

How to Sell *Anything* with Content

Prepared by Dan Thies, Traffic Science Inc
Makers of **ResultFlow** – Marketing Automation for the Growing Online Business

“Why Isn’t Everyone Doing This?”

Greg is a small business owner. We helped him a bit, and he was pretty happy about it.

After 3 years of struggling to grow his business, fighting competitors on AdWords and Facebook, and barely having time for a vacation, things were looking up.

With a steady increase in traffic and revenue, he was actually planning a vacation for the first time in ages.

It wasn’t just that the numbers were up – for every single channel – it’s that every metric he could find to predict the future was going up as well:

- A 38% increase in the number of first-page rankings (per SEMRush) – a number that was rising every month.
- A 24% rise in top-three rankings (SEMRush again) – also rising every month.
- More traffic to more pages with more revenue from search engines, from email, from Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and referrals from all over the web.
- And every new post to his blog paid for itself in less than 3 days!

So naturally, he asked us: *“Why isn’t everyone doing this?”*

All we could say was *“They probably just don’t know any better – yet.”*

Most of them are doing direct response instead.

The Problem with Direct Response

Sam was not happy – she felt stuck.

They had been running their Facebook advertising campaigns according to best practices, but their business wasn't *growing!*

Their initial campaign was delivering a profit – about 20% on every dollar spent – and it was delivering a steady \$5k or more a month in sales, but they were having a hard time scaling it up.

Every time they tried to broaden their targeting just a little bit, the ROI turned negative on them... and they had literally tried *EVERY* way to broaden their targeting.

This is the #1 problem with direct response marketing: it's fairly easy to get to breakeven, but in most markets, it's pretty damn hard to scale it up.

Facebook's targeting is really good if you know what you're doing, but past a certain point, the only way to expand your reach via Facebook is to decrease the quality of your targeting.

With the audience targeting they were using – a "1% lookalike" – finding customers was like shooting fish in a barrel.

When they went to 2% though, well, there were twice as many fish, but – to continue the analogy – it was like going deep-sea fishing to find them.

Goodbye ROI.

That's where content marketing comes in... and the simple strategy we put in place increased their traffic and sales across every channel, allowing them to scale up from less than \$10k a month to over \$1 million a year.

Our strategy also improved the scalability of their direct response campaigns, while improving search engine rankings, increasing the ROI of their paid search, and adding a steady stream of new subscribers for their email marketing campaigns.

Just What is Content Marketing Anyway?

The purpose of content marketing – like all marketing – is to create more demand for your products or services, but there are a lot of strategies that go by the name “content marketing.” Most of them will not get you the kind of success that Sam and Greg have achieved.

So, to simplify things, let’s draw the line between practices that are inherently NOT scalable, and those that can be automated, outsourced, and scaled up into a traffic generation machine.

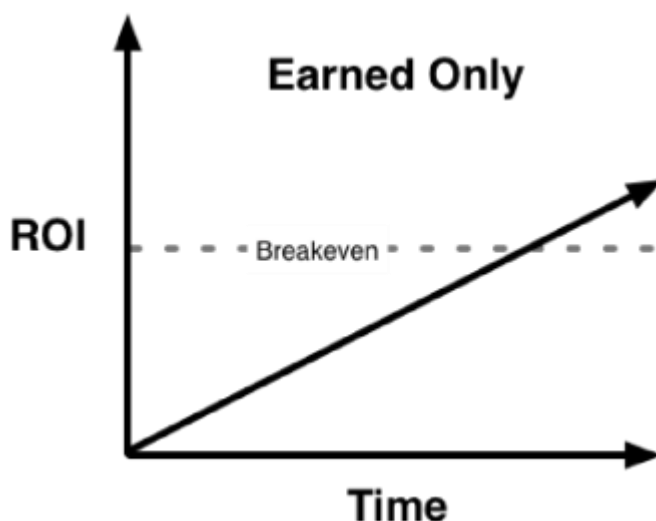
For example, these are all “Content Marketing,” but each of them also has inherent scalability limits:

Guest Blogging. This can “okay” so long as you’re not “link spamming,” but doing the outreach and the writing this takes, is time-consuming, expensive, craftwork that is nearly impossible to outsource.

Infographics. These are good to do, in limited number, but can you do two new ones every week? And who is gathering the data and doing the art?

“Epic Thought Leadership Blog Posts.” For a very limited number of “gurus” with existing audiences, this can make sense, but how much Thought Leadership can you build around water filters, trailer hitches, low carb food, or New York condos?

What every business needs is a Content Marketing strategy that looks like this:



To make that chart a reality, as we've done for hundreds of small business owners like Sam and Greg, we have a simple 7-part process that is repeatable, scalable, and delivers benefits from multiple channels, but *what our method is not* is just as important as what it is. It is natural that you'll want to put our approach into some "bucket" you're already familiar with, and that would be a mistake.

This is not an SEO strategy, per se, but it's the only strategy you need to grow organic traffic in a way that is economical, effective, and – above all else – safe.

This is not an email list building strategy, per se, but it's the primary source of new email leads for everyone that adopts it.

This is not a remarketing or Facebook advertising strategy, per se, but using Facebook in just the right way is a core component of our strategy.

So what is it already?

Our method relies on three unique differences:

- Building an Audience to Drive Traffic
- Leveraging Remarketing to Drive Sales
- Using Feedback Loops to Improve Performance

In the next section, you'll find the 7 steps described in detail. As you read through this – don't be surprised if it takes more than once! – you'll find those critical characteristics throughout.

How to Sell Anything with Content

Here's how this works, one step at a time.

- 1. You start by targeting an audience on Facebook, based on a profile of your ideal customer.**

This doesn't have to be super-scientific to start with, but if you already have enough customer email addresses, it can be as simple as creating a lookalike audience and adding some interest targeting. Easy stuff.

If you are running direct response ads already, you can leverage the same audience, or use a broader audience to bring in more people.

- 2. You begin delivering a stream of high-quality, low-cost content to that audience, through your Facebook page.**

Ideally, the majority of the content you share with your audience will be posted on your own site or blog, so that the traffic comes directly to your site.

This content comes in the form of short stories, which are of interest to your target audience, and have the advantage of being easy, cheap, and fast to produce, while also producing a great response from your audience.

- 3. You spend a little bit of money on "Page Post Engagement" campaigns (aka "boosts") to increase the reach of your content.**

The budget for this is typically in the \$10-\$30 per week range, depending on how aggressive you want to be about your rate of growth.

What happens next is awesome. Where your posts might have reached 100 people before the boost, the paid boost gets that up to 200 or 300, and because of Sharing, the total reach ends up being closer to 500 or 1000.

Some content will do better, and some content will do worse, but the average amount of amplification will tend to increase over time, especially if you "recycle" the stories that perform the best.

4. The result of this is a steadily increasing flow of traffic, even though your budget (and effort) may remain constant.

This isn't really a step in the process. It's just something that happens. Still, it's pretty cool, so I thought I should call it out.

As your audience grows, it generates more traffic, even if you aren't spending any more time or money to achieve that. So your ROI actually increases over time.

5. When people reach your website, you will sort them into different Remarketing Audiences based on what they do.

The story that you share on Facebook is just a "teaser" for a post on your blog, and every one of those blog posts has a set of response mechanisms (CTAs) that allow you to determine what campaigns to deliver to that person next.

One of these calls to action is an email opt-in, of course, and even at a 5-10% opt-in rate, those subscribers do start to add up.

For people who land on your content, but then click on offers, look at products and services, or opt-in to your email list, there will be other, more direct selling campaigns to follow up with them.

6. You don't have to run remarketing campaigns, but you would be foolish not to take the added profit.

Some of our clients don't use remarketing campaigns – mainly because they haven't had the time to get them running – and even they consider content marketing to have a positive ROI.

But when you understand how much BETTER your remarketing campaigns can be, compared to cold-traffic, direct response marketing...

This really is a no brainer. Can content marketing make you money without remarketing campaigns? Yes.

If you're running an AdWords campaign running at a positive ROI and growing every month, maybe you'll realize that's not such a great idea.

7. You will begin to see increases in search traffic – from "long-tail" queries at first, moving up to higher volume, and more keywords.

By adding fresh content – and we’re only talking about 2-3 posts a week here – you’re automatically going to start pulling in more traffic for long-tail searches in your market.

As you bring more people in, the more links you will attract (natural links, that is) and the more your site will begin to appear for higher volume search queries – we see it every time.

The real “tipping point,” though, is when brand name searches (people looking for you by name) start to become one of your largest sources of revenue. This can take time, but when it happens, you’ll never want it to stop.

That’s it. That’s all you have to do to ***sell anything with content.*** We’ve seen it work, over and over, in market after market, and it will work for you too.

But it does seem like a lot of work, doesn’t it?

You’re right – ***this is a beating!*** That’s why we built software.

The Easy Button

The single best way to improve a process is to first do it by hand until really understand it and then automate everything you can, and outsource the rest.

We've been evolving our unique marketing methods for more than a decade, innovating, testing, and automating with every passing year. That decade of learning times the hundreds of business owners that have used it, we've baked into ResultFlow.

In less than an hour of one-time setup and 20 minutes a week to keep it running, you can grow your business using our proven marketing system.

To get started, head over to <https://resultflow.com/getstartednow>