



Using **Ebooks** in Content Marketing



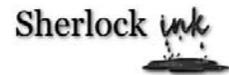
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Sherlock *ink*




Using Ebooks in Content Marketing was produced by

Catherine Sherlock of



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Using **Ebooks** in Content Marketing

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Ebook Readership Has Taken Off

Ebooks have become a well-known alternative to purchasing a physical book – in fact, on Amazon, ebooks have been outselling physical books since 2011.

As a business or organization, you may be able to cash in on the ebook trend by using them in your content marketing – creating free ebooks that spread your message.

The key to using the ebook effectively is to understand how it differs from other communication formats, why it's effective and when to use it. We'll explore those elements and then look at a number of effective ebooks from different industries that demonstrate a wealth of approaches to producing a great ebook.



Photo credit: Marc Garrido | Puig

Born Digital

In the publishing industry, ebooks have usually been the digital equivalent of the printed version, but ebooks can also be born digital. This is what makes them significant to companies, governments and other organizations. With the publication of an ebook on the Internet, your message can be distributed rapidly, easily – and cost effectively.

**DIGITAL -
EASY TO SHARE
FAR AND WIDE**



Thought Leadership

Ebooks are a great way to show off your expertise. They are particularly well-suited to communicating complex ideas and messages.

Specifically, ebooks enable an organization to establish thought leadership in a field. You provide useful and informative content that genuinely helps readers, thereby becoming recognized as a trustworthy source of information. In turn, this leads to deeper engagement with your audience, and your organization becomes recognized as an authority.

Ebooks are a valuable component of an inbound or content marketing strategy in which you offer compelling content so people come to you.

VALUABLE CONTENT



WELL-PRESENTED



READERS PLUGGING IN



Photo credit: Villedieu Christophe



Advantages of the Ebook

Once written, an ebook can be offered indefinitely without further cost. Ebooks have an inferred value that draws people to them because they have the substantiality of a book but they are free. And they fulfill the desire for immediate results: readers search for an answer to a question, and voilà, an attractive and easy-to-read discussion of the issue downloads into their hands in seconds.

Ebooks are also easy to update, meaning you can continue to build on your initial investment.

Another strength of ebooks is that their format makes it easy to repurpose content into other media, such as Slideshare, Scribd, video or presentations.



ADVANTAGES OF EBOOK FORMAT

- **NO PRINTING/DISTRIBUTION COSTS**
- **ATTRACTIVE TO PEOPLE**
- **OFFERS INFORMATION IN SECONDS**
- **EASY TO UPDATE**
- **EASY TO REPURPOSE**



User-Friendly

Ebooks tend to be more reader-friendly than more traditional documents, such as white papers and reports.

- They use a more conversational voice.
- They use lots of graphics and white space, making them visually appealing and easy to read. In his ebook *The New Rules of Viral Marketing*, David Meerman Scott calls ebooks the “stylish younger sister to the nerdy white paper.”
- Ebooks are easy to read onscreen because that’s what they’re designed for.
- They are more modular than reports and white papers. Ebooks are divided into sections or chapters, making it simple for readers to skim and locate specific information of interest.
- They are designed to be interactive. You can add sound and video, surveys, share buttons and links to other relevant content. The more someone gets to interact with your content, the more they become involved, so this is a powerful feature of the ebook.



**EBOOKS PROVIDE
VISUAL
STIMULATION**



To Ebook ... or Not to Ebook?

One key point about an ebook is that it avoids sales material. The power of an ebook comes in providing valuable information to readers; if you include sales material, you run the risk of harming rather than enhancing your reputation.

Another consideration is whether or not you have enough to say for an ebook. A lot of promotional or thought-leadership ebooks are under 25 pages, but you do want a document that is substantial enough to call an ebook. We live in a time of micro-information and short attention spans. But people get frustrated by superficial Internet content that doesn't provide real answers. They often turn to an ebook hoping for an in-depth discussion, so make sure your organization provides solid content.

An ebook also takes commitment. Developing an ebook that is valuable to your audience takes time and resources. If your organization doesn't have the necessary resources to execute it well, you are better off using a different kind of document.



**AVOID
EYE GLAZE:
AN EBOOK
IS
NOT
A SALES
BROCHURE**



Ebooks That Work

This section features successful ebooks from a variety of businesses and a non-profit to get you thinking about the many possible ways your organization could use an ebook. Each ebook has been highlighted for different strengths and strategies.

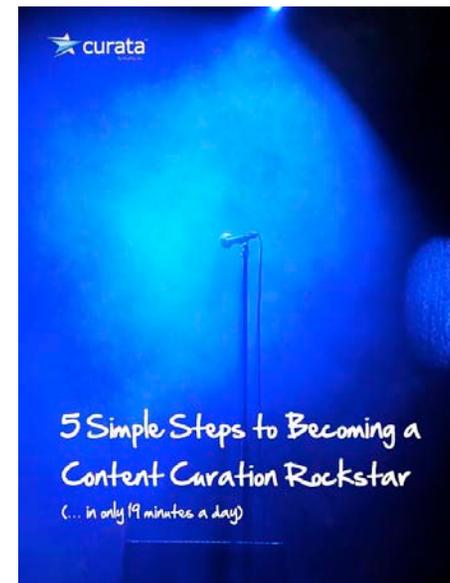
5 Simple Steps to Becoming a Content Curation Rockstar (... in only 19 minutes a day)

<http://info.getcurata.com/rockstarebook.html>

Content curation is the act of collecting, distilling and sharing the most relevant content on a particular subject. Curata sells content-curation software and developed *5 Simple Steps to Becoming a Content Curation Rockstar* to establish itself as a thought leader in the content-curation field.

Award Winner

The ebook was a winner in the 2012 Killer Content Awards presented by DemandGen Report. The awards recognize organizations that have raised the bar with their content marketing tactics.





Using Metaphors

Curata took a fresh, creative approach to its ebook by using a metaphor to present its information. The company has found that metaphors are powerful because people relate to them. Metaphors also provide a ‘backbone’ around which to organize your message.

Curata teaches that an organization can become a thought leader in its own industry through content curation. Using the metaphor of the rock star was a natural extension of this idea: Content curation enables you to become a rock star in your arena.

The company has continued to use metaphors in its publications as part of its overall ebook strategy.

Curata Ebook Title	Metaphor	Overview and Strategy
5 Simple Steps to Becoming a Content Curation Rockstar	Use content curation to become a rockstar in your industry.	A reference piece providing tactical tools for content curation best practices.
The Open and Shut Case for Content Curation	What is the verdict in the court case for content curation? Jury decides it’s the right answer.	Provides third-party ‘proof’ demonstrating how content curation has been successful for other companies.
Content Curation: Taming the Flood of Online Content	Content curation can save you and your customers from drowning in the flood of information from Internet.	Provides an overview of the curation revolution/evolution and what it means for your business.



How Curata Spread Its Ebook

- Released press release for ebook
- Gave away printed copies at events
- Gifted digital copies to webinar attendees
- Attached it in email campaigns
- Linked effective quotes from the ebook to landing pages
- Released it in conjunction with SXSW Conference
- Submitted it for awards

TIP FROM CURATA

To get a great response, provide information that readers can take away and act on immediately.

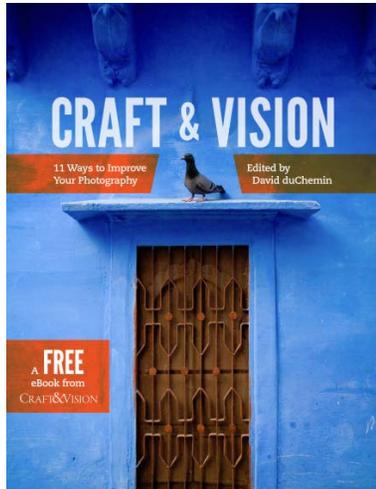
Ebook Results

5 Simple Steps to Becoming a Content Curation Rockstar has been downloaded more than 2,000 times. The ebook is a first-step tool in the company's lead generation toolbox. People provide their contact information for access to the ebook and Curata nurtures them with additional content curation tips and resources. Strong leads are eventually assigned to a 'curation coach.'



11 Ways to Improve Your Photography

<http://craftandvision.com/books/craft-and-vision/>



Craft and Vision's *11 Ways to Improve Your Photography* is a demonstration of content marketing at its best. It may seem counterintuitive for a company that sells photography education to amateur photographers to write an ebook on the subject and then give it away for nothing, but that is exactly what this company did.

The result? Craft and Vision's ebook campaign doubled its new customer base over a 6-month period.

Overcoming Marketing Challenges

As a young company based in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, Craft and Vision had a challenge in reaching its target audience. The company's tagline is "Exceptional photography education at irresistible prices" and its premise is to over-deliver to amateur photographers. The problem was that the amateur photography market was very hard to reach because it has no formal network.

Marketing efforts like a full-page ad in a photography magazine yielded almost nothing. So, the company developed an affiliate program and was happy with the moderate growth it experienced.

The free ebook was originally just a fun idea: How could the company over-deliver more than it already was? By giving away its content for free.



The Release and Results

Craft and Vision released the ebook to its affiliates a week prior to the official launch day to recognize their special relationship with the company and give them time to review it. On launch day, the affiliates helped spread word of the ebook to their communities.

On the first day of the launch, the number of downloads crashed the shopping cart. The shopping cart had a limit of 500 free downloads per month; the ebook was downloaded 2,433 times the first day.

Over the first 6 months, the ebook was downloaded more than 30,000 times.

Time Period	Downloads
Launch Day, December 1, 2011	2,433
First month, December 2011	19,612
January to May 2012	11,062
Total over 6 months	30,674

After about 6 months, new customer growth returned to its previous moderate levels. But in May 2012, the company owners put a quick post on Facebook mentioning that new followers may not have heard about its free ebook. The post resulted in 383 new downloads.



My Brother's "Friends"

Written by Carl A. Bartol, MPA, Esq. and illustrated by Steve Gray

http://www.preventdelinquency.org/my_brothers_friends_online.html

Keeping Kids Safe

At 9 pages, this free ebook is shorter than many, but, in this case, the length is appropriate to the target audience. The Prevent Delinquency Project discovered that children as young as 7 were being recruited by gangs. The ebook was developed to facilitate conversation between at-risk children and the adults in their lives.

This book illustrates the power of well-written text. Pared down to the absolute minimum, the text functions in partnership with the potent imagery to capture the emotional intensity of what these young children experience. The gang members in the pink plaid shirts are particularly powerful because they subtly draw attention to the groupthink and the pressure to conform in gangs without ever explicitly saying a word.

My Brother's "Friends" accomplishes some pretty tall-order goals: it enables adults to start a difficult conversation about what is going on in a family, and lets young children know that they are not alone in their experience and that they do have options and choices.





What Every CEO Should Know about IT Security

http://www.lumension.com/Media_Files/Documents/Marketing---Sales/Others/eBook-What-Every-CEO-Should-Know-About-IT-Security.aspx

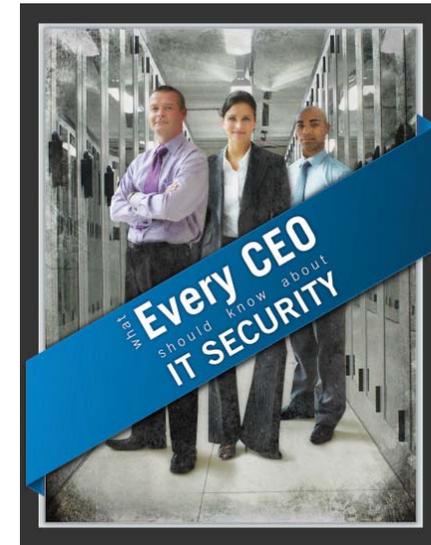
Lumension Security, Inc. is an international company specializing in endpoint management and security. The goal of the ebook was to show off the company's expertise in the security arena in order to establish itself as a thought leader and to differentiate itself from competitors.

Solving a Knowledge Problem

Content marketing is also known as educational marketing. The terms are used interchangeably, but the latter has a slight twist. Often prospects don't understand their own need for a product or service or how to make an informed purchase because they simply don't have enough background knowledge. Educational marketing provides people with a greater depth of knowledge, which enables them to make appropriate and informed decisions.

In conducting research, Lumension discovered an issue that potentially inhibited sales: technology decision-makers struggled to get security concerns adequately addressed because they couldn't interest their CEOs in the topic.

Lumension's solution was to develop this ebook. CEOs juggle many responsibilities and security doesn't tend to fall high their priority list. Most CEOs believe they have employees or departments responsible for security and that their time is better spent on other things.





Lumension used the ebook to demonstrate that security issues are relevant to CEOs because they can have a huge impact – they can damage a company’s reputation and cost a lot of money. The ebook provides examples as proof -- such as the estimated cost to Sony of more than \$170 million when more than 100 million Sony user accounts were compromised.

Titling a Document for a Target Audience

Putting “What Every CEO Should Know” in the title ensured that the ebook captured the attention of the target audience. The title not only catches the attention of CEOs but also of security decision-makers. The ebook provides security personnel with the educational material they need to be able to explain to their CEOs why security issues are worth their attention.

Interactive Content

This ebook also provides an excellent demonstration of the potential for interactive content in an ebook. The table of contents allows a reader to quickly jump to any section of interest, and videos embedded throughout the book provide a different information experience. Clickable banners and hyperlinked text open up into full articles. Social media buttons encourage readers to share the entire ebook or just a video of interest.

Updating Content

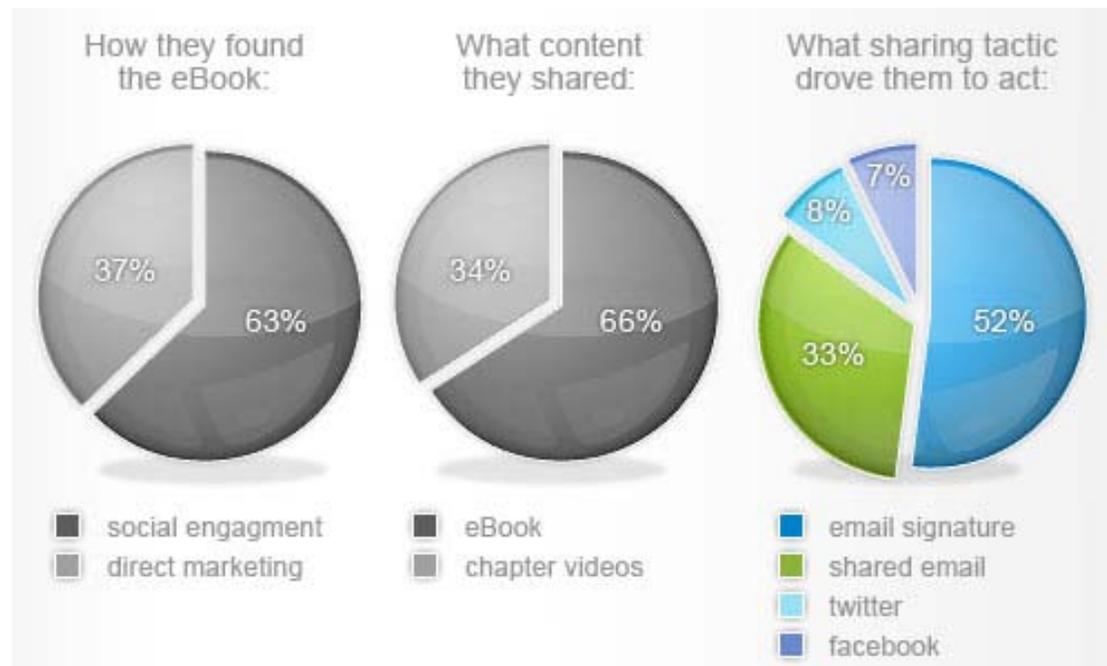
The 2011 version of the ebook was updated and expanded from an earlier ebook called *7 Things Every CEO Should Know About Internet Security*.



Results

The ebook was downloaded more than 7,000 times. During the second release of the ebook, Lumension focused on a social engagement strategy to spread word about the ebook. As a result, 63% of the ebook downloads came through social media, while 37% came from direct marketing.

The following graph shows how people found the ebook, the percentage of people who shared the whole ebook versus just the embedded videos, as well as the breakdown of the social media downloads.



Source: Lumension Security, Inc



The Content Marketing Playbook: 42 Ways to Connect to Customers

<http://www.contentmarketinginstitute.com/2011/08/content-marketing-playbook/>



The Power of Partnerships and Sponsorships

The Content Marketing Playbook demonstrates the effective use of partnership to produce content. Joe Pulizzi of the Content Marketing Institute and Jonathan Kranz of Kranz Communications collaborated to produce the Playbook.

To complete the 42 case studies in the ebook, the partners reached out to their network and customers who were only too happy to be included in the ebook since it gave them exposure.

The Playbook was also sponsored by Eloqua and PR Newswire, which also promoted it to their followers upon its release.

Listening to Your Audience

The idea for the Playbook was a result of listening to their target audience. Readers and speaking attendees frequently asked when and how to use various forms of content marketing. The ebook provides an overview of content marketing options, with definitions, samples and practical suggestions.



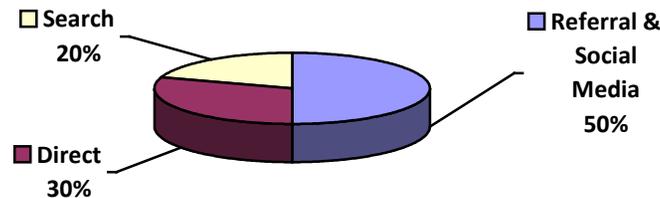
Repurposing Content

CMI and Kranz Communication released the first version of this ebook in 2009. In 2011, they repurposed the content and released the ebook a second time. In this version, they incorporated new insights from recent research, introduced some new content options, asked marketers to choose their top 5 marketing tactics and ranked the 42 examples by their relative popularity.

Results

The Playbook was downloaded 12,000 from the website and viewed 30,000 times on Slideshare.

How People Found the Content Marketing Playbook

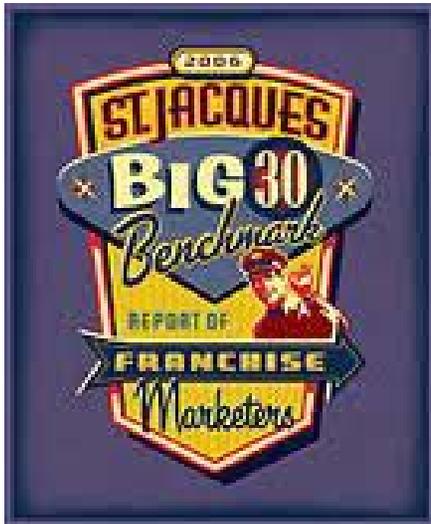


The Playbook was ungated, meaning that readers didn't have to register to read it. The primary goal was to direct relevant readers to the landing page so they would sign up for the newsletter. The conversion rate for people signing up for the newsletter was about 50% and the partners were able to track more than \$200,000 in sales attributed first to the Playbook landing page.



St. Jacques BIG 30 Benchmark Report of Franchise Marketers

http://www.marketingprofs.com/events/files/HANDOUTS/BIG30_final_report.pdf



St. Jacques Franchise Marketing, a firm specializing in marketing for franchise organizations, wrote the *BIG 30* in 2006.

Content from Research

The company developed the content for the ebook by conducting research with its target market. It surveyed the top 30 franchise-brand marketing professionals and identified four key issues common to franchise marketers, regardless of their

industry or network size. The research insights were summarized in the *BIG 30* and promoted via the Internet and other channels.

Result

The ebook garnered so much attention that, within months, the company went from being relatively unknown to becoming a recognized leader in franchise marketing. The company was later purchased by another company.

Have you seen some great content marketing ebooks not featured here?

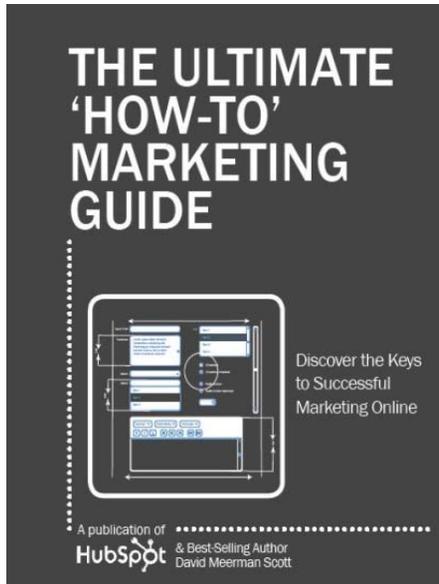
Share your personal favorites and they may be featured in future 'best of ebook' articles and ebooks.





The Ultimate How-to Marketing Guide

<http://www.HubSpot.com/the-ultimate-how-to-marketing-guide/>



If you've ever searched online for educational material on Internet marketing, chances are you've come across a HubSpot ebook. That's because HubSpot has published more than 85 ebooks ... and counting.

HubSpot is an inbound marketing software company based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Its software helps companies track their inbound marketing strategy and increase leads.

The Ultimate 'How-to' Marketing Guide was first written May 2011. It was updated and re-released in a new format in early 2012.

**OVER 85 EBOOKS ...
AND COUNTING**

For more HubSpot ebook examples, check out the company's full collection:

<http://www.HubSpot.com/internet-marketing-whitepapers/>

The Ultimate 'How-to' Marketing Guide Results

- 120,080 views
- 54,051 downloads = 45% conversion rate (number willing to fill out form to get ebook)
- 7,338 first-time downloads
- 12 new customers (sourced specifically to the ebook)



Strong Content

The biggest strength of HubSpot ebooks is their content: They deliver good, solid, actionable information.

HubSpot's ebooks are gated, meaning you have to fill out a form to get them. HubSpot has a higher conversion rate than many companies that gate: on average, 60% of people who alight on an ebook landing page fill out a form in return for an ebook.

HubSpot's Ebook Strategy

Ebooks have been one of HubSpot's main lead generation techniques as part of its inbound marketing strategy.

That strategy has brought the company success, including external recognition:

HUBSPOT SAYS ...

Ebooks are 'the hip sibling of the white paper.'

They're:

- Fun
- Easy to understand
- Meaningful

- Named the 8th fastest growing technology company in North America in Deloitte's 2011 Technology Fast 500.
- #17 in Forbes top 20 most promising companies.

To Gate or Not to Gate ...

That is the question.

Gating means that people have to provide their email address and possibly other information to access content.

The Content Marketing Institute featured above doesn't gate. HubSpot and others gate their materials.

Which is better? **The debate is fierce.** Check out a discussion between David Meerman Scott and HubSpot's Mike Volpe at www.HubSpot.com/debate. Be forewarned: it's at HubSpot, so it's gated.



Ebooks in the HubSpot Inbound Marketing Picture

At HubSpot, ebook creation falls under the responsibility of the 'top of the funnel' team.

Spreading the Word

HubSpot uses its software to optimize its ebook landing pages and then promotes its ebooks via:

- Blogging
- Social Media
- Paid Advertising
- Drip Marketing





A Final Word ...

Ebooks are not for every organization or marketing strategy. A good ebook takes creativity and imagination, and you have to have something to say that is suitable to the format.

But if your goals are appropriate to an ebook, this is a great medium to use to spread your message.

LET YOUR CONTENT DO THE WORK FOR YOU.
CREATE SOMETHING PEOPLE
WANT TO SHARE.

To receive future
articles, reports and
ebooks...

[CLICK HERE](#)

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never shared – ever.



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