



7 Prompts to Help Come Up With Content Ideas

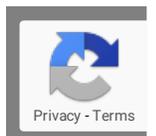
 Kastle Wasserman

Most writers know nothing is worse than staring at a blank page trying to come up with ideas. As the pressure to consistently generate great content mounts for businesses to keep their online presence fresh, more face that dreaded task of trying to think of topics to write about for everything from blogs and emails to social media.

So how do you get those creative juices flowing? Taking time to brainstorm content ideas will help you create a quality list that you can then distil into a content calendar to start scheduling out your writing work. Here are some prompts to get you thinking.

Recent Success Stories: When did your product or service knock it out of the park for a customer in need? Keep a running a list of successes, any testimonials sent in and, where appropriate, take or request a photo of your product making a customer happy. Sharing these stories provides real life proof that you are a credible business fulfilling customer needs.

Expert Knowledge: What do you know that makes you a subject matter expert for your industry? Do you see customers with problems you know how to solve? Did you



attend a conference recently where you learned about innovations and trends in your industry? Share this information and show how you are the go-to source for a product or service with the expertise to back it up.

What Are People Talking About?: If you aren't listening to what people are saying on social media and in blogs, you're missing out on a lot of opportunities. Commentary about the industry, customer service complaints, customer needs and competitor posts are all fodder for creating content. Fortunately, there are lots of tools that you can use to follow conversations, such as [Tweetdeck](#), [Social Mention](#) and [Hootsuite](#) to set up a [listening dashboard](#) and skim for ideas in one place. Research some keywords that are frequently hashtagged for your industry and create a feed.

Just Ask: It never hurts to simply ask people what they want. Try sending a survey to your mailing list to find out what topics people want you to write about. Boost your chances for more responses by offering an incentive such as a prize drawing for survey participants to thank the customer for taking the time. You may find you get back lots of opportunities to share your expert knowledge on your product or industry.

Keep an Eye on the Competition: It's always important to know your competition. What topics are they posting about in their content? Which is generating a lot of comments, especially thank yous? Draw inspiration from them to do your version and show how you handle these topics better. A word of warning – don't copy! A good marketer showcases their *unique selling point* that makes them stand out from the competition. If you are the same as the other guy, why would a customer buy from you instead?

Social Responsibility: What do you and your company do to give back? Do you participate in fundraising, run a green office or production process, help mentor the next generation? Show it off! [Studies show](#) people like to buy from companies who do good for others. If you aren't doing anything right now, look into some charitable opportunities that are a good fit for your product and are meaningful to your target audience. Set up a way to donate some proceeds or participate in a fundraising event. Need a role model? Check out the record-breaking success of Patagonia when they paired their [Black Friday sale with efforts to](#)



benefit the planet that amounted to a whopping \$10 million in sales.

Go Behind the Scenes: Everybody likes a sneak peek into how the “magic” happens. It provides a personal touch and humanizes your brand by letting people get to know who’s behind the product. Do a blog on your employee of the month, share what your employees like to do when they are off the clock, share what pets they have at home. Need inspiration? Check out how Domino’s Pizza put the spotlight on their “**pizza artists.**” Be sure to get your employee’s permission to talk about them or post photos of them publicly and refrain from using last names for privacy reasons. Your customers will love getting to know who your people are, what they share in common and how hard they work to make the product that fills their needs.

Now that we’ve got your brain reeling with ideas, it’s time to go make some great content!



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Relevance

Get in Touch

26361 Crown Valley Pk., Ste. 210
Mission Viejo, CA 92691

Phone: (949) 429-3699

Email: contact@relevance.com

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