



Best Practices for Repurposing Content

It can be extremely expensive to feed the constant demand for content from a wide range of audiences. Content marketing has become a major industry in the 21st century, with companies of all types and sizes working hard to produce content to help them distinguish themselves from competitors as they attract and engage audiences that can represent potential customers.

The costs of content creation can be positively affected, though, if companies work strategically to repurpose content in various ways. The mantra of any efficiency-oriented content creator or team should be “Create once, use many times.” Why let valuable content become buried as new content is created? In this column, I take a look at some practical advice from content creators who have learned to make the most of what they create.

KNOW WHAT YOU'RE WORKING WITH

If you don't know what you have, you can't ensure that you're using your content assets effectively. Linda Formichelli, founder and creative director of Hero's Journey Content, recommends taking stock of your content assets by making a spreadsheet of all of the content you have in all formats—print magazine pieces, blog posts, white papers, case studies, LinkedIn articles, and guest posts you've created. “Only when you have a good accounting of your content assets can you figure out ways to get more value from them,” Formichelli says. “You may even see opportunities for combining older pieces of content in new ways, which wouldn't happen if you didn't have a handle on all your assets.”

DEVELOP A REPURPOSING STRATEGY

“We utilize a hub and spoke model for our content,” says Elliot Simmonds, associate director of DJS Research Ltd. in the U.K. Individual content pieces serve as the hub; the channels used are the spokes. Simmonds' content strategy revolves around sector insights, he says. “We're a market research company and we know our clients are interested in developments in their sectors. These are published as individual articles on our site, providing long-term, long-tail SEO benefits, and are then funneled out across a range of channels over the coming weeks—largely Twitter, LinkedIn, and email newsletters.” The content is also valuable for sales staff to use as teasers or leader lines in emails, Simmonds says. Channels are segmented by sector, with each having a Twitter account and newsletter associated with it.

START BIG, THEN CHOP IT UP

Content creators know that one time-consuming aspect of the creation process is review and approval. Depending on the size of the team, that review process can take days, weeks, or even months. Leverage that investment in time, suggests Mason Stout, SEO specialist with SeniorLeaf, by starting with a longer, more in-depth piece of content—such as a 1,000-plus-word blog post—and then repurposing that content into other formats, such as infographics, social media quotes, or scripts for videos. “Since the original piece will have already been approved by your creative teams, getting the additional pieces of content should be much easier,” he says. “I did this often as a manager in an SEO agency and it was extremely effective in creating new content with very little effort.”

That same concept can be applied to visual content, suggests Amit Raj, director of The Links Guy. “We always advise that the most efficient way of producing a large number of content pieces in the most efficient way possible is to start with a large piece and make micro-content pieces a la Gary [Vaynerchuk],” Raj says. “So, for instance, filming a large 15-minute video for YouTube and IGTV, then using a service like rev.com to transcribe this as an article for your own blog. And that also allows you to create subtitle files for your YouTube video as well.” Then, he says, going back to the written version can yield a series of quotes that could be posted on



Twitter. “And then you can screenshot the tweet and, later, post it on Instagram.”

GO SMALL, AND THEN GO BIG AGAIN

It's common for content professionals to think about combining smaller pieces of content into longer forms—ebooks, for instance, or short social media posts—says Formichelli. She suggests the reverse approach: Take one small aspect of a longer piece of content and blow that up into another full-sized piece. Formichelli gives this example: “Say you have a blog post that rounds up the top technologies in your industry. With this repurposing strategy, you'd turn each of the sections of the post into a full-blown piece of content you can then post individually, turn into ebook chapters, and so on.” Or, she says, “You might grab the sidebar from an existing thought-leadership article and build another article around that idea.”

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PAY ATTENTION TO THE ANALYTICS

Don't just repurpose any of your content; take advantage of the value of analytics to help you identify your high-performing content, in alignment with SEO goals, recommends Haley Anhut, content marketing manager at Clean Origin. “If you're in an industry where things are always changing, then it's best to make sure you have content covering all of your primary and secondary keywords, and then keep them all up-to-date,” Anhut suggests. “For example, a shoe brand might have a blog post about ‘the most popular summer sandals.’ If this page is ranking well in Google, the company can simply update the list each spring to reflect the trends that will be popular that coming summer.”

Anhut shares that one of her firm's top-performing pages is its lab-grown diamond page. “Since this information isn't likely to change very much, we have to figure out what else we can repurpose,” she says. “Oftentimes, the answer is simply to break down subtopics even further into their own pages. This allows you to reuse many of the same ideas but also helps with users who might be further down the buying cycle and interested in a more in-depth piece of content.”

LINKS TO THE SOURCE

Hero's Journey Content
herosjourneycontent.com

DJS Research Ltd.
djsresearch.co.uk

DJS Research Ltd.'s example of sectors
djsresearch.co.uk/blog/articles

SeniorLeaf
seniorleaf.com

The Links Guy
thelinksguy.com

Gary Vaynerchuk's website
garyvaynerchuk.com

Clean Origin
cleanorigin.com

Out of the Box Innovations Ltd.
ootbinnovations.com

Keeping content fresh is good, says Anhut, but she adds that “it's important to fold in SEO to help figure out what content can be repurposed, what new topics you can cover, and what might just need a bit of a facelift.” And don't overlook the gold that might exist in the mundane bits of content that you create as an ongoing part of your business, often without even thinking about it. Jason Lavis, managing director of Out of the Box Innovations Ltd. in the U.K., suggests, “One way of finding a never-ending stream of unpublished content is by going over your email and message archives. In the trenches of everyday business, we constantly ask and answer questions, explain concepts, and brainstorm ideas. These are completely relevant and authentic.” He adds, “Often, an old email needs little editing before it can be repurposed into a blog post. Shorter Q&A messages and email chains can get repurposed for FAQ pages.”

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