



# How to Create Content Your Prospects Need

*The backbone of any content marketing program is, of course, content. And while any inbound marketer should have a solid handle on their writing skills, understanding how to develop content that directly addresses your prospects' most pressing pain points takes a bit more effort. However, the payoff is well worth it; understanding and capitalizing on the solutions for which your target audience is truly looking will deliver better leads and, ultimately, higher ROI.*

# Step 1: Identify

The first step to develop content aligned to your prospects' pain points is an obvious one - understand what those pain points are. All of your prospects' pain points likely fall into one of five general buckets:



**Identity Pain Point:** They want to be known more or differently



**Financial Pain Points:** They want to make money or save money



**Productivity Pain Points:** They want to more efficient



**Process Pain Points:** They want to be more effective



**Resource Pain Points:** They want their staff to be or feel "better"

You can uncover which area your content should address through direct audience research or search for other content in the industry to see what topics are prevalent. Not everything you find will be black and white; for instance if your audience needs to "highlight the positive environmental implications of our production" content could focus on identity, process, or both. A great way to suss out the "real" content need is through user stories. Instead of using a questionnaire, ask your prospects to describe a typical day and listen for clues on what excites them, frustrates them, and how they move through their work. More than anything this should help clarify their true pain points and help you start developing content that fits their needs.

# Step 2: Align

Now that you know your audience's pain points, it's time to align those issues with solutions you can offer. The key here is that most of your prospects aren't ready to purchase and potentially aren't even aware of the best solutions to their challenges. To help align what you have to offer with what prospects need, it's often helpful to use a visual tool that shows the steps that get from one to the other.

Pain Point	Explicit Connections for Your Audience	Implicit Connections for Your Audience	Your Solution
Pain Point #1	Tangible benefits including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cost</li></ul>	Emotional benefits including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community image</li></ul>	Specific Product/Service
Pain Point #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• End user benefit</li><li>• Staff benefit</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Industry leadership</li><li>• Innovation</li></ul>	Specific Product/Service
Pain Point #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Technical solution</li><li>• Etc.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ego</li></ul>	Specific Product/Service

You can also think through the various stages of the buying funnel when aligning pain points and offerings through content. What is the overall pain point -- that's top of funnel (TOFU) content. What elements should prospects consider regarding possible solutions -- that's middle of the funnel (MOFU) content. And finally, what specific offerings can your company provide that they can act upon to address issues -- these are your bottom of funnel (BOFU) pieces. By ensuring every pain point is aligned to a story you can uniquely tell, your company will be better positioned to be there when prospects are ready to become paying customers.

# 3 Step 3: Plan

Now that you understand what information prospects want and how your offerings can be positioned to align to their needs, make a plan on how each piece of content you'll develop contributes to the overall story. To get the most bang for your content marketing investment it's not enough to just write a piece here and there. You want your content library to read like a cohesive story both so your brand is evident, but also so prospects all along the buying path can find information they need and be led to the next step of their journey.

One of the best tools for this is an editorial calendar. This tool simply allows you to plan content for an entire quarter that tells a complete story against one of the key pain points you've identified. Think about having a theme for the quarter -- ideally one that leverages the identification and alignment work you've already completed. Then develop content against that theme. Consider too which pieces fall into which part of the funnel to make sure you have content for everyone considering your offerings.



**Here's a sample editorial calendar to consider your content strategy and titles:**

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3
Quarterly Theme			
Gated Content			
Gated Content Blog			
Webinar			
Case Study			
Opportunistic Content			

# 4 Step 4: Develop

OK...finally it's time to develop content that addresses your prospects' pain points and helps generate B2B leads. And here's the good news, you're likely already more than halfway done given the efforts you've undertaken in identifying, aligning, and planning for this step.

You know the pain point. This should be clearly reflected in the headline so readers understand this is a piece for them. Strong titles could include words like "How to ADDRESS PAIN POINT," "3 Ways to TACKLE PAIN POINT," or "Uncover the Secret to MITIGATE PAIN POINT." Beyond the title, make sure to remind your readers what problem they are solving throughout the piece.

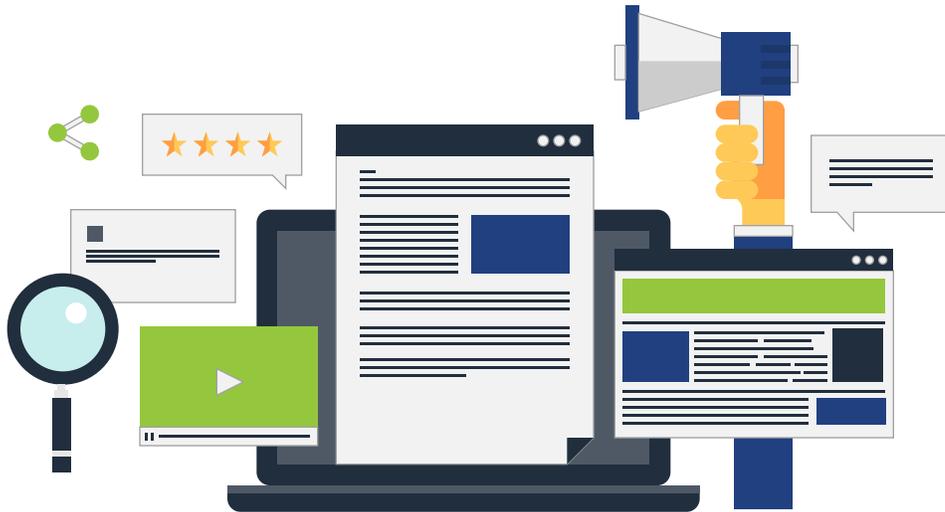
You also have aligned that pain point to your unique offering so that should take up most of the space in your piece. That said, and with the exception of BOFU pieces, resist the urge to talk about your company or its actual offerings. While this might seem counterintuitive, it's critical that prospects read your content as an agnostic third party offering. You want them to get value from the piece and if they think they're being sold to you've lost them at first glance. A good way to offer unbranded solutions is to use phrases that lead the reader to wonder more. For instance, say you are selling SAAS for the human resources sector. Instead of using your company or product name it's better to write "a strong HR solution will FILL IN THE NEED." The reader then thinks "yeah, I need a strong HR solution that does that" and you've moved the prospect to the next step in their buying process.

The final part of your content should include a strong, singular call-to-action (CTA) and...it should be clearly aligned with your prospect's pain point. Whether you're offering a demo, conversation, or other engagement next step, clearly call out the pain point in your CTA. For example, "Are you ready to take the next step to tackle PAIN POINT? Click here to chat with one of our experts on the perfect solution for your unique situation."



## The Bottom Line

Aligning content marketing strategies to your target audience's most pressing pain points allows you to maximize engagement from your most promising prospects. Capitalizing on the solutions for which they're looking will deliver better leads and, ultimately, higher ROI. We've partnered with clients throughout the B2B marketplace to develop hundreds of pieces of content that aligned with their target audiences' pain points and drove revenue-generating leads.



*Interested in finding out how we might work together to get results from content marketing? [Connect with us](#) to start the conversation.*