

Practitioner information

Introduction

This resource helps learners understand the value of creating and distributing valuable, lasting content that builds positive customer relationships with a brand. Learners explore the meaning of content marketing, what content might appeal to engineering audiences, and the media formats that deliver content in the most helpful way, before considering ways to optimise content so it remains high in search results and generates maximum traffic.

Topic links

- Enterprise
- Marketing, promotion, and branding
- Communication

Suggested learning outcomes

Learners will be able to:

- understand the meaning and purpose of content marketing
- give examples of types of content and media to use for different purposes
- describe the purpose of evergreen content and search engine optimisation (SEO).

Why this topic is relevant for engineers

Valuable, lasting content creates a competitive advantage by building positive, lasting relationships with potential and existing customers. Conventional marketing must work hard to persuade customers of a product's quality and value. Content marketing enhances this by demonstrating that the brand understands customers' needs, is committed to their success, and provides 'proof points' that build trust and emotional engagement with the brand.

Delivering the theory: What is content marketing?

- Invite learners to share their understanding of 'marketing' and 'promotion', giving examples. Discuss other forms of promotion such as sales exhibitions.
- Highlight that individual sales are 'transactional'. They may provide immediate value but may not develop into a lasting relationship. However, building a relationship makes future sales easier to achieve (and usually cheaper), and may even reduce the importance of price as a negotiating factor.
- Discuss how content management works alongside the customer experience (see the resource **15. Branding in engineering**). A strong brand, based on product quality and organisational behaviour that creates lasting positive experiences, is the foundation for effective content marketing. This creates the 'authority' that builds trust in the content.

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Delivering the theory: Choosing media formats

- Highlight the difference between content (which is information) and media (which is how this content is communicated).
- It is important to consider and identify what each piece of content is designed to achieve: what is the desired impact, effect, or action? Hence content designed to solve a problem might be presented in forms accessible in an office or factory, for example, a web page or video, while content that can be consumed at leisure, for example, industry background or engineering theory, might be presented as a PDF or podcast.
- Discuss good practice when asking customers to share personal information to gain access to content. Most learners will have experience of doing this (for example, through gaming) and can reflect on the quality and frequency of interactions. Highlight that companies have a legal obligation to store, manage, and protect user data to a high standard, as well as a commercial need to distribute content responsibly.

Delivering the theory: Creating high-quality evergreen content

- Ask learners to consider how they search the web. Does anyone ever click through to later pages of search results, or do most people just choose from the top few results? (Note also that the top results may be paid-for or sponsored links.)
- Discuss why some results rank higher than others and what makes a link more appealing to click on than others. This can help learners identify the importance of a strong title and opening.
- Learners can search for information that might help them with other coursework to review and critique search results, before working on the case study.

Delivering the case study: Sustainable solutions

- Learners can share examples of applications for electric-motor-driven systems in engineering, both in manufacturing (factory equipment) and in end-use (machinery).
- Discuss what customer value reduced energy and emissions might deliver, such as lower costs and greater sustainability (as well as being good outcomes generally, these may also make the motors more appealing to their own customers).