



**BENEFITS**  
**of Content Marketing**

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# Is your business taking advantage of these 9 benefits of content marketing? Are your competitors?

When I talk to groups about content marketing and repurposing content, it's best not to assume everyone is familiar with the concepts.

While content marketing is all the rage these days – and for good reason – it doesn't mean everyone is aware of it.

The word *content* covers a lot. Your sales copy is content. The graphics or video on your site are content.

When I talk about *content marketing*, I'm not talking about your sales copy. I'm talking about content just like you're reading now... helpful, educational and of interest to people who are looking for answers on a particular topic.

Your sales copy is something people have to read if they want to learn more about your business, or your product or service. Your unique, personal and helpful content is something people want to read – or listen to, or watch – because they get value from it whether they're buying or not. It's what keeps them coming back to your site.

Here's an example. Let's say you sell cameras. Your sales copy is obviously going to promote the cameras you sell and why you – among all the camera stores available – are the one to do business with.

But if I'm not ready to buy, why would I need to come back

to your site? Or maybe I just bought a camera from you or someone else. Again, why visit your site and keep coming back?

The answer is your *personalized, non-sales content*.

What are topics of interest to camera buyers or photographers? Here's a quick list off the top of my head... how to find the right camera, how to take great photos under different conditions, little-known or little used features of cameras, the best way to print your photos, efficient ways of labeling your photos... the list is almost endless.

Your unique content opens the door for you to become a trusted resource for your prospects and customers. By freely giving them information, and being more than just sales copy on the page or screen, you're more likely to convert prospects into customers and current, casual customers into loyal customers.

I consider a blog to be your content hub. You can setup a blog for free on your site or on a blog-specific site (like WordPress.com) and post articles to it any time you like. It's your 24 hour printing press.

Many who champion content marketing will go so far as to say that you



should consider yourself an information publisher. Yes, you sell a product or service, but it's that unique content that may help people decide whether to choose you or a competitor.

The trouble that many businesses have with blogs is that they run out of steam pretty quick. There's nothing worse for a blog than for visitors to see that it hasn't been updated in months. Believe it or not, that tells people something about your company, and it isn't positive.

So if you're going to go down this road (and I believe you should), you have to commit to it long-term. Successful content marketing doesn't happen overnight and it's something that must be maintained.

I know that sounds scary. After all, you're already spinning a dozen plates, right?

I'll simply tell you this: The content you publish on your blog can be an important driver of traffic to your site by people who are looking for specific information you're sharing.

And when you leverage that content by spreading it to other channels, you increase the odds of more people finding you and your solution to their problems.

Personally, I can tell you that content I wrote years ago is still drawing people to my site. How great is that?

Part of my mission is to help you get your content marketing efforts off the ground so that you're creating great content, and spreading it so that content is working for you as hard as possible.

I have other content marketing related resources that you'll find

at: <http://mikeklassen.com/resources>

If you want specific help, I do work one-on-one with businesses to get them started on the right foot.

For now, I'd like to highlight nine specific benefits to content marketing...

### **Your unique content generates better-quality leads**

When people are contacting you based on your content, it means you've piqued their interest enough that they're willing to contact you to learn more. Getting prospects to call you is the dream of just about every business.

What a call (or e-mail) in that case means is that the prospect felt you did a good enough job in either addressing a need or showing that you understand what they're going through that they're willing to explore a next step in the sales process with you.

### **Your unique content is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

As a solo operation, I can't be available all the time. And since I work with people in other countries, it would be nuts to be on-call 24 hours a day. Perhaps you can relate.

Your content – not only on your own site but spread to other marketing channels – allows people to get to know you when you're not in front of the computer or by the phone.

Ideally, you'd always get a chance to meet prospects and customers face-to-face. But it's not realistic, is it?

Our potential customers can, for some businesses, be anywhere in the world. For that reason, you want to be available when it's convenient for the prospect. Your unique content can be a great stand-in when you're not available to take the call.

## Your unique content leverages your intellectual capital

The idea of intellectual capital can be a new one to some. We're often so caught up in doing what we do, we don't appreciate just how much we know. You might think it's nothing special, but it is to someone who lacks your experience.



For example, magalogs have been around for decades. But businesses are discovering them for the first time at any given point. So my experience as a magalog designer – even though it hasn't been decades – is far more than someone who is just hearing about magalogs this year.

It's my experience and the ideas that I have on this topic that allow me to position myself through my content as a specialist and, more importantly, as a trusted resource.

Going back to the camera business I mentioned earlier, you may not think you're the world's greatest expert in cameras. But if I'm looking to buy a camera and know nothing about what to look for, your experience and genuine concern for me finding the best fit is going to be priceless.

That experience is part of your intellectual capital and it's just as valuable as financial capital. Never take it for granted!

## Your unique content helps you stand out from competitors

I obviously don't know what your business is all about, so there's no way I can know what your competitors are doing. But I can make this really simple: If you're providing lots of useful content and your competitors aren't, it helps you stand out as an expert in your field.

All else being equal, who are people more likely to call when they're ready to buy? The business providing lots of useful content and making a deeper connection with them? Or the business who thinks a sales page is good enough?

On the other hand, if most of your competitors are providing meaningful content and you're not, you are in a sense standing out, but not for the right reasons.

Admittedly, there are some businesses where a single sales page is good enough. Usually there's no competition, or it's a limited-time or one-time-only type of sales site. Or it might be a product/service that doesn't need a lot of thought by the buyer.

However, that's not the scenario for most of us, especially those of us providing a service.

## Your unique content improves your search engine ranking

I want to clearly state that I am not a search engine expert. But I've seen what content is doing for hits to my sites.

My sales copy talks about a couple of core topics so people understand what services I offer. But my blog content and downloadable content covers far more ground.

Not only does all that content create a rich site of information, it increases the chances that I'll be found when people are searching on all the different topics I'm writing about.

Even better, when I spread that content to other marketing channels, it not only links back to my site (another positive with search engine rankings) but it's exposed to people I wouldn't have otherwise reached on my own site.

If they like what I have to say, it's more likely they'll visit my site to learn more.

### **Your unique content positions you as a trusted advisor, not a salesperson**

Let's be honest... you're in business to make money. So there is always a sales component to what you do.

But there's a difference between forcing your product/service on anyone within reach and someone who takes the time to make sure the product/service is a good fit.

The former is trying to grab your money before you change your mind. The latter appreciates that the sales process can be a long one and is happy to help you make the right decision.

### **Your unique content exposes your personality**

There's an old saying that people like to do business with people they know. Obviously we do business with people we don't

know all the time. But if we do know them on some level, and we've built up some trust, we're more likely to gravitate to the people we know.

While you can certainly expose your personality through your sales copy, your blog content, or content in video and podcasts, makes a more personal connection. You can be a bit more free to be who you really are and not be so formal as is more common with sales copy that needs to answer questions about a product or service.

In my case, I've had a number clients go through my content not to find out if I'm a good designer, consultant or speaker, but to get a sense of my personality and whether I'd be good to work with on a *personal* level.

For some businesses, personality may not be important. If you pay-at-the-pump when you get gas, the personality of the station owner and the staff may not matter. But if your business involves a lot of customer interaction, your content can help you stand out from a competitor's passionless sales page.

### **Your unique content shows stability in your business**

I was intrigued when someone pointed out this benefit to me. We are in a time of instability, on a worldwide level and a business level. The trouble is, we can't stand instability. That's especially true in business.

If you're a business that depends on outside suppliers, you're very aware of the chaos that comes when a supplier disappears or needs to be changed for some reason.

One of my blogs has over five years of content. What does

that mean? If nothing else, it means I've been around for a while. It's a subtle thing that gives my clients a feeling like I'm not someone who just threw up a website last week and may disappear tomorrow.

I have to admit I hadn't fully appreciated the role content plays on this point until talking about it with others. Businesses have enough challenges as it is. They don't need an extra challenge when it comes to finding partners they can depend on.

Certainly content alone isn't the sole consideration when working with someone. But it's something that helps to create a more complete picture of whether or not you're the right fit.

### **Your unique content continues the sales conversation**

Unfortunately, not everyone who comes to your site is ready to buy. Maybe they don't have enough information. Maybe they don't have the money. Maybe it's a purchase they're planning months down the road and this is just the research stage.

So, what reason do they have to keep coming back to your site if they're not ready to buy? Do you think they'll keep coming back just to re-read your sales copy? Highly unlikely. And you're having to hope they bookmark your site so that when they are ready, they come back and don't just do a new search and end up at your competitor's site.

Instead, what if they found a lot of great content that you update on a daily or weekly basis? Might they be willing to subscribe to your blog so they don't miss out? And then, when they are ready, might you have an edge if you've been "talking" to them all that time? I believe you would.

### **How I'm using content marketing on my sites today**

I realize that just because I'm doing something a certain way, it doesn't mean you should, or that it will work for you the same way it does for me. Even businesses in similar niches are different enough that "one size *doesn't* fit all."

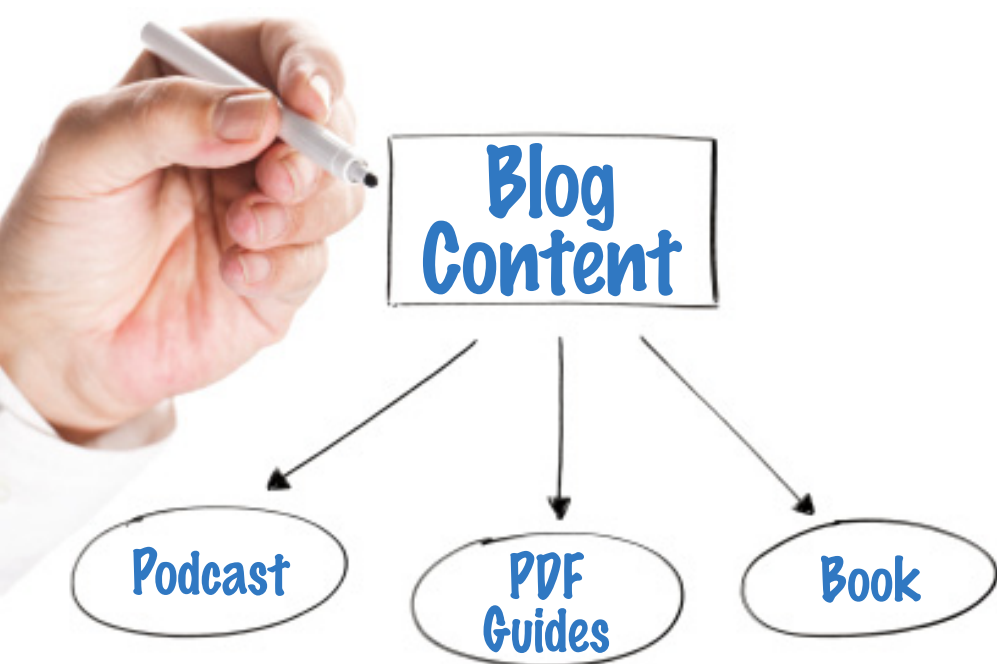
But I felt there was value in sharing a bit about how I'm doing things at this moment. I say *at this moment* because like any marketing effort, it needs to be flexible. While you don't want to change based on the way the wind is blowing on any given day, you don't want to be held hostage by your plan.

My weekly text-based blog is at <http://magalogguy.com>. While I wish I had enough quality content for daily updates, I tend to write long articles. So once a week works for me. Consistency counts for a lot. Writing four articles one week, then taking three weeks off before another burst of activity isn't a great plan.

And so we're clear, updating your blog only once every three months may, *technically*, be consistent, but it's not serving your best interest. Personally, I feel a text-based blog should be updated at least once a week.

I say *text-based* because on <http://mikeklassen.com>, I've gone a different route. My updated content is my podcast. I didn't feel I had enough content to merit two separate blogs. But the podcast is still content.

So when new podcasts come, they show up not only in iTunes, but also <http://mikeklassen.com>. Each new listing actually shows up as a blog article where people can read the topic, any links I've included, and even listen to the podcast on the site.



By the way, some of the content for those podcasts are simply audio versions of the blog on the Magalog Guy® site. This is a major part of repurposing content that I talk about in my book, *Increase Sales & Build Deeper Connections*. (Of course, that book contains a lot of repurposed blog content.)

I'll also be including interviews on my podcast, another great source of content and a wonderful way to reach a new audience since your interview guests will promote that interview to their audience.

On both my sites, I include free downloads. Again, it's often repurposed content, or content that I originally wrote on my blog, but want to expand upon in a PDF download or book.

From my sites, I spread my content through different channels that I discuss when I speak to groups either in-person or through webinars.

But just getting a consistent effort going on your website is plenty to keep you busy if you're just getting started.

## Taking the next step...

To say there are *only* nine benefits to content marketing would be a mistake. My goal isn't to list every benefit under the sun. Instead, I want to cover the ones I see resonate with businesses most often.

I'm also aware there are never any guarantees. I'm not the type who feels there's only one solution when it comes to marketing.

There are no magic bullets. You still need to have a solid sales process. *Marketing does not equal sales.*

But based on what I'm experiencing and what I see happening with others, content marketing increases the odds of people finding you, and helping lead to a sales conversation whether it's now or months down the road.

It's not a quick fix, though. It takes time and commitment.

When I speak to groups I tell them that if they're just going to try content marketing for a month and then quit if they're not seeing results, don't even bother starting.

It's almost like thinking you can run a TV commercial once or twice and that should be enough. It's not.

So what next? Great question.

Right now, you can go to <http://mikeklassen.com/resources> and download the guide, *Great Ideas for Generating Great Content*.

One of the biggest obstacles to consistent content marketing is the fear you won't have enough to write about. This short PDF will get you started.

That same link will take you to my book, *Increase Sales & Build Deeper Connections: Maximizing Your Content to Boost Sales and Generate Better-Quality Leads*.

If all this is new to you and you're a bit overwhelmed, I'm ready to guide you through the process.

As a consultant, I work with people to get them on the right foot with content marketing, evaluating what content you have and how best to leverage it.

For some clients, I single call to brainstorm ideas is just push they need.

As a direct market graphic designer, my job is to be a content bridge... taking your content and putting into a format that your audience will respond to. Maybe that's a PDF like this, a print or eBook, a magalog, or some other format.

As a speaker, I've shared my content marketing experience with groups in-person as far away as Australia. And it can be done just as easily online with a webinar for your group.

Contact me at [mike@mikeklassen.com](mailto:mike@mikeklassen.com), or at 360-371-2746. I look forward to hearing from you!

*Mike Klassen*

# About Mike Klassen



**Mike Klassen** is a consultant, speaker, author and direct marketing graphic designer, helping businesses boost sales and create more personal connections with customers and prospects.

He speaks extensively about content marketing and content repurposing, showing how businesses can stand out from competitors while solidifying relationships with customers and prospects.

In his role as a direct marketing graphic designer, Mike works with clients to leverage their content through magalogs, books, sales letters and training material.

In addition to helping clients around the world, Mike works directly with businesses on the stage and in the classroom. His experience is shared in articles and advice that have appeared in *Print Professional Magazine*, *ESBJournal*, *Home Business Magazine*, and *Inside Freelance Design*.

He's also the host of the *Increase Sales & Build Deeper Connections Podcast* and co-host of the *Neanderthal Marketing Radio Show*, both available on iTunes.

Mike is the author of *Increase Sales & Build Deeper Connections: Maximizing Your Content to Boost Sales and Generate Better-Quality Leads*.

To learn more about Mike and how he can help you boost sales or speak to your group, visit: <http://mikeklassen.com>

*[Mike's] presentation was a stand-out among our delegates. His content was well thought-out and he provided lots of examples and tips on how those listening could take immediate action on the points he had to share. What else I loved about Mike was the fact that he was extremely approachable and our members enjoyed lots of face-time with Mike as he helped them through various issues relating to Marketing and building their personal and business brand. We'd welcome him back anytime and would highly encourage any organisation to engage Mike wherever in the world they may happen to be.*

## **Dale Beaumont**

Author of 16 Best Selling Books

Founder and CEO of Business Blueprint