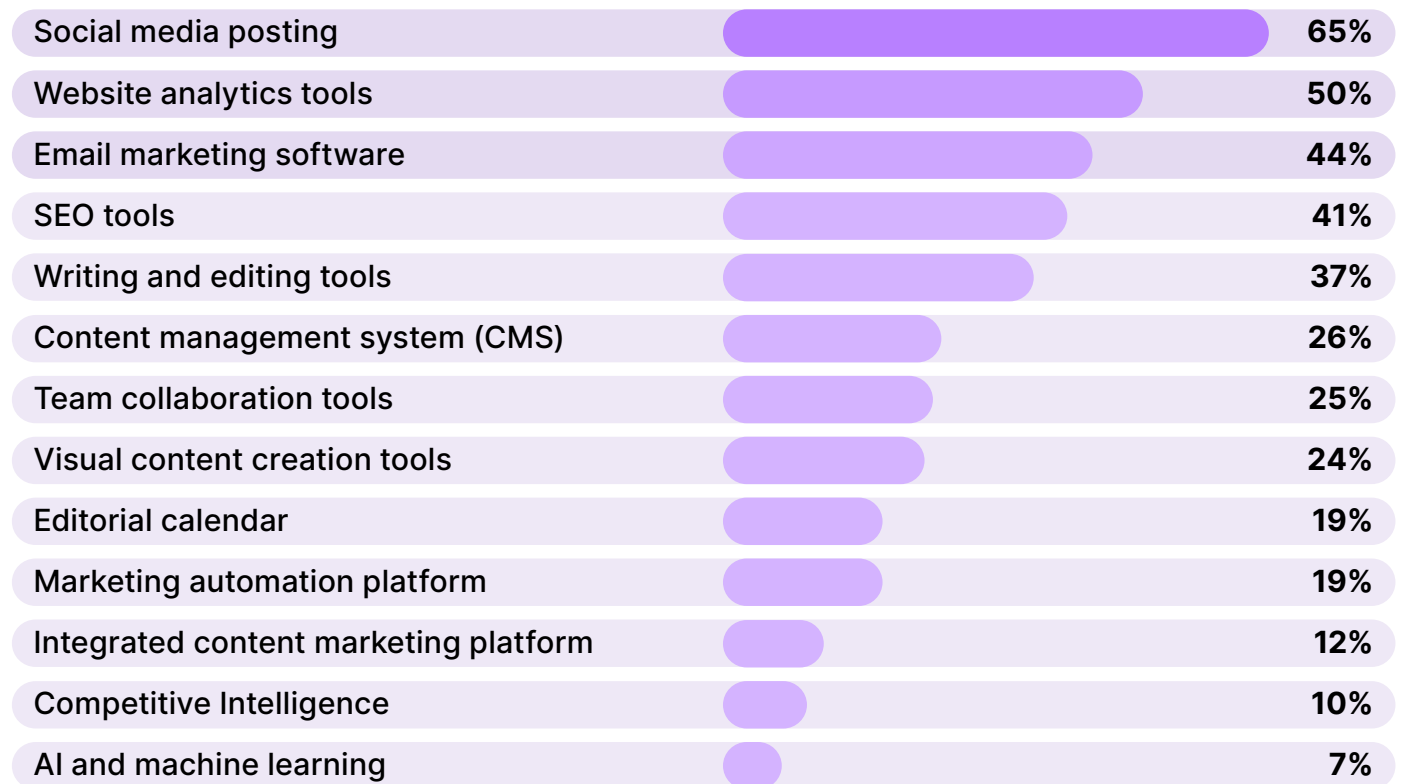
Do you expect your content marketing team to grow in 2022?



Content Teams

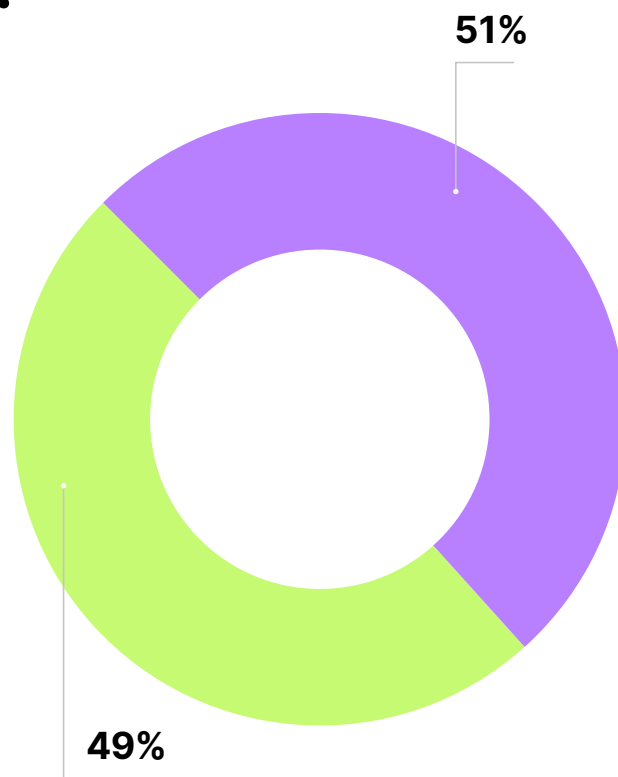
Which technologies does your team use to leverage your content marketing efforts?

Content marketing teams need the right tools for the job. Here's how our respondents use technology to execute their plans.



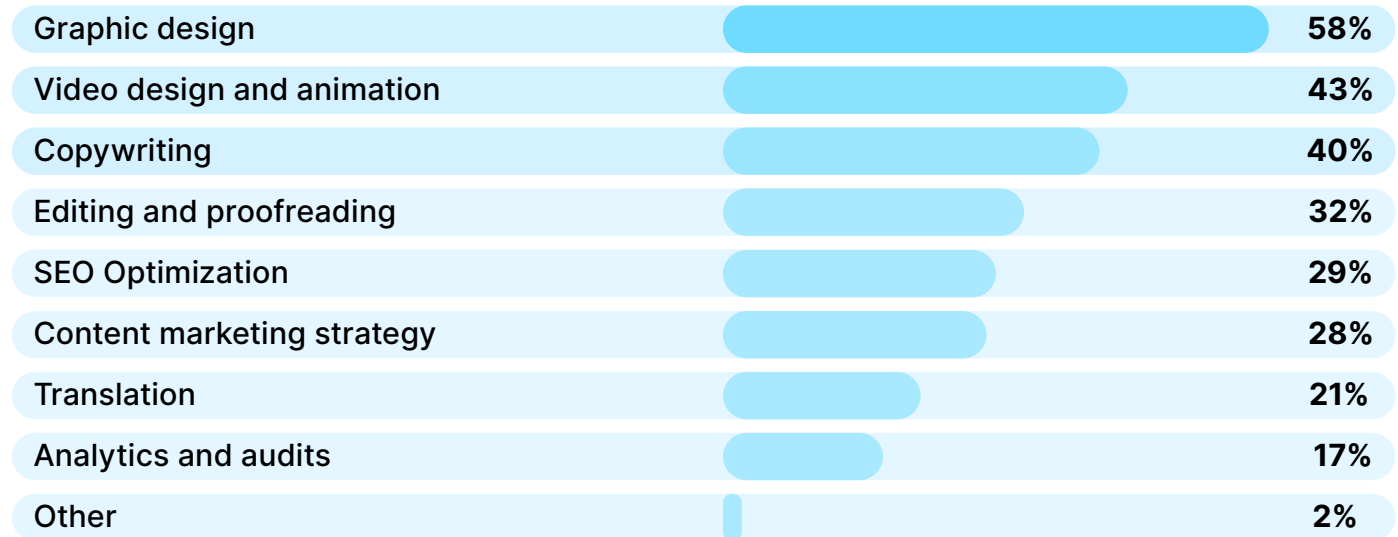
Outsourcing

Do you outsource content creation?



Outsourcing

Which of the following content-related services do you outsource?



Content Performance Measurement

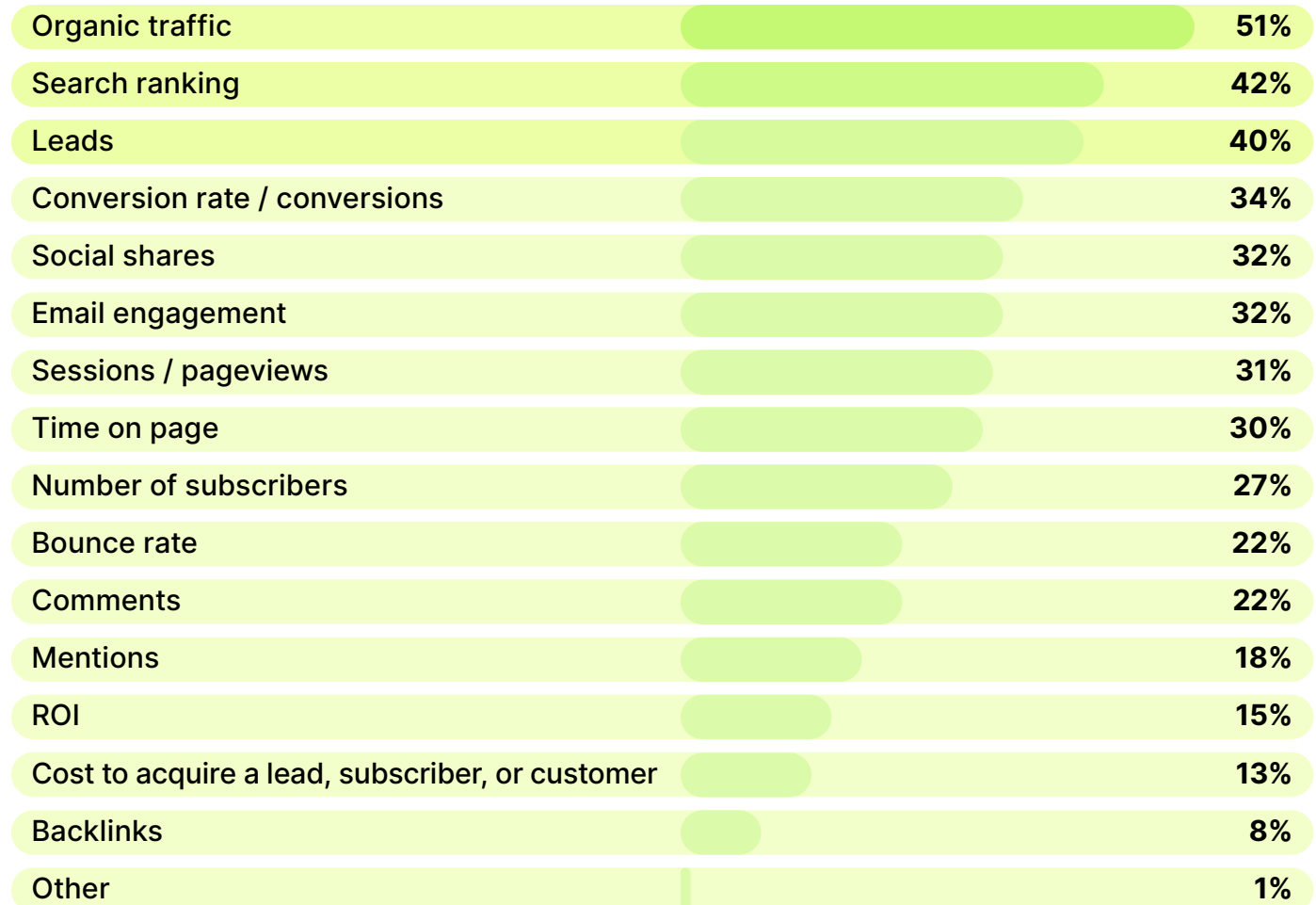
As Peter Drucker said, “You can’t improve what you don’t measure.” Here’s what content marketing teams were testing in 2021.

Do you measure the content performance in your company?



Content Performance Measurement

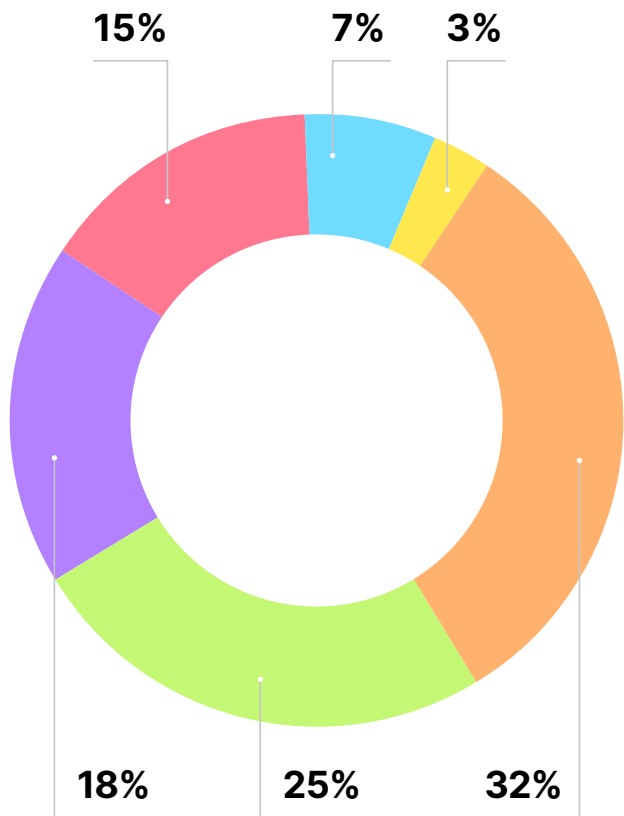
What are the **key metrics** you use to **measure** your content's success?



Audits

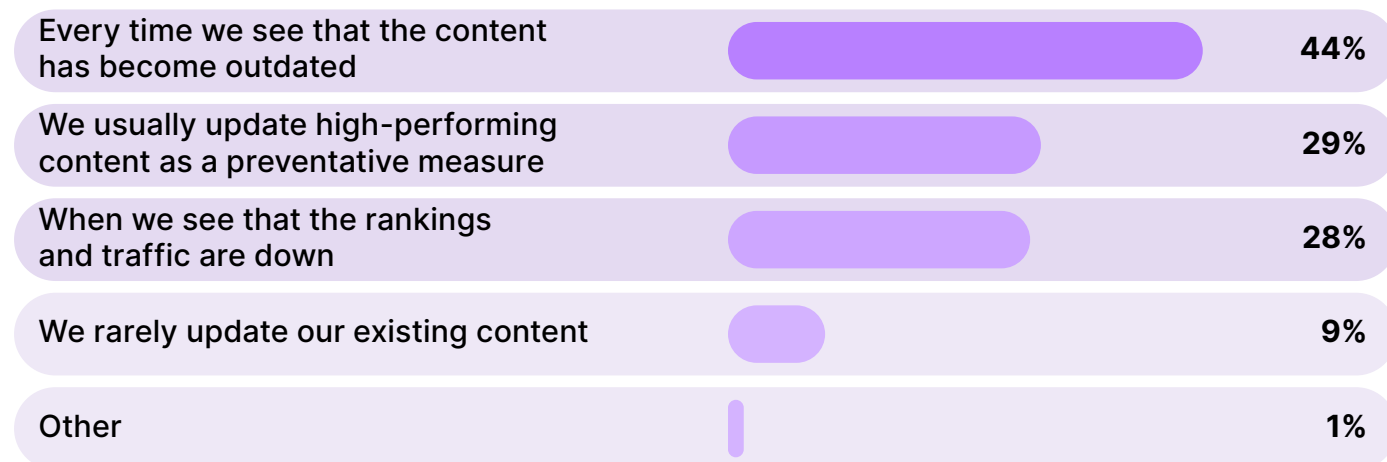
How often do you conduct content audits?

- Twice a year
- More than three times a year
- Once a year
- Never
- Once every 2-3 years
- Not sure

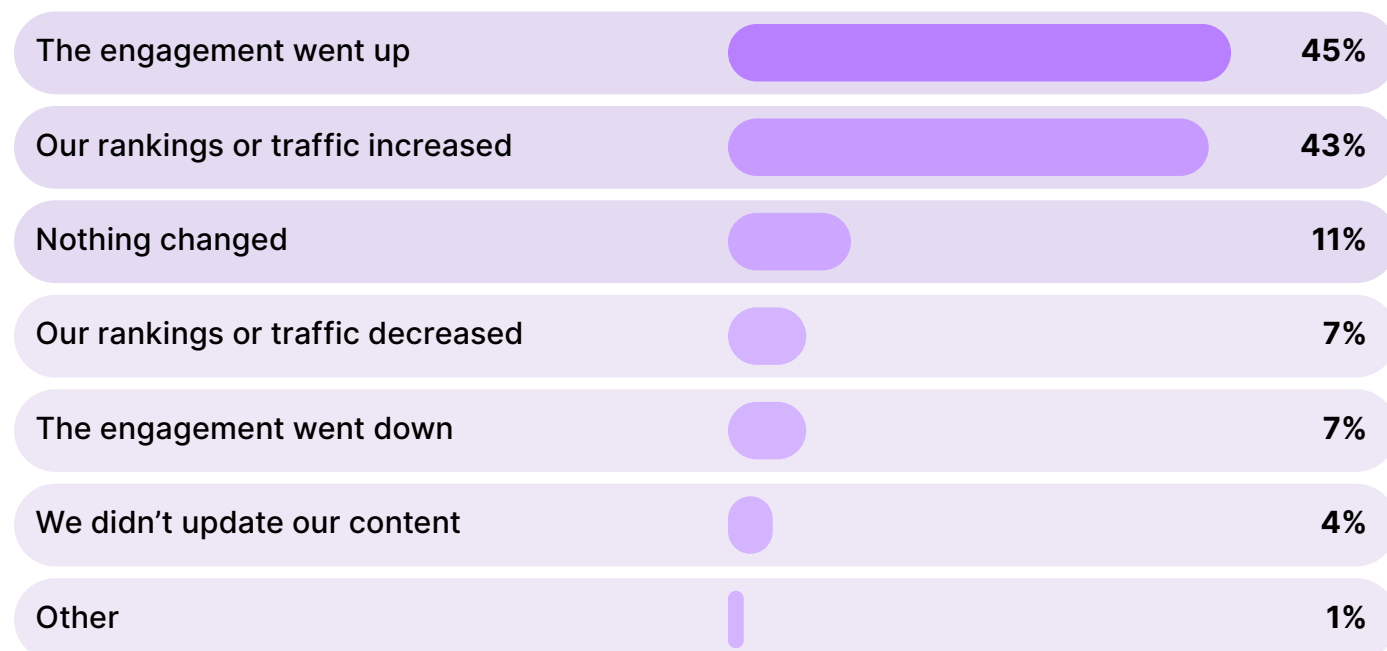


Audits

When do you usually update your existing content?



Which results did you achieve after updating your content?



What makes a content strategy successful?

We know that's a lot of information to take in. So, here we summarize how successful teams run their content marketing operations.

Having a documented content strategy

78%

of companies that believe their content marketing was very successful in 2021 have a documented content marketing strategy

81%

of companies with unsuccessful content marketing efforts didn't have a documented content strategy

Content marketing spend

53%

of companies that didn't have much success with content marketing in 2021 spent less than 5% of their marketing budget on content

73%

of those companies that believe to have had a very successful content marketing strategy in 2021 spend from 10% to 70% of their total marketing budget on content marketing

Promoting your content on paid channels

46%

of companies that had highly successful content marketing this year increased their paid content promo budget in 2021

31%

of companies that had unsuccessful content marketing in 2021 had no paid promo for their content at all

Size of the content marketing team

59%

of companies whose content marketing was unsuccessful in 2021 had no dedicated content marketing team or specialist

36%

of companies whose content marketing was unsuccessful in 2021 had 1-3 specialists in their content team

Running content audits and updating content

46%

of companies whose content marketing was unsuccessful in 2021 never run content audits

65%

of companies whose content marketing was very successful in 2021 run content audits more than twice a year

Takeaways

Have a documented strategy and plan

Of our respondents, 91% said that content marketing was successful to some degree, so it's certainly worth considering as a tactic in 2022. It's also essential to have a high-level strategy for your content, which should involve the key content marketing results, goals, metrics, buyer personas, and content plans. Of those who had a successful content marketing strategy, 78% have a documented content marketing strategy.

Prioritize quality of content

It's worth bearing in mind what kind of content does well. Our survey uncovered that quality of content is the primary success factor in organic ranking and in content marketing in general. This is followed by increasing the content output, investing in keyword research and creating unique and research-driven content.

Takeaways

Put your money where your mouth is

On top of this, paid promotion can help your chances of being highly successful in content marketing: 46% of companies that did extremely well increased their paid content promotion budget in 2021. In contrast, 31% of companies that had unsuccessful content marketing had no paid promotion for their content at all.

Giving your content an extra paid boost can help you attract new audiences at the top and middle of the funnel. For example, running ads to promote your gated content (e.g., ebooks) is an effective tactic for generating qualified leads.

Takeaways

Run content audits and measure your results

Running content audits can help you pick the low-hanging fruits and generate quick wins without spending extra resources on new content. 65% of companies whose content marketing was very successful in 2021 run content audits more than twice a year. Besides, the engagement went up by 45% and organic rankings and traffic increased by 43% for the respondents that updated their content.

Finally, 66% of companies measure content performance, which leaves 20% of those who don't and 15% who are not sure. It's important to make sure we are moving to 100% of companies measuring content performance in 2022. Doing so is the only way to understand whether your content resonates with your customers and generates tangible business results. It's also the only way to improve and optimize your strategy. The top three content marketing metrics, according to our respondents, are organic traffic, search rankings, and leads.

The Anatomy of Top-Performing Organic Content in 2022

While 77% of marketers report that blogging drives results, there's no cheat sheet for creating valuable, original content. Achieving thousands of views, backlinks, and shares takes time, tools, and expertise. However, the analytics show content that performs well **does** tend to exhibit a number of common characteristics that you can emulate in your own work.

We aim to offer insight into how to increase traffic, drive backlinks, and make your organic content more shareable by examining the following common characteristic:

Headlines

Structure

Lists

Length

Visuals

How we determined content performance

We selected 500,000 articles published on blogs that had between 30,000 and 500,000 average monthly views in 2021, excluding blogs published after November 2021. We looked at organic traffic, engagement on social media (Facebook), and backlinks. Finally, we established the mean reference values for the most common characteristics of content.

In recognition of the fact that there are some big differences across industries, we have included characteristics for successful content in ten selected fields.



Key Stats

Headlines

1

- Headings with “Guide” in the title attract three times more organic traffic than others, and those containing “how to” outperform by 1.5 times
- Articles with seven or fewer words in their H1 get 36% more average organic traffic than those with 14 or more words

Page structure

2

- 47% of articles that have an advanced headings structure (H2 + H3 + H4) belong to the highest-performing organic content group
- 39% of articles with no H2 are low-performing
- Articles with one or two lists per 500 words get 68% more traffic than those with no lists

Key Stats

Visuals

3

- Articles with more than seven images generate 116% more organic traffic than those with none
- Articles with videos get 83% more traffic than those without
- Articles with more than three videos generated 55% more backlinks than those with none

Topic coverage

4

- Articles over 3,000 words get 138% more traffic than those with fewer than 500 words
- 78% of articles with fewer than 500 words have not been shared
- Whether a target topic is fully covered or not is key

Headline Type: Impact on Organic Performance

Organic traffic



Shares



Backlinks



What we did: We compared headings with different wording (those that offered a question and an answer, guides, top-N lists, how-tos, and more) against the average monthly organic traffic, number of shares on Facebook, and backlinks the article had.

H1 Length: Impact on Organic Performance

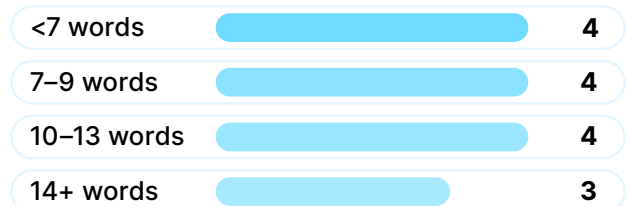
Organic traffic



Shares



Backlinks



What we did: We compared H1 length against the average monthly organic traffic, number of shares on Facebook, and backlinks the article had. Note that these results are reflective of the fact that we are looking at organic traffic—and headlines in the SERPs are curtailed. Blog and search headlines can be differentiated and be of different lengths.

Distribution of Heading Depth

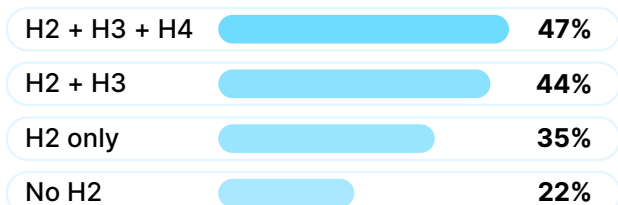
Low performance



Medium performance

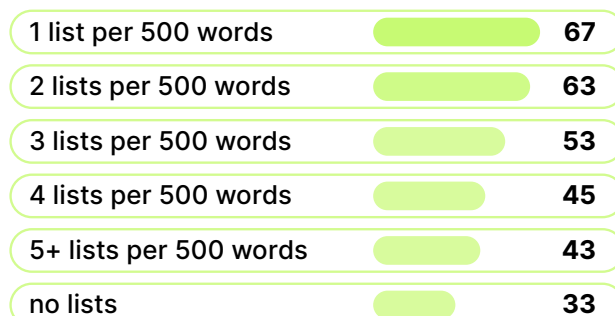


High performance



Number of Lists: Impact on Organic Performance

Organic traffic



Shares



Backlinks

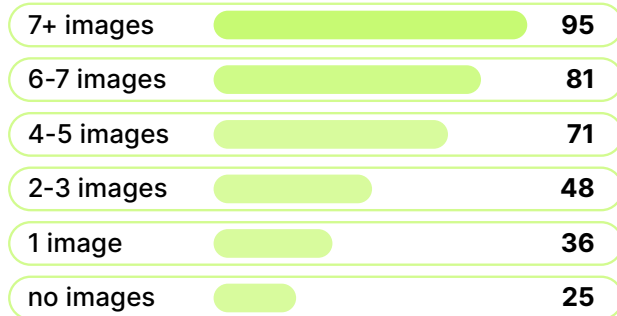


What we did: We looked at the percentage of articles with different structures (presence or absence of H2, H3, H4, etc.) in each of the performance groups assigned based on organic traffic, social shares, and backlinks: We averaged the metrics to split all articles into high-performing (20%), average-performing (60%), and low-performing (20%) ones.

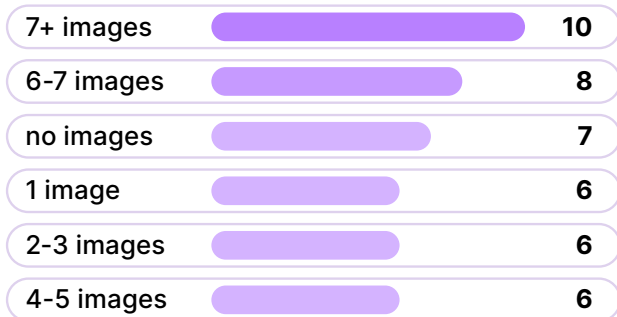
What we did: We looked at the number of lists per every 500 words of plain text (with no bullets) and compared it against the average monthly organic traffic, number of social shares, and backlinks it had.

Number of Images: Impact on Organic Performance

Organic traffic



Shares



Backlinks



What we did: We looked at the number of images in the article and compared it against the average monthly organic traffic, number of social shares, and backlinks it had.

Number of Videos: Impact on Organic Performance

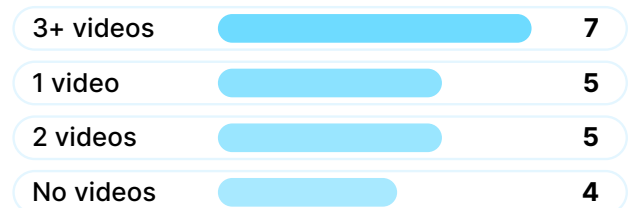
Organic traffic



Shares



Backlinks



What we did: We looked at the number of videos in the article and compared it against the average monthly organic traffic, number of social shares, and backlinks it had.

Content Length: Impact on Organic Performance

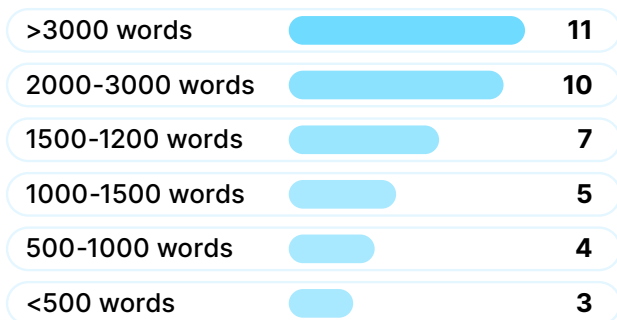
Organic traffic



Shares



Backlinks



Non-Shared Articles by Length



What we did: We looked at the word count of each article and compared it against the average organic traffic, number of shares on Facebook, and the number of backlinks it had.

Key Takeaways

Craft your headlines carefully

1

In our analysis, we see that articles that feature “Guide” and “How to” in their headlines attract the most organic traffic. Guides and how-tos perform well because they enable your audience to overcome a challenge. When looking for an angle, you can try to tap into their desire to solve a problem or learn something new by generating FOMO (fear of missing out). You can also use scarcity of time (I need to read this now), mystery (I have to know about this), or good old-fashioned humor.

Structure content to improve readability

2

Headlines help both readers and search engines navigate and understand the content. Using the correct subheadings (H1, H2, H3, etc.) can help you cover the entire topic while ensuring a smooth experience for the reader. It also improves your [website accessibility](#), as screen-readers (for visually impaired audience members) are better able to deliver the content.

Key Takeaways

Use lists wisely

3

Lists **do** help with content performance as they enable readers to better understand important information, but only include them where necessary. Too many lists per 500 words may negatively impact the reading experience. This rule applies to all other areas: It's important to always focus on pleasing the actual reader vs. the search engines.

Leverage images

4

Images tell a story, break up the copy and also appear in the image section of the search results (if you include relevant keywords in the alt. text). While it's best to use original images and infographics, you can also find free-to-use and paid stock photographs on websites like [Unsplash](#), [Pexels](#), [Pixabay](#), and [Canva](#).

Key Takeaways

Introduce videos

5

It's becoming easier and easier to create quality videos to include alongside your written content. In terms of what sorts of videos to produce, you can expand on points made in the article, add commentary or a different perspective, include case studies or examples, or simply add an FAQ video.

There are free and paid video creation platforms that make the job relatively straightforward. Some of the most popular include [InVideo](#), [Animoto](#), and [Canva](#), among others.

Don't write longer articles for the sake of it

6

Note that while longer articles outperform, it's because this content tends to be more in-depth—not simply because it has more words. The preferences of your audience and the topic or format determine how long each piece should be. If you are unsure what the optimal length for any particular piece of content is, you can identify it by running an analysis using your target keywords and the Semrush [SEO Content Template tool ↗](#). To get a better understanding of what your readers are looking for when exploring your target topic, use the [Topic Research tool ↗](#).

Top Performing Content in Niche Industries

Following on from our global analysis of top-performing organic content, we examined some important patterns of top-performing blog posts in a number of industries in the U.S. Analyzing all types of traffic, our aim was to establish some best practices and benchmarks for those industries.

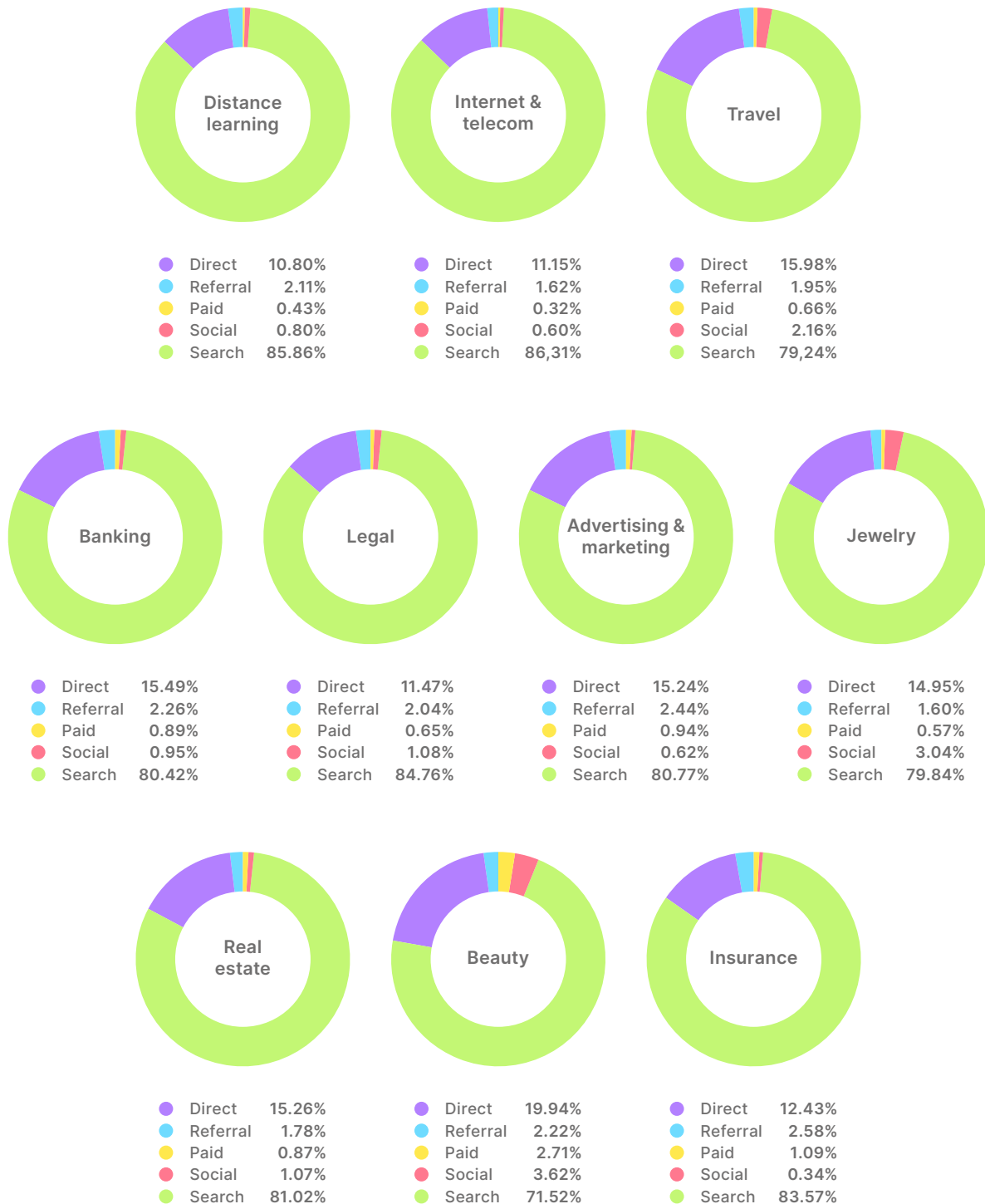
We analyzed 8,435 articles on 969 domains in English that were getting the most traffic between October 2020 to October 2021 in the 10 industries that are among the most expensive for PPC advertising. Then, we looked at the traffic sources, backlink and organic keywords data, organic traffic, as well as the common patterns related to content types and engagement.

Average CPC for Bidding on Keywords in Each Industry

Category	Avg.CPC (USD)	Category	Avg.CPC (USD)
1 Insurance	20.12	5 Internet & telecom	5.54
2 Distance learning	13.20	6 Banking	4.98
3 Legal	11.41	7 Real estate	1.90
4 Marketing & advertising	7.33	8 Beauty & skincare	1.60
		9 Travel	1.46
		10 Jewelry	1.26

What we did: We looked at the average cost per click for each of the considered industries from January to November 2021.

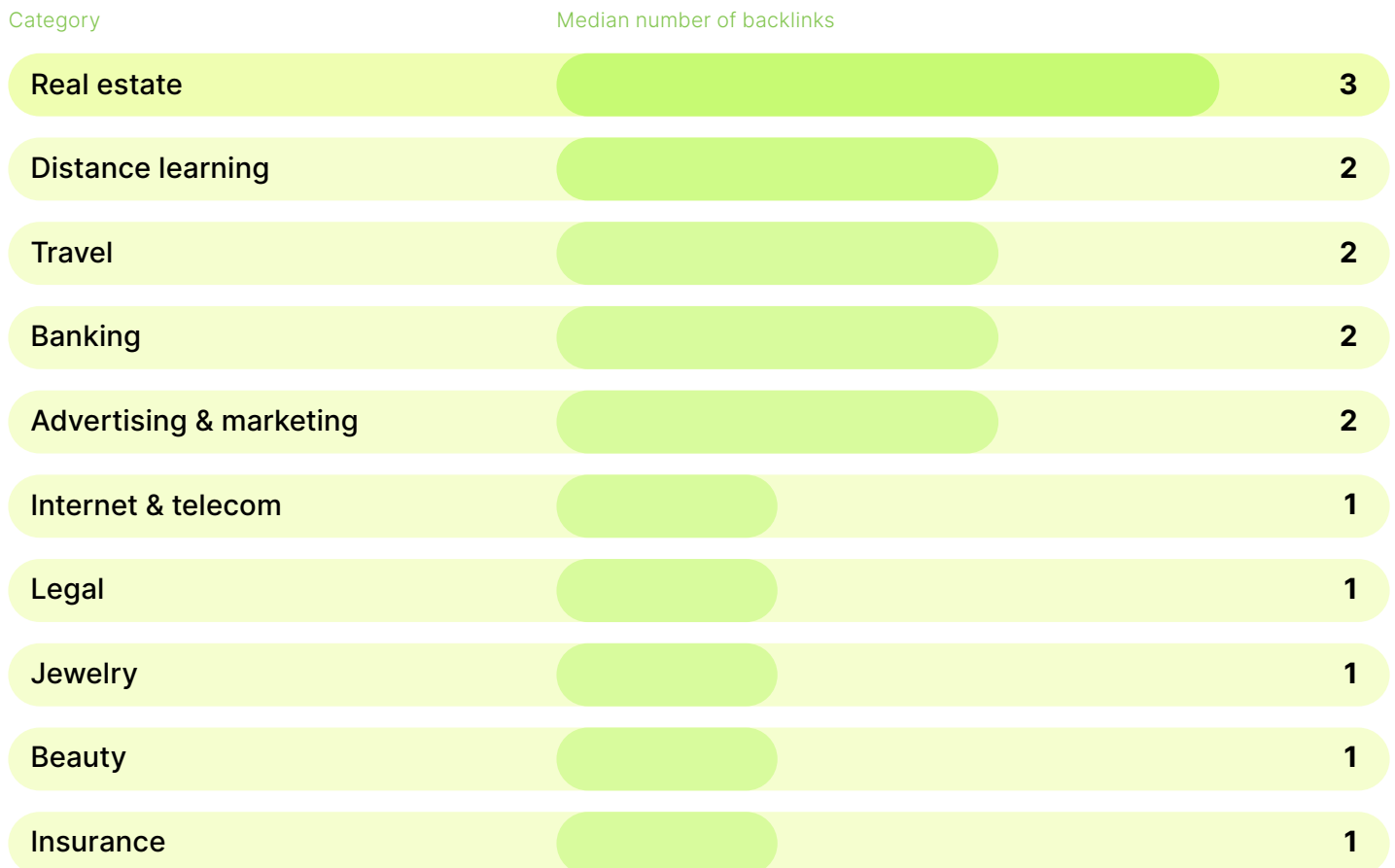
Traffic to Industry Blogs by Source



What we did: We checked the traffic sources of the selected industry blogs across in the U.S. from October 2020 to October 2021 and split their traffic by sources. All data shown is for an average blog post in each category.

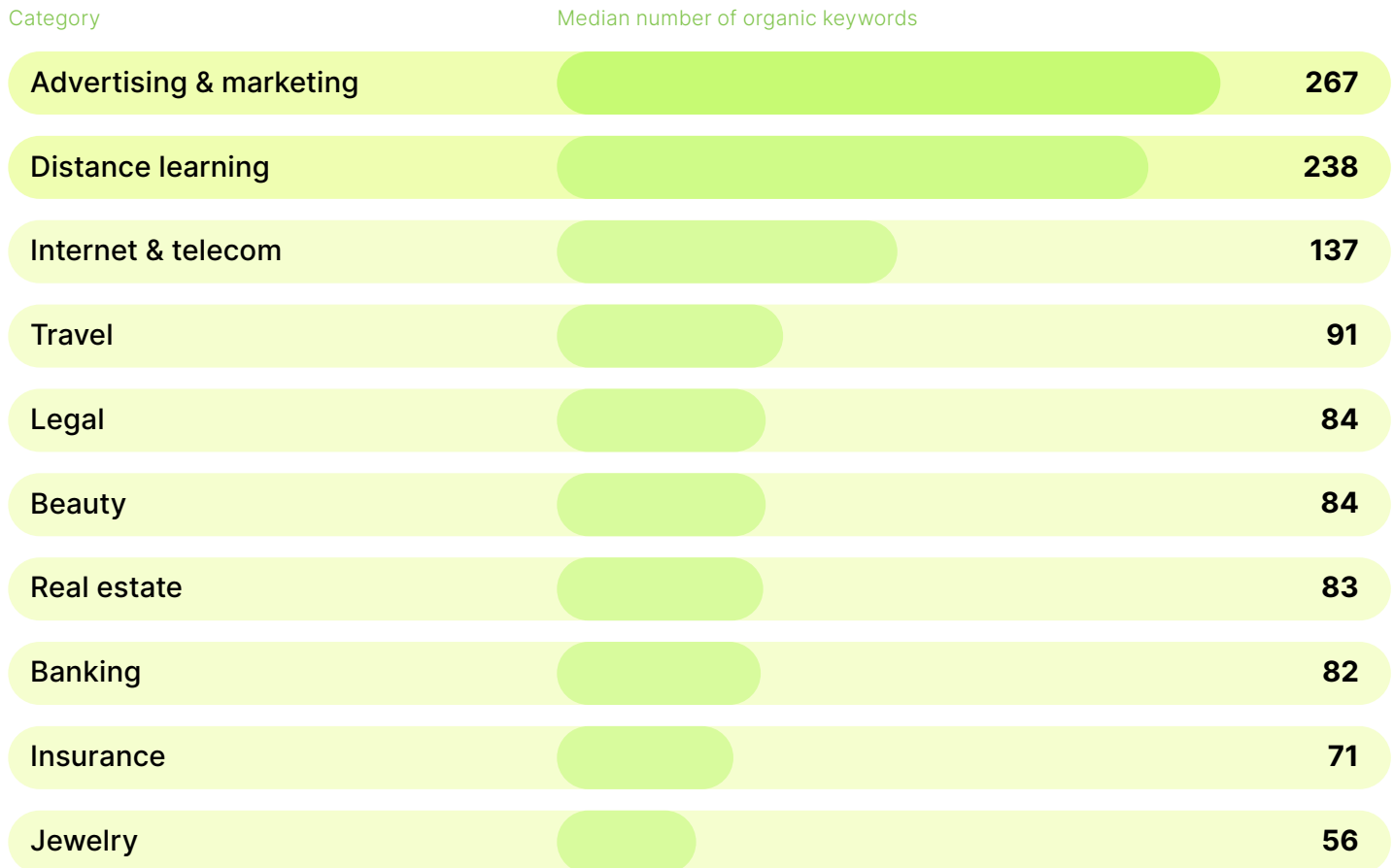
Industry Blogs

Performance by Backlinks



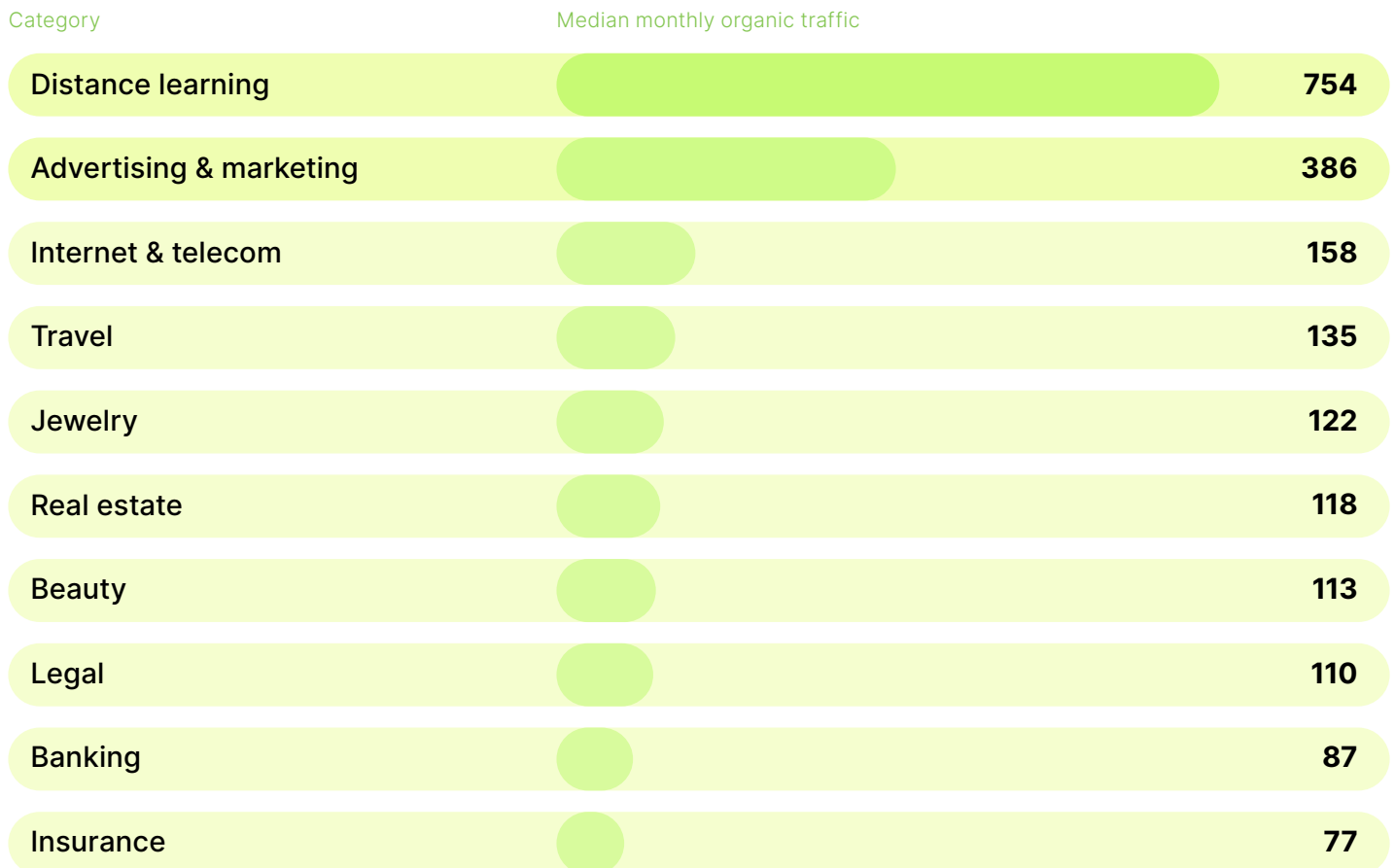
Industry Blogs

Performance by Organic Keywords



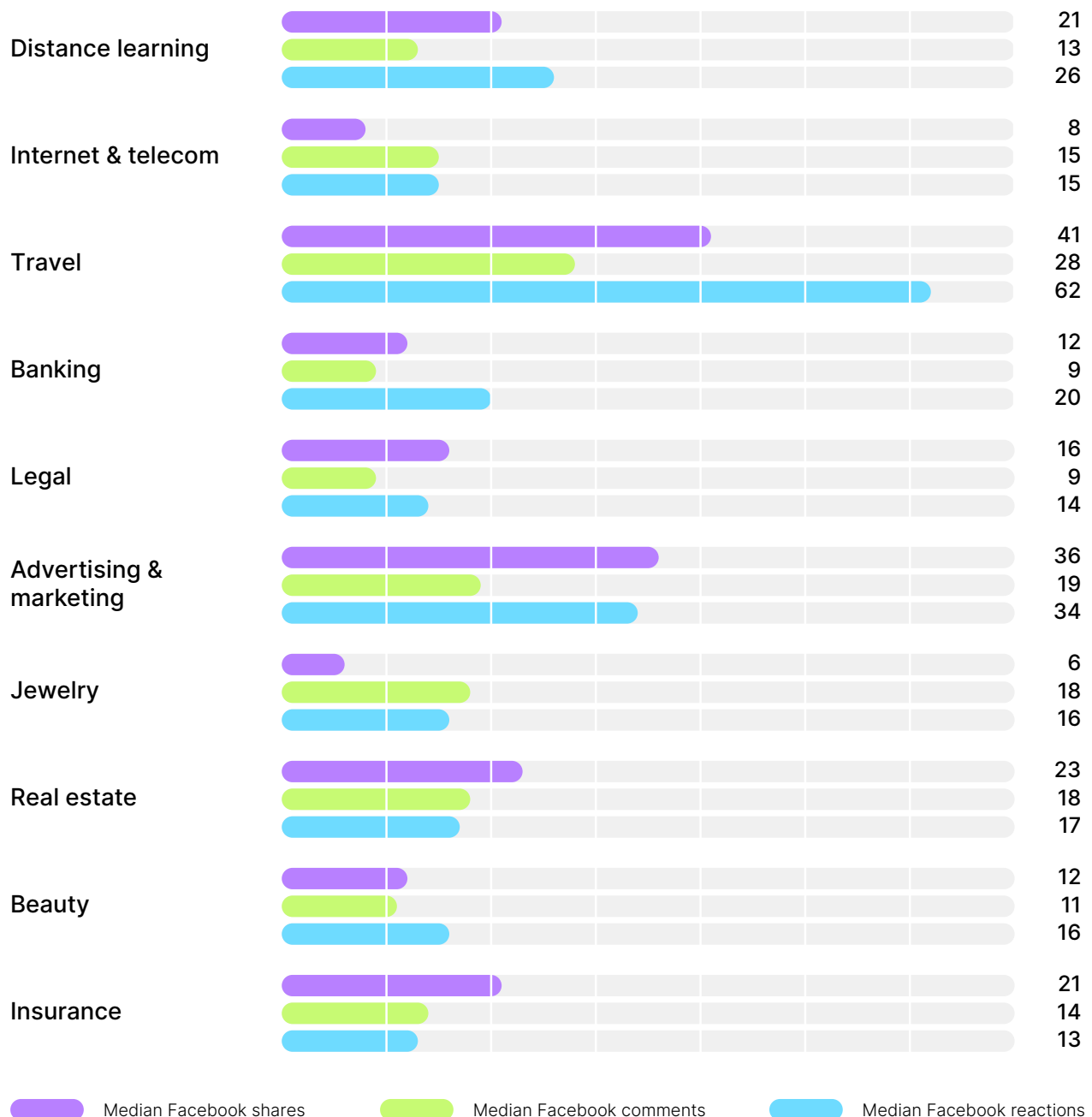
Industry Blogs

Performance by Organic Traffic



Industry Blogs

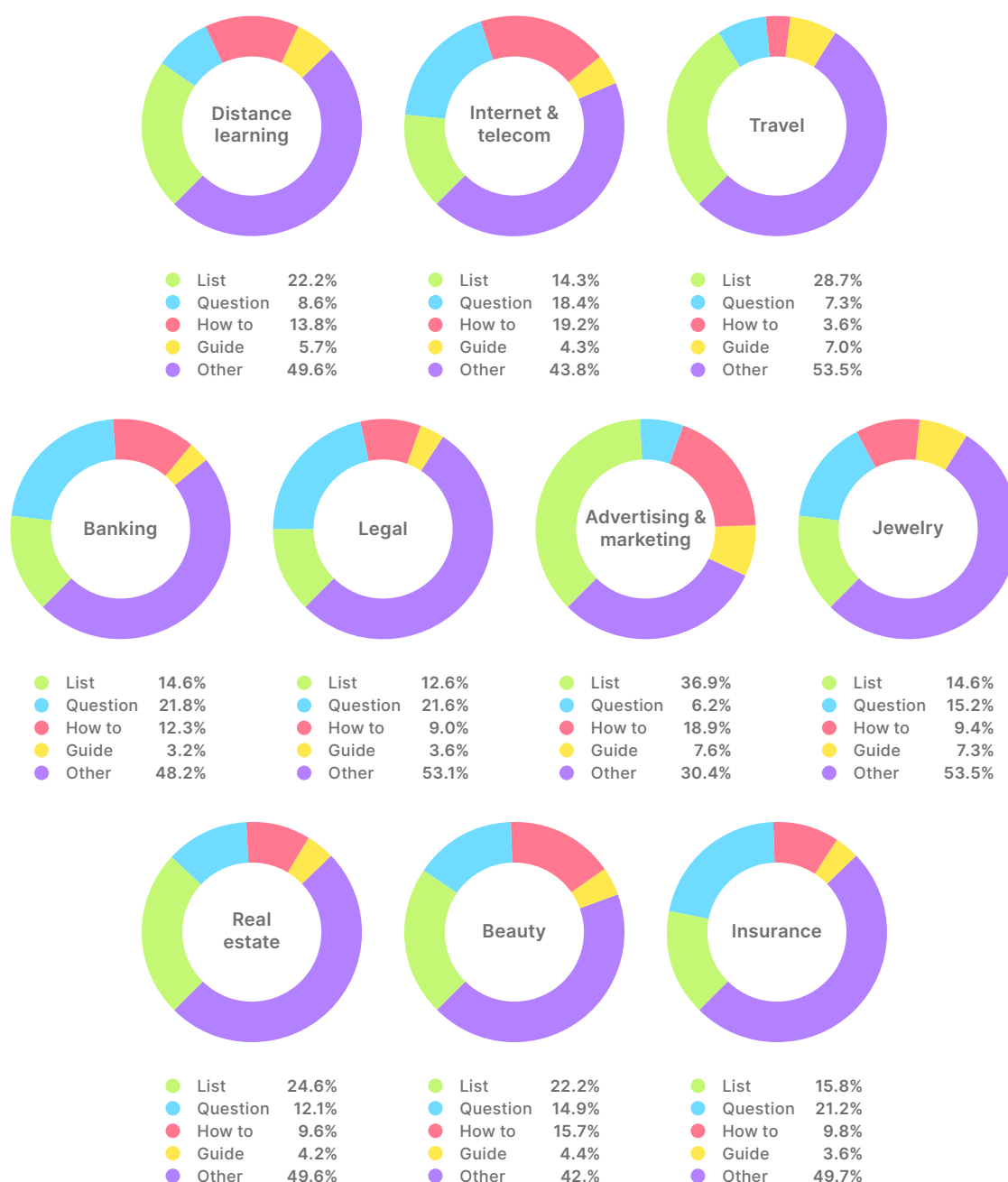
Performance by Social Media Engagement



What we did: We determined engagement in top-performing content, defined by median Facebook shares, comments, and reactions across each of our chosen industry categories.

Industry Blogs

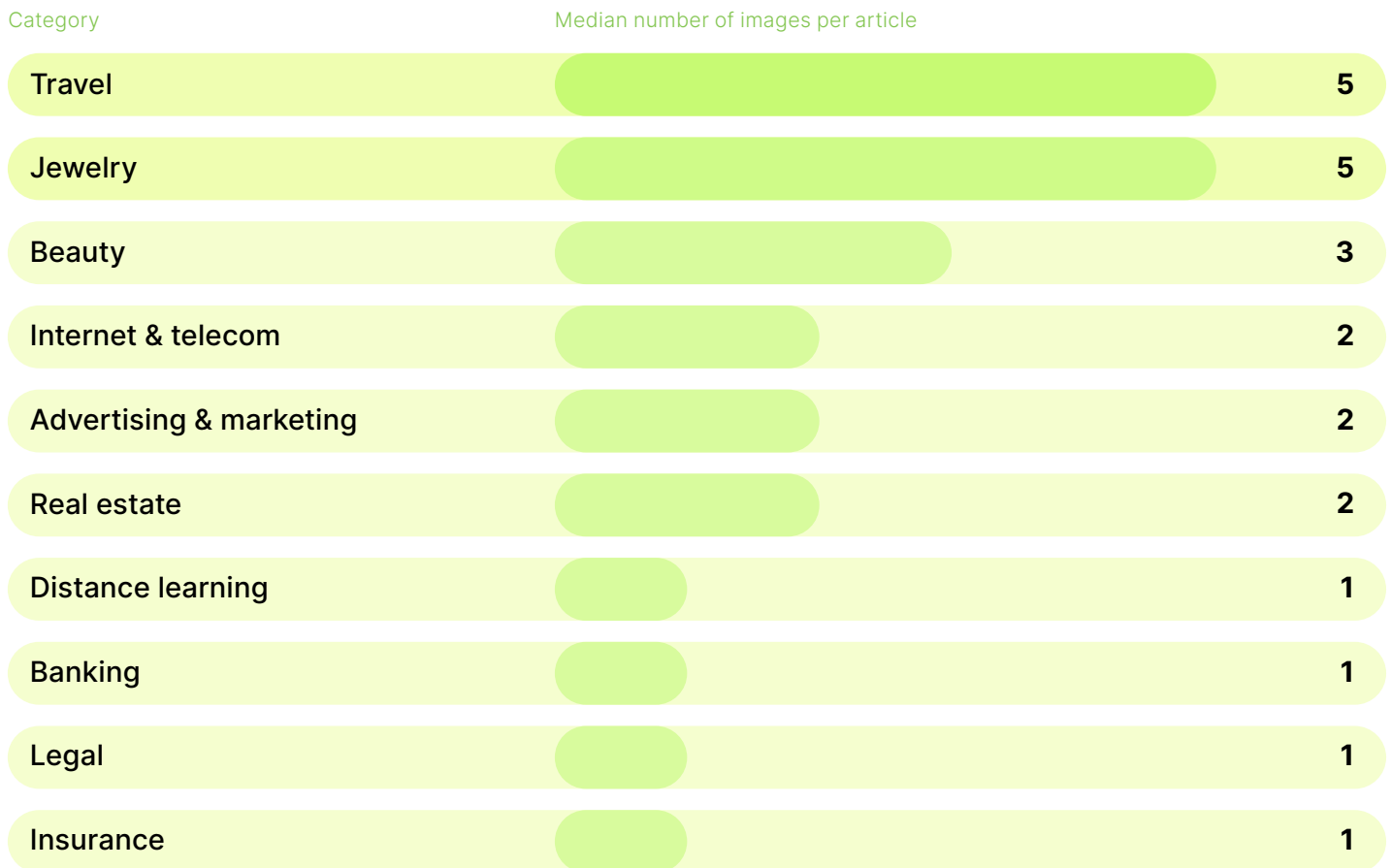
Top-Performing Articles: by Article Types



What we did: We identified articles from each of the industry blogs and categorized types of content seen there.

Industry Blogs

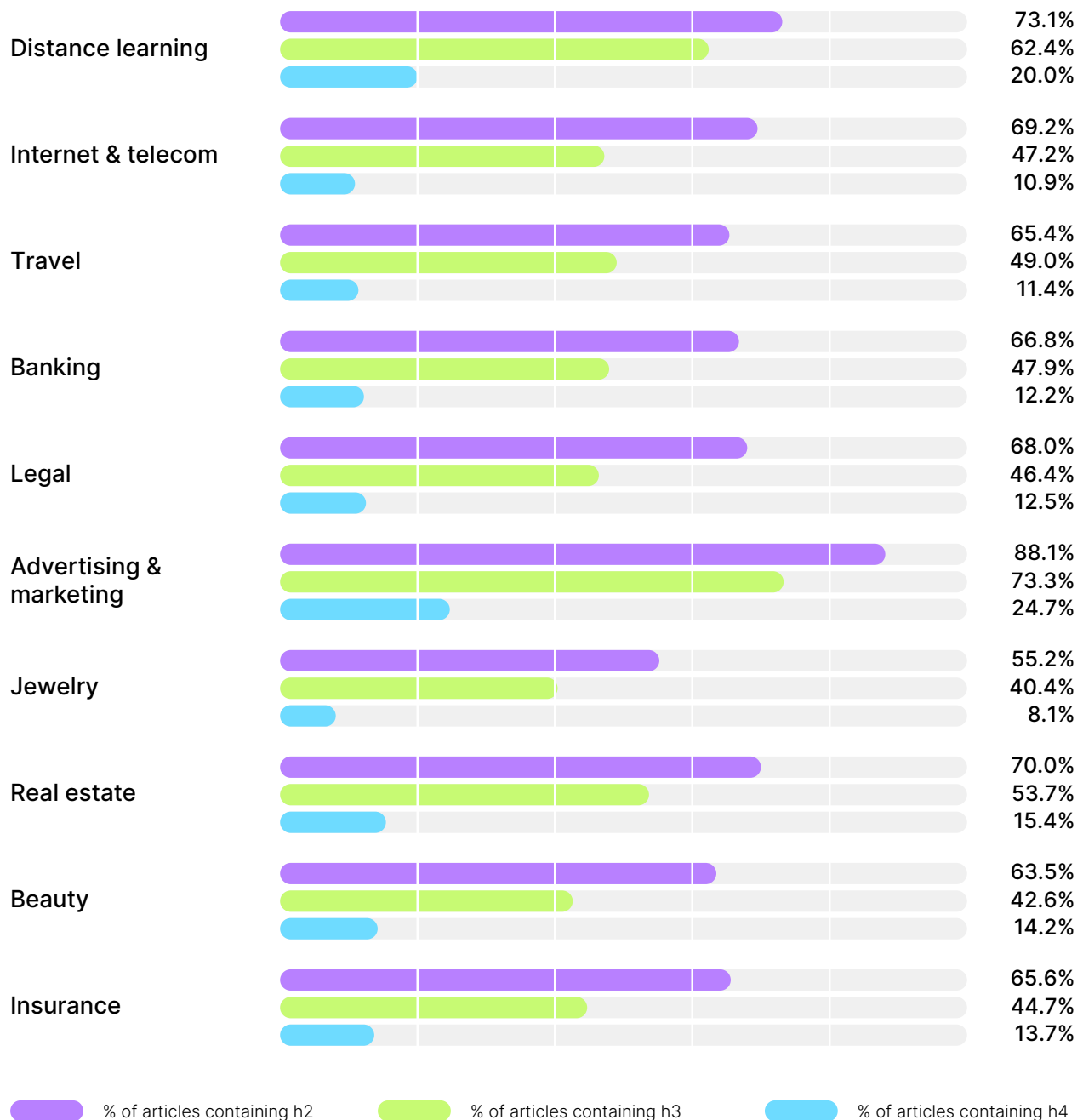
Top-Performing Articles: by Number of Images



What we did: We determined the average number of images in a blog post per each industry.

Industry Blogs

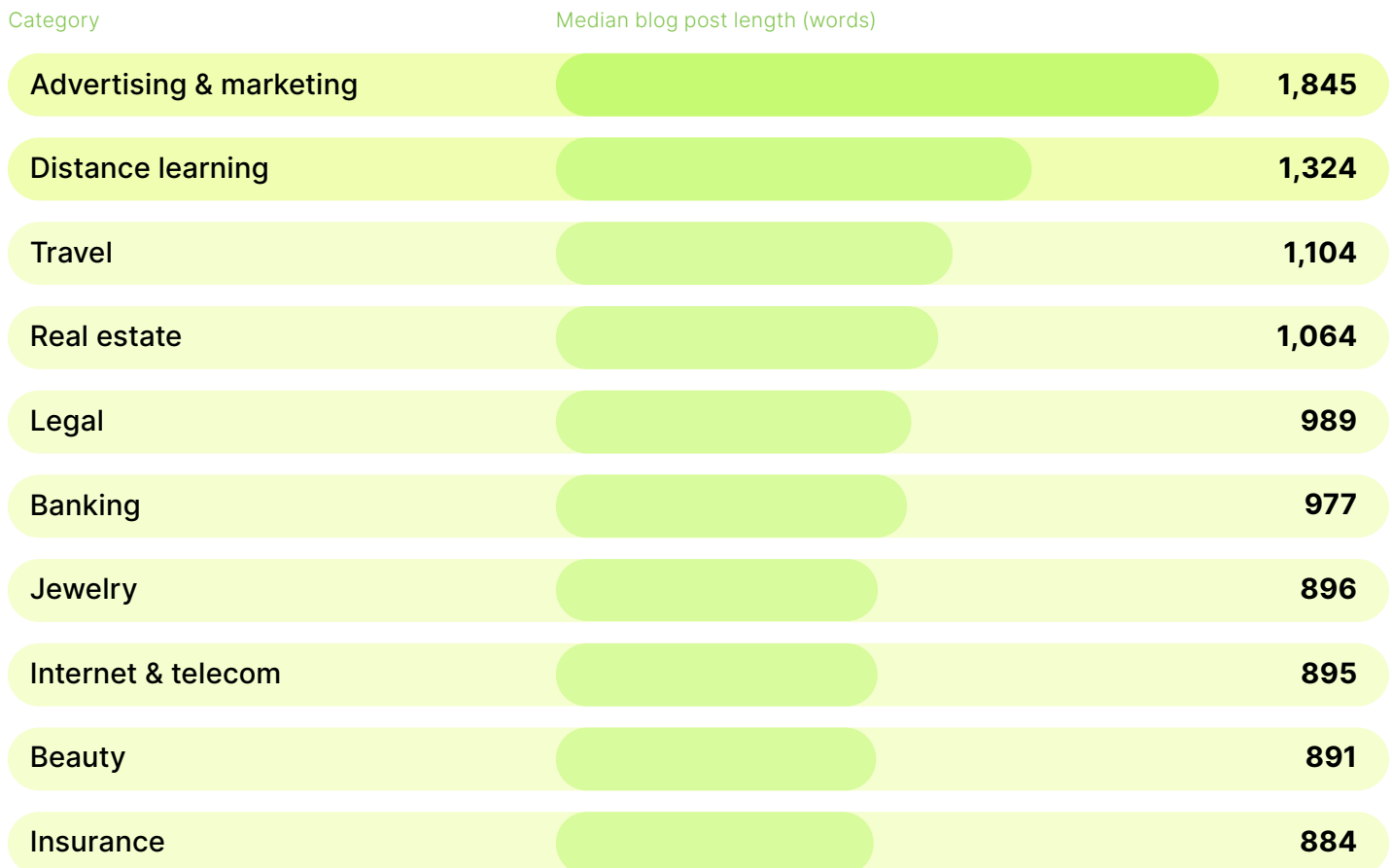
Top-Performing Articles: by Heading Structure



What we did: We picked the top performing articles from each industry blog and averaged the number of H2s, H3s, and H4s.

Industry Blogs

Top-performing Articles: by Article Length



What we did: We picked the top-performing articles from each industry blog and determined their average length.



Takeaways

Organic traffic and engagement

1

The industry with—by far and away—the most engagement on Facebook is travel and tourism. Search is the dominant source of traffic in all industries. The fact that distance learning and marketing and advertising are leading in terms of organic traffic and keywords suggests it's worth learning from companies in these sectors.

Use of images

2

Travel and tourism, alongside jewelry and luxury goods lead the way when it comes to use of images. For the rest, the use of images ranges between one and three per article. Taking into account the global trend, which shows the use of images affects ranking, it's worth selecting visuals carefully.

Takeaways

Structure and traffic

3

Advertising and marketing are leading the way when it comes to structure, with the highest number of H2s and other subordinate H tags. Distance learning is second, showing there may be a loose correlation between structure and ranking. This is worth keeping in mind as you produce your own content.

Article titles

4

Article titles featuring the word “list” do well in many of the industry categories. “Question” and “How to” are also top performers. This is worth considering, no matter which industry you operate in. However, you should also keep in mind that some formats could work especially well in certain sectors. For example, the listicle articles are popular in travel and “question” blog posts are more relevant for banking and legal.

Takeaways

5

Article length and quality

In terms of article length, advertising and marketing are the runaway leaders with an average word count of 1,845. Distance learning and travel and tourism are in second and third place—perhaps reflecting the need to compete on comprehensiveness in arenas with a huge volume of competing articles.

When creating content, pay attention to your readers' search intent. Consider how much information should be provided to cover the question. Also think about your audience's preferences, dive into competitive research and define the objective of each piece you produce. For example, if you are writing a news piece, there is no need to create a giant how-to guide.

If you are unsure about how detailed your articles need to be, explore the top 10 search results for your target keywords and make use of the [SEO Content Template](#) to automate this process.

Keeping all this in mind, it's important to consider our recommendations carefully and make sure your decisions on how to create content stem from the knowledge of your customers and your industry.

Writing Effective Content: Tips for Optimization in 2022

You've seen what works and what doesn't in content marketing. Now let's take a step further and start optimizing your content.

In this section of the report, we'll dive into content optimization techniques taken from a global analysis of Semrush Writing Assistant data. We examine whether highly optimized content does better (or worse) in the search engine rankings, and then share some tips on how best to approach your own content optimization.

Here's what we did

Semrush analyzed a year's worth of data (June 2020 to June 2021) from the SEO Writing Assistant (SWA) tool, which checks whether text is optimized for engagement and SEO. In total, we analyzed 23,561 texts that ranked in Google's top 10 results. 5,000 of these texts had a perfect score (SWA score 9-10).

- The highest scoring content was considered anything that scored between an 8-10 in the tool.
- The lowest scoring content was considered anything that scored under a 6 in the tool. We also call this "under-optimized" content.

SWA Score and Ranking Correlation

In examining SWA data, we found that the higher the score, the more the chance there is of ranking in the top 10 search results:

- ★ Only 13% of articles that scored badly in SWA rank in the top 10
- ★ Nearly a quarter with a good score rank
- ★ 34% of those with the perfect score rank

Percentage of articles in Top 10 Google results vs. the SEO Writing Assistant score



Improving Readability

Whether you are writing B2B or B2C content—and depending on the needs and expertise of your target readers—your writing will vary in complexity. But in all cases, if your writing is hard to read and follow, it doesn't matter how interesting or valuable your ideas are. Your readers will almost certainly switch off, click away, or scroll somewhere else.

The Importance of Improving Readability

**17%**

of all lowest-scoring texts are too complex for their audience

13%

of low-scoring texts are too simple for their audience

51%

of low-scoring texts have paragraphs that are too long

43%

of low-scoring texts have sentences that are too long

41%

of low-scoring texts have words that were too complex

90 words

the average length of paragraphs that are too long

28 words

the average length of sentences that are too long

14 characters

the average length of words that are too long

Data source: Semrush analyzed a year's worth of data from the SEO Writing Assistant between June 2020 and June 2021. The highest-scoring content was considered anything that scored between an 8-10, and the lowest-scoring content—anything that scored under a 6.

Writing tips

Use shorter words instead of complex ones, where possible. It sounds patronizing, but the truth is, you want your readers to be able to skim your copy and get as much information as quickly as possible.

41% of texts we analyzed use words that are too complex.

So, forget your high school English teacher. Use “use,” not “utilize,” “feature,” not “characteristic.” The idea is to sound like you are talking to the reader, not giving them a lecture.

43% of low-scoring texts have sentences that are too long. Make sure to mix up the length of your sentences. Lots of short phrases make your copy sound choppy. At the same time, too many long sentences can be hard to follow and the text will sound long-winded and boring.

Write short paragraphs. According to SWA, you should aim for fewer than 90 per paragraph.

Maintaining a Consistent Tone of Voice

Marketers are often told to write conversationally. As mentioned above, this means to imagine you are speaking to the reader directly. But conversations can have different tones, from somber to sardonic and lighthearted to professional.

It's important that you define a brand [tone of voice](#). This will help you maintain consistency across your communications. It will also help you stay consistent within your web pages and articles.

The Importance of the Tone of Voice

75%

of all texts have sentences that are too casual

30%

of all texts have words that are too formal

78%

of high-scoring posts are consistent with their tone of voice



Writing tips

Consider who you are talking to. Imagine they were sitting across the table from you. Would you be casual, using slang or very informal words? Or would you be a little more polite and formal? This will help you get the tone for each piece of content right. It's worth the effort, as 78% of high-scoring posts maintain this consistency.

The right tone of voice for your brand should be determined on the company level and incorporated into every content piece you create. It should stem from your knowledge of your customers and your [brand story](#).

Reader Experience

Blogs are more than just words on the page. They are entertaining information sources, full of takeaways and insights. Part of the role of a content writer is to amplify the brand's message and make the written content easier to consume. That includes adding images and relevant links.

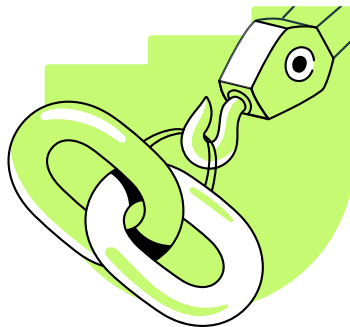
The Importance of Adding Images and Links

55%

of low-scoring posts don't have enough links

57%

of low-scoring posts don't have enough images



10%

of low-scoring posts have broken links

18%

of low-scoring posts fail to add alt tags to images

Data source: Semrush analyzed a year's worth of data from the SEO Writing Assistant between June 2020 and June 2021. The highest-scoring content was considered anything that scored between an 8-10, and the lowest-scoring content—anything that scored under a 6.

Writing tips

Identify areas that could be expanded on or need sources to back up what you are saying. Add internal or external links. Where you are adding external links, be sure to find trustworthy, up-to-date sources that don't compete for the same clients or keywords.

Use images to illustrate your post. They should complement the content, rather than distract from it. Use a consistent style and size for your images, so as to keep your branding consistent.

Don't forget to add alt tags to any visuals. These show Google and other search engines that you're serious about accessibility and help people who use screen readers to understand what's on the page. You can also include relevant keywords in the descriptions too. To make sure all of your images have alt tags, you can use the SEO Writing Assistant (SWA).

How To Optimize Your Content

Here are our tips to help you give your content the best possible chance of appearing in the top 10 results and provide the best possible experience for your readers.

- **Start with keywords.** 44% of low-scoring content did not include a target keyword. Ensure the keywords are included in any briefs (and don't get edited out later). Make sure the headline is optimized—it should include a keyword. 71% of low-scoring content fails to do so.
- **Cover the topic comprehensively.** While a high-quality article doesn't need to be long, it does need to include all the important information. Over 60% of low-scoring content is shorter than ranking articles competing for the same keyword.
- **Keep the tone of voice consistent in each piece of content and across all brand collateral.** Using SWA can help you spot inconsistencies and improve your copy.

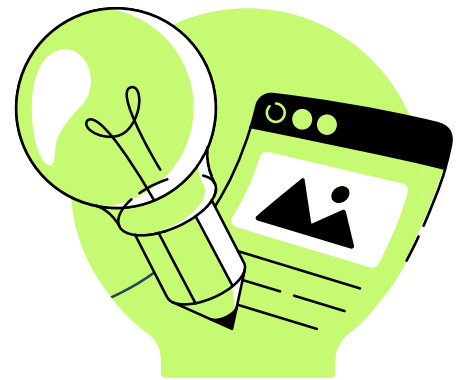
How to Optimize Your Content

- **Include external links to authoritative sources and be sure to link internally too.** More than half of low-scoring content had too few links.
- **Tell a story.** Narrative engages the reader and makes your content more memorable. Also, be sure to include calls to action and next steps—this will bring your readers closer to conversion.

About Semrush Writing Assistant

[Semrush's SEO Writing Assistant \(SWA\) ↗](#)

is a tool that analyzes written content in real-time. It then gives an optimization score (out of 10) based on four equal pillars: search engine optimization, tone of voice, readability, and originality.



Conclusions

Brand building, SEO, connecting with the customers, and generating leads—there are many reasons why people invest in content marketing. Our expert contributors and survey results alike show us that content truly is the future of marketing, with more investment, bigger content teams, and more marketers exploring the field than ever before.

When it comes to achieving objectives and meeting KPIs in content marketing, we've seen that a documented strategy and clear-cut processes are

essential. At the same time, customer research, analytics, and content auditing are all pillars of success.

As you look to the future of your own marketing efforts, Semrush is always here to support you. Whether you are just starting out or are a veteran marketer, our suite of content marketing tools can help you grow better organically. We offer practical and data-driven support at every stage of the content life cycle, from planning and research to execution, auditing, and analytics.



Methodology

Top Google Search Queries Related to Content Marketing

Focusing on Google searches related to “content marketing,” we found the average monthly search volume for keywords in the period January to December 2021.

Trending Topics Related to Content Marketing

We looked at data for the most queried topics by the users of Topic Research, where each topic consists of a number of related keywords.

- **Popular Topics** are based on the search volume, as well as backlinks, and shares.
- **Trending topics** show the most significant growth in the number of mentions on social media.
- **Trending Searches** are related to the trending topics that generated the biggest search volume.

Top Twitter Topics and Hashtag Trends

To establish the Top Trends in content marketing, we collected and analyzed more than 200,000 tweets in English containing the #contentmarketing hashtag, posted between January and December 2021.

We filtered popular tweets (with five or more retweets) and examined the following data points:

- Most popular hashtags combined with #contentmarketing
- Most popular topics discussed in the tweets (identified by machine learning algorithm)
- Use and types of visual content

Top 20 Google Search Queries Related to Content Marketing

During the period January to December 2021, we chose English language keywords for searches related to content marketing. We determined the global average monthly search volume to populate our data, which included the top search queries and top questions asked on Google.

Cost Per Click (CPC) Trends Analysis

In this analysis we found the highest cost per click for keywords related to content marketing, in English in the US.

Content Marketing Survey

We asked more than 1,500 marketers from 40+ countries in B2C and B2B sectors to give their opinions and insights on content marketing.

Anatomy of Performing Content

We covered blogs with average monthly unique pageviews from 30,000 up to 500,000 and discounted any articles published in the last quarter of 2021. We looked at:

- Average organic traffic
- Social media engagement on Facebook
- Number of backlinks



Anatomy of Performing Content

These were then segmented into high-performing (20%), average-performing (60%), and low-performing (20%) groups. We then analyzed these segments for common characteristics, including:

- Length
- Headline types (how tos, lists, questions, guides and studies, etc.)
- H1 length
- Heading depth (H2, H3, H4) of the low-, average-, and high-performing articles' list presence
- Image presence
- Video presence



Top Performing Content in Niche Industries

We looked at important patterns of top-performing blog posts in a number of industries, analyzing all traffic (all sources) in the U.S.

This section covers the 10 industries that are among the most expensive for PPC advertising. We analyzed 8,435 articles on 969 domains in English that were getting the most traffic between October 2020 to October 2021.



Tips for Optimization in 2022

Looking at SEO Writing Assistant (SWA) tool data from June 2020 to June 2021, we analyzed 23,561 texts and established a correlation between highly optimized content and search engine rankings. Then we looked at the key patterns of highest-scoring and lowest-scoring texts.



About Semrush

Since 2008, Semrush has served more than **7 million marketing professionals** around the world. Our goal is to help our users understand their competitors' marketing strategies, uncover growth opportunities, build brand reputation, and produce valuable content that delivers on brand goals.

Semrush in numbers

7 offices

50+ tools

Serving clients
in **> 142** countries

Data and trends
from **190** countries

7 million people have
used our services

Semrush Content Marketing Platform

Our content marketing platform is a one-stop solution to help your business grow with content. Explore these **seven powerful tools** you can use to build a content workflow based on your audience's needs:

Get your free
7-day trial today

Topic Research

quickly generate dozens of content ideas for your content hubs

Marketing Calendar

collaborate with your team members on the content campaigns

SEO Content Template

easily generate SEO-friendly briefs

SEO Writing Assistant

optimize your copy for users and SEO on the go

Brand Monitoring

find partnership and backlink opportunities

Post Tracking

analyze the performance of your external publications

Content Audit

run regular content audits on your website