10 DATA-BACKED CONTENT MARKETING SECRETS TO USE IN 2018
There’s no one place that consumers are going to find content.

Facebook is the #1 content delivery network for millennials, not Google.

Data confirms it: data is the preferred content for the future.

Not all age groups prefer to access the same types of content.

Social media influences the product research process for younger age groups, but not overall.

Consumers are skimming your long-form content.

Video content is in less demand on social than the hype portrays.

Static Image Ads are still preferred over video ads, except in Latin America.

Branded videos are the most memorable form of branded content.

The best way to engage with a brand online isn’t via social.

This data comes from the HubSpot Research 2017 Content Trends Report, a refresh of a previous study conducted in 2016. Around 3000 people from a general population were surveyed in the US, Germany, Colombia, and Mexico between July and September 2017. For additional data, reports, and collection methods, check out HubSpot Research, our source for the latest marketing, sales, and business data.
There’s no one place that consumers are going to find content. But, Google and Facebook are the primary channels.

Consumers are going to search engines to find out more about topics they’ve already heard about. This process is called content retrieval. On the other hand, Facebook is the channel that people are discovering new content. It’s the delivery channel.

Consumers go to Facebook to find out what’s happening in the world, and then they search Google to learn more.
Think about whether the content has search intent or a need for delivery.

If your ideal audience already knows of the problem or topic you’re creating content around, then use strong SEO tactics to make sure you’re ranking for specific keywords in search.

If you want to create content people aren’t already searching for, like introducing a new idea, product, etc, think about that content as message that needs to be delivered. Facebook is the go-to delivery channel, so create content that is native to that platform.
Google is still the number one place consumers are going to find new content. But for young millennials, it’s Facebook.

If you’re marketing to consumers exclusively in the 55 or older age bracket, should you follow the same words of wisdom as someone marketing exclusively to the 18 to 24 age bracket? No.

Older generations are using Facebook for content discovery far less than younger generations. They also discover new content more so through publication websites (NYTimes.com, etc.).
What Marketers Should Do

Target audience age matters. It’s important to use data to understand how, where, and why your audience prefers to receive content.

For example, you might use email distribution and search optimized content for older adults while you focus on social media campaigns for younger generations.

Don’t rely on assumptions; use the data.

Where do you go to catch up on news, business, and lifestyle stories online?

Search in Google or other search engine
Read my Facebook feed and click interesting article/videos
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Data confirms it: video is the preferred content in the future.

When we surveyed consumers in both 2016 and 2017, we noticed some interesting differences over what content topics consumers want to see more of.

Namely, compared to the previous years, consumers want to see more videos, news articles and research reports.

Meanwhile, consumers seem to care less about social media posts, online classes, blog articles, long form content, and podcasts.

In general, what content types do you want to see more of in the future?

- Videos (How to Videos): 53%
- News & Articles: 46%
- Social Media: 44%
What Marketers Should Do

If you’re not already, you should focus on creating attention-grabbing, high-quality videos for social and beyond. That said, video isn’t the only format you should create.

Here’s a tip: Choose a format that works best for the content’s topic - instead of the other way around. Do this and you’ll diversify your content offerings while saving your valuable video resources for the topics best suited for that format.

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Not all age groups prefer to access the same types of content.

When you look at content format preferences, differences are clear. Older generations care less about video and more about traditional written forms of content.

In contrast, younger generations want more video, more social photos and posts, and far fewer news articles, research reports, and email content.
What Marketers Should Do

Focus on creating content for your target age group. Are your consumers primarily under 30? Spend more resources creating video that captures their attention and less time on your email marketing program.

You don’t need to neglect strategies entirely based on age groups, but data helps you match your resources to your audience's content preferences.

Don’t just guess. Always experiment and optimize your content for your audience, and more importantly, the conversions your own brand sees.
Social media is a big influence on the product research process for younger age groups, but not for other age groups.

When it comes to buying, consumers will do their research beforehand. That much has always been clear.

But for millennials in particular, social media plays a big role in the research process. It’s no longer just a content sharing platform to engage top-of-the-funnel prospects. It’s also a platform to help you make the sale.
What Marketers Should Do

What can you do to help? Optimize your social media experience for young consumers.

Social media sites signal good customer service to users with features like message response times, ratings, and reviews on business profiles - so make sure to optimize your profiles accordingly.

**Bonus tip:** try adding a chatbot to your Facebook account to delight users and make the buying and research process easy. Want help creating your first chatbot? We’ve got a guide for you.
Consumers are skimming your long-form content. But good news! They’re paying attention to videos.

While views, conversion rates, and heat maps are great tools to get a sense of how users interact with content, it’s also helpful to see what they pay attention to most based on preference.

Consumers are self-reportedly paying more attention to videos, news articles, and in-depth pieces featuring video. Meanwhile, they’re skimming through long form content like blogs, 1500+ word articles, and ebooks.
What Marketers Should Do

Make your long form content highly skimmable to ensure your messages don’t get lost in an overwhelming bout of paragraphs.

Focus on text hierarchies and divide your content by H1, H2s, H3s, etc. Use bullet points, ordered lists, and images to break up your long-form texts and make it skimmable.

Want to increase engagement time with your long form content? Think interactive. Ceros allows you to easily create interactive content and embed it right into a blog post or web page.

What do you closely pay attention to and what do you skim?

- Videos (How to Videos): 38% skim, 62% consume
- In depth articles (CNN, BBC News): 43% skim, 57% consume
Video content is in less demand on social than the hype portrays.

While users are reporting they want to see more video in 2017 than 2016, we’re also seeing signs that video is not the only content users want to see.

Users report wanting to see a variety of content across social platforms, with a large majority preferring images/photos to video.

Source: HotSpot Content Trends Survey, Q3 2017
Consumers are saying they want to see more video in 2017 than 2016, but that doesn’t mean you should only ever create video.

Focus on creating content in the format that makes the most sense for the content’s topic rather than adjusting to fit the constraints of video.

On social, users want a variety of content. Save your videos for those topics that are most likely to perform best. Experimentation with content formats is key!
Static image ads are still preferred over video ads, except in Latin America.

Digital advertising platforms, including all of the major social media networks, have evolved their ad formats to include different types, including videos, images, and text-based ads. Which is the most popular?

It turns out, static image-based ads are still preferred by consumers over video ads in both the U.S. and Germany. However, in Latin America, video ads are preferred.
If you’re running digital ads, keep this motto: always be testing. Test your ad copy, creative assets, conversion points, and ad format.

You’ve seen the data: consumers prefer image-based ads in some regions and not in others, but does that mean you should only run static image ads? No. Instead, create a digital advertising testing schedule to optimize your ads for your target audience.

Need a template to help you with your digital ads? HubSpot has a template for that in our social media templates kit.
Want to create a lasting impression with your audience? Branded videos are the most memorable form of branded content.

Online consumers are used to seeing branded content across different platforms -- but what types of branded content types are the most memorable?

Respondents in all age groups said that branded videos were more memorable than other types of content.
How do you create content that will make a lasting impression on your audience?

Research has shown that when people hear information, they are likely to remember only 10% of that information three days later. But pair an image with that same information, and people retained 65% of the information three days later (LifeLearn, 2015).

Video is clearly the format that consumers remember best, so make sure to use it effectively. Want to create effective videos? Check out HubSpot’s comprehensive video guide.

In the past month, what type of content posted by a company (not a person) was the most memorable to you?
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The best way to engage with a brand online isn’t via social; it’s on your website.

Marketers care about engaging future and current customers online. But where should they focus their engagement efforts most?

While many marketers think about social when they hear engagement, HubSpot found that 67% of consumers surveyed prefer to engage with brands on their websites. That’s far more than the 37% that prefer to “like” brands on Facebook as a form of engagement.
For marketers, it’s important to provide engagement opportunities wherever your prospects might want to engage.

However, take note of the intention behind someone visiting your site versus your brand’s social profile. Someone that visits the pricing page on your website is likely a higher quality prospect than someone viewing the basic information on your Facebook page - even if it includes price range.

Optimize all of your channels for engagement, but measure those engagements differently. Website visits and form fills should be measured as a higher quality engagement than a Facebook like.
Turning these secrets into an effective content strategy

Turn your insights into action: use the following three principles to determine your content angle, targeting strategy, and format:

1. Choose the right format
Choose the format that fits the topic, not the other way around.

2. Create content for your audience
Create content for your target audience. Use data to understand what content they want and where they prefer to receive that content.

3. Give them what they want in the format they like.
Give your audience the content in the format they prefer to receive it. Need a refresh? Review the secrets again for the data.

Need help planning your content strategy? Check out HubSpot’s content planning template used by 70,000+ marketers."
Your source for the latest marketing, sales, and business data. HubSpot provides software to fuel your growth and build deeper relationships.

How top brands and agencies are building rich, interactive content tailored to their audience.