

Marketing White Paper:

How to maximize content creation cost by understanding how various types of people read

Boost B2B Marketing ROI by Catering to Natural Consumption Behavior

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For nearly as long as newspapers and magazines have been entertaining and informing the masses, publishers have known that they need to appeal to essentially three kinds of readers: Skimmers, Readers, and Examiners:

Skimmers glance at headlines and captions – they fly right through it

Readers dig a little deeper and read subheads, introductions and summaries, captions & pull-quotes, and charts & graphs – they take more time than skimmers

Examiners read every word in the body copy – take the most time of all

Publishers appeal to these varying behaviors by breaking up their articles into digestible little bits and pieces so that each type of reader gets a little something from a single publication.

In short, Skimmers get a glimpse of what is happening, Readers know a bit more, and Examiners know everything. The newspaper or magazine keeps everyone happy.

Valuable Lessons for Marketers

This same framework can be used when publishing longer content marketing documents such as white papers, case studies, business cases, ebooks, websites, and more.

To illustrate how this whole idea came about, let me tell you about my company. Knowing that publishers have utilized this framework, for literally decades, I thought about my own company's target market and realized that they too fit into a three-level audience. My team and I identified three roles in an organization that typically evaluate our services: CMO at the top, VP/Director of Marketing in the middle, and Marketing Managers/Art Directors at the bottom.

Then we profiled what those people care most about (as it applies to the services we offer) and applied relevant phrases and concepts to each. Here's what we came up with...

Chief Marketing Officer	VP/Director of Marketing	Marketing Manager/ Art Director
		
<p>Cares about:</p> <p>Building the brand, engaging customers, empowering the sales force, and getting ROI from their investments so they can increase market share and impress the CEO and the Board</p>	<p>Cares about:</p> <p>Aligning the right message with the right audience, assuring their teams are productive, delivering great leads to the sales head, and looking good to the CMO</p>	<p>Cares about:</p> <p>Delivering the right thing, delivering it on time, and impressing their VP or Director boss</p>

Since CMOs have so much on their minds and so little time, they likely will simply skim a long document that they've come across. So that's where we put things that align with their goals in places like headlines and captions because that's where they will look. If they're happy with what they've seen, the CMO will pass it along to a subordinate for further investigation.

So the VP or Director gets their hands on it and they dig a little deeper and read things that they care about in places like introductory paragraphs, sidebars, pull-quotes, and more.

It looks interesting to the VP but they too are too busy to read every word so they pass the document along to one of their subordinates to verify claims and confirm the possibilities. Alas, the Marketing Manager examines all the nitty gritty details about the firm. Convinced that the company does what they claim, back up the org chart we go. And, naturally, this works the same way had the VP or Director found it first or if the Marketing Manager came across it first.

To illustrate how it works, below are a few pages from one of our white papers, shrunk down to make room for annotations...

The image shows a white paper titled "Maximizing Return on Marketing Investments" with three distinct annotations:

- CMO:** A red arrow points to the top header area, which includes the text: "Marketing White Paper: How incorporating psychology into visual content can boost ROI for branding, engagement, and sales."
- VP/Director of Marketing:** A blue arrow points to a central section titled "By incorporating the proven psychology traits outlined in this paper, people are more likely to share and remember your brand, thus maximizing your marketing spend." Below this, a blue box highlights a section titled "Leverage Economies of Scale" which discusses shooting multiple versions of a video and using social media to reach different demographics.
- Marketing Manager:** A green arrow points to a section titled "What's the ROI of being remembered?" which discusses the importance of creating quality content that is memorable and associated with a brand.

Other visible text on the page includes "interplay Be talked about.", "Establish Success Metrics", "Evaluate the Return", and a "NOW! EVERYTHING ROI!" badge.

As you can see, each person gets exactly what we want him or her to know about us because the things that interest them are in places where they are most likely to look. CMOs notice that we're all about saving money and maximizing investments. VPs/Directors see how we impact an organization and improve productivity. And Marketing Managers learn all about how we do it. All of them also are exposed to our innovative processes and ideas so the whole document has increased relevance and opportunity potential. One document for many people, each getting just what they want, and they're all headed to the same conclusion: Interplay is worth considering.

Here's how to do this in your own documents:

1. Write the main body copy of your document, intended for a lower-level practitioner. This is the nuts and bolts of your main argument, the primary solution or best practice that you recommend, so key phrases and such in the body copy shouldn't be dramatically effected by the tailoring approach we are recommending. Once it's done, set it aside.
2. Write down everything your audience gets from your solution. Not what it does, but how it improves their lives, relationships, productivity, and more. Short phrases work best. List all the topics you can think of.
3. Break apart your audience into three hierarchical groups. You might already have such groups profiled and saved as personas for your inbound marketing efforts.
4. Sort each of the topics in step 2 into each of the groups you identified in step 3.
5. As an added benefit, you now have a bunch of SEO keywords and phrases, some of which might be new. In fact, grab your current SEO keyword list and see if the exercise has revealed additional phrases that you can add to it.
6. Add the top few keywords from your SEO list to each group, beneath the topics you saved in step 4.
7. With this nice little list of phrases and SEO keywords handy, go back to your main body copy document and weave the top-level phrases into the headlines, captions, and the executive summary. You might need to rework things a bit to get everything to fit. Then place the mid-level phrases into sidebars and captions. The body copy should already appeal to your lower-level audience but make sure it includes the phrases they care most about.
8. You're done, publish it.

Executive summary

So by strategically placing topics that matter most to various segments of your target market, you can appeal to all of them with a single document. As that document gets passed around, each target audience member can gain something from it, and find those things easily because they are in places that match their natural consumption habits.

By serving all of layers of a target customer in a single document, companies can reduce publishing costs.

You may have noticed that this document incorporates some of the same lessons that we're espousing here. For instance, we put "ROI" in the headline and "maximize cost" in the tagline to appeal to the C-suite. We also added a pull-quote to the Executive Summary with "reduce publishing costs" in it for good measure. The subhead "Valuable Lessons for Marketers," the three bullets, the caption under the main image, and the executive summary are all easy ways for a VP or Director to consume the essence of our argument. And the main body copy details how we get it done and describes the nuts and bolts for a marketing manager. See? Everybody wins. Especially us because we only had to publish one document to make our point to all three.

We hope you've enjoyed this document and have learned a thing or two for your own publications. To discuss this and many other marketing innovations that we provide, please interact with us where it is most convenient:

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I'm Dan Clark, the Owner of Interplay Agency. I'm a published author with over 30 years of experience in marketing and visual communications. My entire career has been devoted to creating marketing content for the high technology and financial services industries.

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