

# Content Marketing Best Practices

When creating your next piece of long-form thought leadership or a content campaign, follow these best practices to boost your engagement, generate leads and maximise ROI.



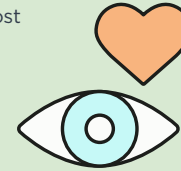
## CLIENT FIRST

Finding a topic can often be the roadblock. A great place to start is by identifying commonly asked client questions and then shortlisting in-demand topics and themes. Always ask: What is the reader gaining from this? A fresh perspective? A deeper dive? An exposé? A primer? In order to influence investors, the writer must have greater insight, or different insight, than the reader – and it needs to be lucidly expressed. Make sure your title is client-first too by keeping it simple and descriptive. Avoid cryptic titles and take a “does what it says on the tin” approach, as this will help with engagement, pick-up and targeting.



## VISUAL AIDS

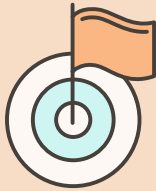
Make your content attractive by using visual aids, which (like scannability) improve the reader's experience and keeps them engaged. Long-form can risk feeling monotonous and dense, so enrich text-heavy content with relevant high-quality images, charts, infographics, coloured text boxes, graphs and tables. Like the old saying goes “a picture tells a thousand words” – the addition of visual aids to support complex concepts and to display ideas simply will help improve understanding and boost overall quality. These can then be pulled out and used as a part of your campaign such as in promotional social media posts or in presentation/pitch decks.



## DEPTH (NOT LENGTH)

It used to be the case that length and quality were synonymous with one another. These days, there isn't a clear-cut answer for how long a piece of content should be. The best formula? Write as long as it takes to answer the question/explore the topic thoroughly and deeply. Depth is now a far more important indicator of quality than length is.

And remember, an attractive paper with visual aids and scannability tools will naturally increase the length and depth of your content – which as explained, will serve to enhance and boost the content's quality indicators.



## OBJECTIVE

White papers are frequently mis-used as a way to showcase or promote a capability, product or company credentials. But this is NOT thought leadership.

The more objective your content, the more likely you will gain trust and increase dwell time. Aim to influence your readers and warm up leads organically, rather than by exposing them to a sales pitch they didn't sign up for.



## SUMMARISE

Not having an executive summary is one of the biggest (and most common) mistakes made with white papers, in-depth reports and long-form content. The beginning of a paper offers prime real estate to capture interest and convince a potential reader to delve in further.

Remember: Your investment content isn't a novel, so the plot doesn't need to be left to the end for “the big reveal”. So, don't be afraid to bullet point all your juicy takeaways – they will just peak the reader's interest even more! Think of your executive summary as an elevator pitch: keep it simple, pithy and thought-provoking.



## DOWNLOAD FRIENDLY

Generally, a great rule of thumb is always to make a download available where possible – for any content, not just long-form. Downloads can be saved onto drives and easily read offline, allowing readers to “save it for later”. They are also print-friendly. When webpages aren't supported by easy printing, they can appear badly formatted and waste paper, which could affect your return rate and brand reputation. For PDFs, be sure to follow a clear structure, use keywords and metadata to help search engines to crawl efficiently. Just don't forget to canonicalise to prevent duplicate content issues.



## MULTI-CHANNEL

To maximise engagement, performance metrics and ROI, it's critical to distribute content across multiple channels to a targeted audience. From the outset, create your campaign with distribution in mind and ensure that you have a plan for how the content will be showcased on your website, via email, on social media, at events, within pitch decks, during client presentations etc. This may flag up specific content requirements or (better still) may even identify where synergies and efficiencies can be made to help prevent channel adaptations being required later down the line.



## KEYWORDS

Optimising your content with trending and popular keywords related to the topic is a sure-fire way to help improve organic traffic and performance. This is important for all content (not just web articles or blogs), because Google will also crawl for content on PDFs. Try to do your keyword research before the writing starts so that they can be inserted into your content as naturally as possible. It's good practice to use them in headings and titles if it's relevant. Call-to-actions in the form of links to further reading will also optimise content for SEO and improve the reader journey.



## SCANNABLE

Make your content work as hard as possible by ensuring it is reader-friendly and easy to digest. Use navigational cues such as chapters, headings and sub-headings, and optimise them for scannability by writing simple titles that summarise the content beneath. If the salient takeaways can be understood by reading the titles alone, then you've done a good job. Add pull-outs quotes and use lists with bullets or numbers where possible to draw attention to important points. Ensure that your documents and website utilise white space properly so that content looks uncluttered.



## SYNDICATE

Content syndication should be a core objective and success metric within any content strategy. The goal of content syndication is to have an independent third party showcase your content – whether that's paid-for, self-syndicated or organic. Press releases/outreach, collaborations, SEO and paid media partnerships are some of the most effective ways to syndicate content. But do remember that syndication is useless if it's to the wrong audience, so target widely-used content platforms or media houses who have a wide reach, strong email distribution and the ability to target your audience intelligently based on their interests. This will boost brand awareness, brand reputation and generate high quality leads.



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