



Stop Throwing Money Down the Drain:

Increase Your Profits by Outsourcing
Your Content without Sacrificing Quality

By Alice Seba & Annette Elton



NEWLY UPDATED

A Note from Alice and Annette - What to Expect with this Guide



Congratulations on taking the first step to truly maximizing your content creation. This is the beginning of something big and long lasting for your business. This guide will teach you about a variety of things in regards to creating and using content for your online business.

From the importance of content to the kind of content you should create and how you can repurpose your content to maximize your return on investment to hiring and working with a writer, this guide will give you plenty of fresh ideas to help you turn your content into highly efficient profit producers.

We encourage you to go through this guide in its entirety, even if you already have some understanding of how content creation works. There are innovative and unique ideas sprinkled throughout this guide and we'd hate to have you miss anything.

Through our combined backgrounds, we've learned a few tricks and plenty of powerful strategies along the way and love helping others to do the same. Not only do we understand great content...we, most importantly, understand great marketing. To truly make the most of content creation, you must have an understanding of both. This guide will give you the head start you need.

Let's get started right now and bring you just a little bit closer to the amazing lead and sales generating machine that can be unleashed through great content.

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They Say Content Is King, But Have They Said Why?

While you have probably been told time and again how important content is for your internet marketing businesses, you may not have been told exactly why this is. Our goal here is to make this concept clear, giving you a greater understanding of why this one word, **content** is so important. Not only will you learn what different types of content there are, but also how to maximize your content and content building strategy to build your online business.

What is Content?

When referring to written content for a website, there are many formats you can use to present it. Essentially, we are talking about the meat of any website, such as:

- Articles
- Blogs
- Editorials
- Interviews
- Press releases
- Sales copy
- Product information
- Website reviews
- Business letters
- White papers
- Special reports

Your Beacon to Potential Customers

Many internet users have a need for information on a particular topic. What they'll likely do is sit down at their computer and open their favorite search engine. They'll type in a word or phrase which best describes what it is they're looking for.

For example, if they're looking for information about learning to rock climb, they may enter "learning to rock climb" into their search engine of choice. If you have a website devoted to teaching people about rock climbing, they may find you.

Once they have found the content they need on your site, they will take the time to read it. If you have a site rich with targeted information for your readers, you have a better chance of people finding, and staying with you as they reach the various phases of their needs. Regardless of your business model, this provides you with the perfect opportunity to make any relevant product or service recommendations, and also offer your readers the chance to sign up for your business newsletter.

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As a result of your content being created and found online, the remaining steps of the process become practically automated. Your website content keeps working, your autoresponder keeps everything in order and your products keep making you money while your content base continues to grow.

Unlike pay-per-click campaigns and other forms of advertising, creating great original content is much less expensive a means of advertising. Great content also tends to multiply all on its own, without much effort on your part. If you offer quality content, it will begin to build your internet marketing business into something you can be proud of.

Does Your Content Spread the Word?

One of your main goals as an Internet entrepreneur is to get traffic flowing to your website. With each visitor to your site, not only do you have the opportunity for them to read your content, but also for them to pass your information on to others. Word-of-mouth advertising can go a long way to grow your business. If what people find when they search your site is both helpful and informative, chances are they will discuss it with others.

It could be with their friends and family, on their blogs and forums, or through any of the various social marketing venues. They may even use some of your reprint articles on their own websites. These are all methods, which can bring you more traffic and potentially more clients as a result. Having a strategy planned out for continued content puts you in a position ahead of your competition.

Does Your Content Effectively Demonstrate Your Expertise?

Among your primary goals as an internet marketer is to establish professionalism and expertise in your niche. Visitors to your website will appreciate finding quality content and will continue to come back to you for more. Showing them your expertise will establish a relationship of trust between the two of you, which will result in them buying your products or services instead of turning to someone else the next time they are in need.

By demonstrating your knowledge, other professionals in your industry will come to respect your material, resulting in another opportunity for advertising and publicity. It's nice to have others approach you for articles, interviews and quotes as a result of your professional reputation.

You will obtain a reputation of a person who not only conducts business on an established and recognizable professional basis, but also as someone who can teach with a level of expertise not offered elsewhere.

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Do You Know What Your Readers Need?

Readers look for content, which is not only easily accessible, but of exceptional quality. Anything educational, informative or entertaining will tend pique their interest. It all depends on your business or audience, as these terms may carry a variety of definitions in different contexts. You probably already have a good idea what it is your audience is looking for, and what they want to read about.

If you aren't sure about this however, then it's time to find out. Research what your readers respond to and how they look for your information.

- Are they using any particular keywords?
- What about the questions they are asking?

In order to discover what it is your readers really need, you can poll visitors on your website for a more direct approach. Ask them what they want, and they will often give you the answers themselves!

Content plays an important role in your business growth and chances are you have some type of content strategy in mind. Perhaps you've decided to give away a report, email a mini course via an autoresponder and you've listed 10 article ideas for each month. This is a great start; however there are ways to maximize this content for ultimate return on investment and business growth.

Are You Making the Most of Your Content?

Many people still aren't familiar with the concept of repurposing content. That's okay. We get into the mindset that content has to be fresh and original, and it does, and we forget to look outside the box to solve our content needs.

Content repurposing is simply a case of taking your existing content or information and reusing it in a different format or for a different purpose.

For example, you can take forum posts and turn them into articles or blog posts. One very notable client of ours, Michel Fortin, does this and he's even posted on Twitter about it. Of course, he's a detailed forum poster with some amazing insight into his industry. The point is he's using content he has already written and creating something new from it. He's creating something valuable to his audience and something to keep his website in the front of the minds of his prospects and customers and of course to keep his search engine page ranking tip top.

The repurposing process just makes good business sense. It makes it easy for you to create new products and tools that can help you increase subscribers and traffic volume. This increase provides you the opportunity for additional revenue, without the need for creating new information from scratch.

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Think of the benefits to your business if you were to convert a teleseminar or report into several other products. Not only will you make money on the initial admission fees for that seminar, but also by simply turning it into various other formats means you could be making that much more profit for your business with very little extra time involved. Repurposing content just makes sense when it comes to owning a successful business.

Any of your existing content can be made original again with a bit of tweaking. With the right help, you can easily adapt it to fit your readers' needs. This allows you to reach a wider audience of people, while effectively saving time and resources and who doesn't want to save time and money?!

With that in mind, let's take a look at some of the different ways you can repurpose some of the content you may already have on-hand.

Numerous Profitable Ways to Repurpose Your Content (and we're just touching the surface of what's possible)

We each have our own preference for the way we learn and receive information. When repurposing content, the possibilities are almost endless as to what you can do with content you have already written or outsourced. Here are some examples of how you can easily tweak what you already have, or repurpose your content to provide something new and original for your readers.

- Turn video or audio recordings into transcripts for ebooks, workbooks, reports or even break it down into articles or blog posts.
- Combine articles or blog posts of similar subjects and create an eBook or report.
- Turn reports into e-courses
- Take a report and pull it apart into blog posts and articles.
- Combine reports to create eBooks, e-courses, or an autoresponder series.
- Combine an autoresponder series into a working e-course.
- Audio or video interviews can be turned into transcripts or a series of blog posts.
- Convert website announcements into interesting press releases.
- Review comments to your blog posts, turning them into feature articles.
- Grab forum posts and turn them into articles or blog posts
- ...and the list goes on.

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You can alter any of your existing content to make it original again and fit your readers' needs with the right help. However, let's take a deeper look into a few of the most common types of content, content you probably have on your website right now.

Blog Posts

Typically, you will find blog posts are written on a more personal level than most other forms of content. Often describing personal experiences or stories, they usually don't follow the same tone as you require for your business needs. However, these can easily be repurposed into more formal articles and reports.

Let's take a blog post series on repurposing content, for example. With some altering of the content by adding statistics and other available data, combined with examples of how to repurpose content you can easily find yourself with a report instead of simple blog posts.

The opposite is also true. You can pull apart a report in order to create a series of blog posts. This is a great way to maximize content, ensure the value is available and accessible to all readers and website visitors and to make the most of your content investment – you save time and money.

PLR or Private Label Rights

The use of private label rights content can be a fantastic way to extend your content strategy. In fact, Alice and her partner Mila Sidman offer plenty of great content to our members each and every month at AllPrivateLabelContent.com. For maximizing your content strategy cost-effectively, PLR is a decent and better choice than reprints. With PLR, you can change the content as much as you'd like and there is no need to give credit or a link out to the original author.

While it can be used as is, repurposing PLR content can be done in a variety of ways. A few of the more popular methods of repurposing PLR are:

- Grouping a series of how-to articles on a similar topic can be turned into an ecourse. Simply add an exercise or two and some action steps to be taken following the lesson and you have added value to your content.
- Create a report by gathering relevant articles and combining them. Write an introduction, a smooth transition between articles as well as a conclusion and you have a brand new item. You could even modify the content by including some of your own, or changing the point of view the report leans towards.
- PLR content can be cut down into blog posts or autoresponders. While most people think of articles when they hear of PLR content, there are also PLR reports and ebooks available to you. Think of the number of blog posts and articles you could create from a 30-page ebook!

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Ecourses

Perhaps you have an online course or two, which you use as a giveaway, bonus or lead generator. You may even have them in your product catalogue as an item you sell. Each online course has the potential to be paired down into content-rich autoresponders.

For example, your online course could have a total of 10 lessons or so. You can easily take the three most useful lessons and break them down into a few paragraphs, creating an autoresponder series. If this same course is a product you're selling, this autoresponder could be the perfect way to motivate your readers to make a purchase. This autoresponder could also be used to promote other products or services you have to offer, especially in the case of affiliate marketers.

FAQ's or Frequently Asked Questions

Chances are, no matter how long you have been in business, you have been asked a variety of questions about your business. Perhaps they have been from people you have met in person who have learned about your business through family or friends, or questions you have received from your existing customers. All questions you receive, and more importantly your answers to these questions, make fantastic content material. Collect those email messages and responses to repurpose and turn into fresh content.

You may choose to create a Q&A document to distribute freely from your website. Another option could be taking the main points from your responses, adding to them an attention-grabbing title and the next thing you know you have a great article or blog post with little to no effort. Perhaps you have received a number of quite compelling questions. Gather them together, along with your compelling answers, and create a short report, for example "The Top Ten Questions People Ask about _____."

You will find the great thing about repurposing your content is how easy it is to pull everything you need together to polish into quality fresh content. Plus, it's an easy task to outsource as well!

Newsletters

Newsletters, also known as e-zines and e-newsletters when they are distributed electronically, are a very effective way to keep the lines of communication open with your prospects and customers. The use of regular communication, as you are probably aware, is one of the primary aspects to motivating purchases - it's all about creating and maintaining front-of-mind awareness with your readers.

It makes no difference whether your newsletter has one article or ten. All of this content can be repurposed into a variety of products or formats for you to share with your readers.

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- **Reports.** This may be a large job and one you may want to consider outsourcing, especially if you have been publishing ezines or newsletters for a long time. However, you also have the option of pooling together all of your newsletter content by topic in order to create a series of special reports. Any dated content will of course need to be updated, including timely statistics and quotes. You may choose to give these reports away, sell them or package them as a bonus product to be added to other product purchases in order to increase their value.
- **Blog posts.** Consider shortening some of your newsletter content to be repurposed into blog posts. You can also use this information to add to guest blog posts as a means to expand awareness on a particular topic.
- **Articles.** Finally, newsletter content can be reformatted and rewritten to create original content, which you can utilize for article marketing or SEO purposes.

Autoresponders

Marketers normally use autoresponders as short informational messages with a bit of a marketing message tied in. The goal with these is often to motivate readers to click through via an included link to receive more information on a product, or to encourage a purchase.

- **Articles.** Messages from a series of autoresponders will often combine quite well, enabling you to create longer “How To” or “Tips” articles. By simply pulling your autoresponder series together, adding a few transitional sentences and removing any of the marketing content, you find yourself with a very well formatted article.
- **Ecourses.** Since many autoresponder series are designed to instruct someone how to do something, you can easily pull them together and create an ecourse, which you can sell or give away. By adding a few exercises and action steps in the form of a workbook to the package can also increase the value of this easily repurposed content.

Forum Posts

If you are among those who happen to be active social networkers and marketers, you've likely participated in your share of a few handpicked forums devoted to your industry or niche.

For example, if you sell a line of pet-related products or services it's quite possible you may be a devoted visitor to one or two forums specializing in the pet industry, or that caters to pet lovers. Perhaps you even have a forum on your own website.

Forum posts are among some of the excellent sources for content. We often let down our guard when we're chatting on social networking sites and share some of the most useful information and insight. Your customers and prospects can benefit from this information!

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So our recommendation is this . . . collect those posts, either by cut and paste or downloading them if possible, or hire someone to do it. Take some time to really look at what you have. You may potentially have a wealth of content ready to go with a little polish here and there. Combine them and work them over to create some valuable content for your potential and current customers.

Digital Information Products

Many internet marketers have within their product catalog an arsenal of ebooks, reports and workbooks. If this is the case in your situation, perhaps you've given them away at various times, or maybe you have sold them. Either way, these can become ideal projects for repurposing.

Ebooks and reports can easily be reworked into a multitude of articles and blog posts. Larger ebooks can be broken down and turned into several smaller special reports. Not to mention the reworking of each article created for the ebooks and reports. From one large ebook, you could potentially find yourself repurposing it into approximately thirty articles or more, the same number of blog posts, perhaps five special reports and then some.

When you have an ebook or report available for repurpose, it's not unrealistic to consider creating literally hundreds of articles from it. Just a quick note: If you decide to spin an article for article marketing purposes, it's important to remember to make sure there is enough of a difference from your original. Many experts recommend at least 60% difference. This will ensure that search engines don't penalize you for duplicate content. There are several free online tools to help you check for this, including dupecop.com.

Between forum posts and your digital products, you are likely to have in your possession enough material to keep you, or a valued contractor or employee, fruitfully busy for a long, long time.

Interviews

Any type of interviews, whether they're audio, video, or even in print just happen to offer you an abundance of opportunity. Any one interview can be transcribed and turned into a valuable product. From this transcription, you can create:

- **Multiple articles and/or blog post.** The content available to you from one interview can often provide several nuggets of key information. You can write an article highlighting each of these nuggets. Quite often, these articles require only the addition of an introduction, with you being able to pull the body of your content verbatim, right from the interview. You can also consider turning it into a series of list-type articles containing bullet points to highlight key bits of information under a common theme.

- **Workbooks.** Interviews are a wonderful resource you can use in order to create workbooks for your prospects and customers. By pulling out those key points of information, you can then invite your readers to use this opportunity to take action, answer questions, take a survey or quiz and so on.
- **Reports.** Like articles, creating reports from an interview are a pretty straightforward process. You, or your writer, can pull those key points of information from the interview and expand on them. You can even quote the person/expert interviewed to add credibility and authority to the report.

How-To Articles

Do you have an abundance of articles in your archives? You could consider pulling relevant articles together in order to create a class, workbook or online lessons. Take some time to look through your collection, and sort them by theme. Look closely as to where there may be gaps in your available content. Is there enough information there for you to create a course? How can you complete it? By taking the time to fill the existing gaps and packaging it nicely into a course, you find yourself with yet another valuable piece of content to offer your customers and prospects.

Another idea would be to create a wonderful product by gathering your various how-to articles together into a bundle and making them available. Alternatively, you could explore combining a few similar how to articles of the same topic or area to create an original article or blog post.

Re-purposing your content begins with taking a look at the content you already have from a different angle or point of view. You know your audience best, and are the person most likely to successfully determine which pieces from your archives will offer the greatest value, as well as those that received a more positive response. This is where it's best to begin your repurposing, since the success rate will be at a higher level.

Tips for Repurposing Content

Content repurposing is by all means a sound part of internet business strategies. Not only can it result in optimal return on investment (ROI), it can assist in keeping your prospects and customers satisfied with a constant flow of valuable content.

When deciding to repurpose content you have on-hand, you may be concerned about your readers recognizing the content from previous content they have already seen. Keep this in mind when you are creating your content strategy. You want to ensure your prospects and customers are receiving valuable and quality content, while avoiding being repetitious time and again. Your goal is to provide value and maximize your content.

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The aspect of content repurposing is much more than simply a way to fill in the gaps while struggling to come up with new content, or even to cover times when you are on vacation or otherwise away from your business. Repurposing also makes good financial sense. While we have already discussed the repurposing of various content such as articles, reports and ebooks we have yet to discuss areas which is often overlooked – ecourses and FAQ's or other client communications.

These too can add to your content strategy, adding even more value to the content you may already have in your possession.

With all the possibilities for creating and repurposing content you may be scratching your head and wondering how you're going to fit all of this into your already busy schedule.

Overcoming Possible Content Creation and Repurposing Barriers

As an online business owner, there are a variety of things which may keep you from being able to focus much effort on the aspect of content creation. If however, you can overcome these barriers, the possibilities this will open up for you can be plentiful. The more content you have out there, the greater your reach...and you'll be that much more visible than many of your competitors.

Let's take a look at some of those barriers, shall we?

“I Hate Writing” or “I’m Not a Writer”

This is not only a very common objection, but a reality for many people. While there may be plenty of tricks and strategies available for you to learn to become a better writer, (and we definitely encourage you to understand the qualities behind good writing!) you don't need to win the next Pulitzer Prize to get plenty of fantastic content for your business.

We'll get back to some tips to help you overcome this in a moment, but first let's address another common barrier related to the creation of content...

“It Takes Too Much Time”

That's for sure! Even if you love writing and can put together content fairly quickly, it's still a time consuming task which takes you away from those even more crucial aspects of your business...*the business of making money*. Even repurposing content can take a bit more time than you want to invest.

The good news is there are ways to create amazing content, and double your content with a repurposing strategy, while maintaining control over your business, budget, and continue to grow and thrive.

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What You Might Not Know About Outsourcing

Employing full-time staff for your content writing and repurposing needs can really add up. If you outsource your writing projects by hiring writers only as you need them, you can cut your costs drastically. As a business owner, this can save you two of the things, which are of the most value to you: time and money.

Ask any small business expert what an entrepreneur's most important job is and they'll say two things:

- Planning your business. Many experts recommend a minimum of 25% of your time be devoted to planning your business strategies.
- Spending time on the tasks that drive profits. (for example if you're a coach then your time is best spent coaching – that's where you make your money)

By assigning the creation of your content to someone else, you are freeing up more of your time to tend to the other aspects of your business, which are quite necessary to keeping your business successful, such as retaining and winning customers.

There is also the aspect of saving money, since your time will be spent doing things which are more conducive of your time. Content creation is easily done by someone else, and quite often at a lower rate than what your time is worth. Take a moment to weigh how much it costs for you to run your business for an hour, and compare that to writing original articles for the same amount of time.

As you can surely see, there is no comparison. When you think of it this way, by outsourcing to a writer you are simply delegating that particular aspect of your business to the most appropriate place. This will result in you saving money in the long run.

Is It Possible to Find An Ideal Contractor?

HA! Spend any amount of time doing business online or off and you know full well, quality varies from provider to provider. Even at the checkout at your local market, one cashier is likely much more accommodating and friendly than another, right? The same holds true for contractors.

You might even wonder *does the ideal contractor even exist.*

Yes! There are different qualities various business owners look for in a contractor. However, the most sought after qualities tend to be speed, efficiency, affordability and reliability, no matter which function the contractor will be fulfilling. This next section will cover some of the more commonly outsourced tasks, as well as how to find the right contractor for your specific needs.

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Is A Ghostwriter The Answer?

Do you feel a bit guilty for either wanting or needing to outsource some or all of your writing to someone else? Well, you shouldn't. There are many other businesses which do exactly that, while making good money in the process. There are many online businesses that outsource their content writing needs...and some of them even specialize in writing! You may also be surprised to know that many famous bloggers have in their employ ghostwriters to write for them...but it's absolutely true! It all comes down to maximizing your time and money.

At this point in time, ghostwriters fall among some of the most popular outsourced contractors around. There are very helpful and professional writers who can help ensure your website continues to prosper online while you tackle the other aspects of your business. What a ghostwriter does is create content under your name and with your direction. However, for this to run smoothly, you first need to establish what it is you want.

Ask yourself: *What kind of writer do I need? What do I need help with?*

The answers you come up with to these questions will help you to determine the type of writer you require. Being a business owner who understands the value involved in targeting a specific niche, you may also realize how every area of business has its own specialties as well. This same concept can be directed towards writers. Not all writers are capable of writing everything you may require. Conversely, not everything can be written by any one writer.

You may want to consider checking out different writers by requesting samples of their writing and/or visiting their personal or business websites and reading their blogs. You can get a feel of their writing style ahead of time this way.

It's important to realize that quite often the type of material you need written will most likely require some sort of specialized skills. If your chosen contractor doesn't have any previous experience with the particular type of writing you need, you may be required to spend some time training them to do things in the appropriate manner.

Either way, *make sure your contracted ghostwriter understands that:*

- Any and all work supplied to you by them will appear under your name
- They will not have any claim to the work that they perform for you
- You seek exclusivity (you don't want the same work appearing somewhere else)

When it comes to payment details, these may vary depending on each writer or project. For this reason, it's good business practice to determine your preferred payment arrangement ahead of time, before any hiring process begins. Consider whether you want to pay per word, per hour or per project. If you have a budget, be straightforward about it.

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Also, offering any “extras” (like profits from ad revenue) upfront will also assist in helping you find someone who is accepting of your personal preferences and payment process. We’ll go into more detail about payment near the end of this document.

Freelance writers are easily located in the yellow pages, through Internet searches (some may have independent websites or be associated with companies that specialize in content writing), copywriting agencies or freelance marketplaces. However, you may want to consider posting an ad somewhere and having freelance writers apply directly to you. This could save you even more time and resources in the long run.

Tip: You may want to give special consideration to your ghostwriter’s native language and dialect. While it still remains your choice to hire whomever you want to hire, writers who aren’t native English speakers can occasionally have difficulty communicating successfully with their audience in a relaxed or casual tone. The same applies for writers who speak a different dialect of English than your own. For example, it may take awhile for a British writer to grasp an American business owner’s spelling and tone.

Do You Need an Editor?

One aspect, which is sometimes overlooked by business owners hiring writers, is that they are also hiring an editor. These are two entirely different skills, and they don’t always come hand in hand. While it is possible for a contractor to have one of these functions as their primary focus while moonlighting as the other, this is not necessarily true in all cases. You may want to clarify this beforehand if you absolutely require both skills to be performed by the same contractor.

While there are business owners who don’t mind acting as their own editors, since it gives them the opportunity to add to the written content tidbits of information about themselves or their business, many find this task time consuming. With all of the other functions related to running their business, the extra time just isn’t available for this extra work.

Hiring an editor able to adapt their writing to your preferred style and “voice” is something that can be of great benefit you. Although grammar and sentence structure are important, consistency is more so. Make it your goal to hire someone who can clean up your written material *and* make sure that it sounds like it came from you without difficulty. Consider providing prospective editors with a business-specific style guide and having them edit articles in your voice as a means to really see their abilities in this area.

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What Exactly Does a Researcher Do?

If you are in need someone to get facts straight, we can only recommend you hire a researcher. Researching can be a very time-consuming activity, especially for those who either don't do it regularly or who aren't used to doing it at all. However, in order to be taken seriously it's paramount to have correct information available. The same goes for any business aiming for the status of "expert" amongst fierce competitors. By letting a researcher collect and double-check the facts for you, your content creation will be that much easier. Make all attempts to find a researcher already familiar with your business or industry to avoid a sharp learning curve.

Transcriptionists – The Key to Instant Content

Long gone are the days when transcriptionists only took dictation. They can now also contribute to your original content stock by assisting in the repurposing of content by providing transcriptions of podcasts or other audio files, teleseminars and videos. In addition, if you offer any other type of informational content (visual or audio) for your existing or prospective clients, they can help you make it accessible to those who can only read the content.

While each individual business owner may have their own ideas about what makes a "good" transcriptionist, the following questions can be asked to get you started on the right track to finding the right transcriptionist for your business needs:

- How fast can the transcriptionist type? (It's important to keep in mind that typing quickly does not necessarily mean typing accurately).
- How many mistakes does the transcriptionist make per minute?
- Does the transcriptionist already understand relevant terminology? Are there special terms that are related to your business which your transcriptionist must know and recognize (this is especially important for business owners involved in the medical or legal fields)?
- If you're familiar with particular transcriptionist software or own some yourself, does the transcriptionist work with the same type?
- If you're working with a transcribing company, how often do they test their transcriptionists for accuracy?

A word of warning: while there is software on the market specifically designed to act as a virtual transcriptionist, no computer software can successfully take the place of an actual person. Real people can easily differentiate between important pieces of speech ("um" and "ah" are usually reported on dictation software as true content) and can judge which background noises should be ignored.

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Before Your Search Begins

Finally, here are some general tips to guide you before and during your search, as well as after it is done:

- There is not necessarily a need for face-to-face contact with your contractor in order for a mutually beneficial working relationship.

While there are some business owners who find comfort in knowing many details about the person they are talking to or contracting, in the outsourcing world these things are quite trivial and, in the majority of cases, not at all necessary for the contractor to do perform quality work.

Keep in mind that both you and your contractor are busy people. While there are a number of benefits to establishing a great business relationship (such as a building a relationship of trust, mutual help, additional future opportunities for money saving and making), there is no one involved in outsourcing who has to be incredibly close to anyone to accomplish their jobs. That's the nature of outsourcing!

- There are many freelance writers who saturate the market today.

You will definitely not be faced with a lack of choice. Even in the event of a short turn-around time, it's important to make a careful, informed decision when hiring a contractor. Making assumptions that you have found a good writer because they charge more than another for the same amount of work isn't always an accurate one to make.

There are many capable writers out there who charge less than what they're worth or don't have much writing experience to present to you. However, if a writer claims to work very cheaply, you're quite possibly not getting the quality you deserve.

- Keeping the lines of communication open is important.

Be open and ready to converse with your contractor. It's important to encourage questions before and during projects if necessary. Any project can fail if the lines of communication are broken. Check in with your contractors to ensure they not only have a handle on the project at hand, but also feel comfortable with it. If required, schedule periodic updates on the status of any particular project.

Remember, there is supposed to be a connection between yourself and the content.

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Any content put out by your business should be an extension of yourself. It should be your goal to reach out to prospects and customers, and any of your content should be geared towards this same task. If you are fortunate enough to stumble upon a content creator who is capable of not only creating, but also maintaining this connection with your audience, consider yourself lucky. What you have found is a goldmine! Whatever you do, don't let your discovery go.

Potential Problems You May Encounter (or Already Have):

As with all aspects of your business, there's always a learning curve to get it right. Hiring someone to produce content for you also has its own unique learning curve. Here are some things to look out for to help you get to the right person for the job more quickly.

- **Many writers who look for cheap work on Elance (or elsewhere) need to do so because they are in constant need of clients.** As writers establish their credibility, they have plenty of clients and word-of-mouth to keep things going.

*Disclaimer: I'm not saying there are no good writers on Elance. It's possible, but generally speaking, these types of sites are populated by writers who are in dire need of work.

- **A lot of the cheap labor you'll find is from non-English speaking countries.** I have nothing against hiring people from other countries who may not have full command of the English language. That's totally fine when you need them for something like web design or programming and you're able to communicate your needs to them. However, when it comes to writing, the holes in comprehension and writing ability become all too clear. As they conduct their research, they are unable to grasp the full meaning of what they're reading. Then they try to take that research data and write it into their own words, creating a toxic combination of bad grammar and nonsense ideas. You don't need that!

It's simply a matter of hiring someone right for the job. Some writers whose second language is English may do a terrific job for you, but without that full command of the written English language, you may as well be throwing your money right into the garbage.

- **The samples provided don't match the work you receive back from the writer.** You may be conscientious and ask for samples. The samples look good, so you hire the writer. Then you get something back that looks like this:

“Practice make them happen, this true if you follow proper physical exercise you mind and body will be fit forever. For carry out proper fitness in the body should set a goal. Based on your analysis of the costs and benefit of fitness and your current activity and fitness levels, set goals for your fitness program and achieve the goal truly.”

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This is an **actual** sample from a piece of writing fellow online business owner, Bangatorio Mitchell, received from a ghostwriter.

How does something like this happen? The writer seemed to have a good command of the English language, but then they returned this garbage to poor Bangatorio.

No one knows for sure. Perhaps the writer outsourced the work to someone else who didn't write well, but that's not what it looks like. It looks like this so-called writer took some of the "article rewriting" software that is marketed as the magical solution to creating multiple "original" articles from one article.

This type of software uses a thesaurus to replace certain words and most times, as you can see above, it just doesn't make sense when put in context. The scary part about it is that this writer may very well have taken someone else's copyrighted article, ran it through the software and then passed it onto Bangatorio as "original work".

- **You find a good writer, but they flake out and disappear.** Sometimes you'll hire someone, they'll take a deposit for your work or even full payment, and then they're gone. Although, it's not the norm...it can happen.

Here's a story from online entrepreneur, Liane Wood, recently shared with me:

"I hired a ghost writer to write several articles for me and she'd been recommended to me by a trustworthy source. I thought I'd checked her out and I liked the work samples I'd seen from her.

So I sent her a detailed list of topics for the articles and even included links to reference material she could use for each article.

What I got back was the correct number of articles but all of the articles were on ONE topic. I tried to talk to her about it and referenced the list I'd sent her with all of the resource links - but couldn't get a response from her. Then a short time after that her emails started bouncing back to me as undeliverable.

I ended up just giving up on it and never did get the articles I wanted or paid for."

Unfortunately, it happens, but we'll talk about steps to protect yourself from these unpleasant situations a bit later.

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So, What Do You Do in the Face of These Possible Horror Stories?

Now that we've told you about the things that can go wrong with hiring someone, it might seem like it would be a waste of time to outsource your content. With all those hassles, it might just be easier to do your own content, get some free reprint articles or forget about using content altogether....right?

Please, don't give up so easily. This guide gives you the information you need to be smart in your hiring and get exactly what you want out of your content creation. Your first step is...

Understanding What Good Content Is

While it's a fact that you don't have to be a terrific writer to provide great content to your readers, you do need some understand as to what great content is – particularly in reference to Internet users. Unless you are part of a very formal market (scientific, legal, etc.), here are some important guidelines that can help you find good content. Make sure your content is:

- **Approachable:** Generally speaking, articles and other relationship building content are approached with a conversational tone. They're not formal essays, but written in a manner similar to a one-way discussion in order to connect with your reader. Writing should be empathetic toward the reader's problems while providing useful solutions.
- **Informative:** Content should be designed in a way which will inform your readers...and yes, it's perfectly fine for you to add a bit of self-promotion or product recommendations when very appropriate. This is where it's important to include solid tips and examples based around real information.
- **Show Expertise:** Be a confident expert. Although you won't personally be writing all of your own content, you can guide your contractors towards the type of content to include. This will ensure you are proud to share each and every piece of content you put out to your clients and prospects.
- **Reader-Friendly:** People who spend a lot of time reading online can easily suffer from eye-fatigue. Your writers should make a point of writing in short, simple to comprehend sentences and paragraphs. They should make a habit of breaking things up a bit by using focal points such as headlines, sub-headings and bullet points.

Once you have an understanding of what constitutes good content, it makes it that much easier to guide your contractors, enabling them to produce exactly what it is you require from them. So, what about finding the right person for the job?

Let's talk about that next...

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Locating the Ideal Person...Or Better Yet, the Ideal Reputable Service

When your search for a writer begins, it could be quite tempting to seek out the lowest bidder in order to save yourself a few dollars. When the time comes, cost should never be the primary focus of your search. You can still find affordable writers without having price be the dictating force for your decision.

Instead, find a person or company you feel comfortable with. This means having a fair degree of certainty that they will be professional and uphold their end of the bargain as well as create content that represents you and your company in the manner you wish to have communicated. This will be a person who essentially will be representing your business through their work.

This is the perfect circumstance where you may wish to consider working with a service rather than hiring an individual writer. Unless of course they come highly recommended with a long history of providing quality writing service, which is entirely up to you. While we don't by any means want to knock anyone using working from home by using their entrepreneurial spirit to provide an income for their household, we do realize you have a business to run. You need to put your needs first and foremost.

You know the old saying, "There's strength in numbers." They probably weren't talking about outsourcing content, but the saying applies perfectly.

There just happens to be a very harsh reality when it comes to working with an individual writer. We aren't saying this against solo writers and of course the choice remains entirely up to you as to who you decide to hire. However, they are simply one person with the same 24 hours in a day as everyone else. They also have a whole life, as well as possibly even a family to care for outside of their business. If things were to go wrong, or they were to get too busy, there just may not be any backup resources for them to turn to. It is then your business as well which is put on hold.

It's quite possible that some cynics may claim the only reason we am saying this is because we have our own content creation service. But let me tell you, we created this service precisely as a result of these types of problems. We've dealt with tons of contractors...some good, some bad. Some came, some went. Some left on good terms and some left on bad. Some still happily work for us today.

The point of the matter is there can be a lot of hassle involved in dealing with and properly training new writers. If you have time for that or you've found the perfect person for the job by all means you should hire them. However, when you have a service to worry about all of the managing of researchers, writers and proofreaders it's like a dream. You personally talk to one person who then becomes the "in charge" person for training, ensuring projects are up to snuff and dealing with all the drama and excuses that sometimes comes up when contractors don't get

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their work completed. You simply say what you need done, and when you need it. The next thing you know, it's done and back in your hands.

Let's take a look at some additional tips for finding the right people for your content creation:

- **Request writing samples.** By doing this you have the opportunity to examine how each writer approaches different topics. You will also be able to see how much effort goes into each article and how informative and engaging they make it for your readers. You can also get a feel for their understanding of the subject matter.

This is also a good time to inform your potential writers of various ground rules, such as specific dialects of the English language which are acceptable, as well as informing them that the use of any article rewriting software is not only unacceptable but grounds for immediate termination of their contract as well.

- **Request references.** It is completely normal to ask any potential writer for references. You may also choose to ask people within your networking circle if they have used any particular writer or service before. Did this person complete assignments in a timely manner? Did they follow directions? Was the end result satisfactory?
- **Test their work.** You may wish to give the writer or service a small assignment to start with, to make sure they are compatible with your needs. How do they handle constructive criticism? Are they certain they understand the assignment by asking questions before starting the project, if needed? Will they come to you for clarification if necessary during the assignment? Do they need hand holding throughout the entire process or are they able to complete the project with very little extra direction?

What about Payment?

It's important to have any discussions about how payment for completed work is handled before assigning any projects to your newly contracted writer or writing service. You should find out the following from the writing service regarding payment:

- *What are their rates? Do they charge by the hour, per page, per word, etc?*

The decision is yours to choose if you wish to work with a writing service charging by the hour. However, if this is their practice, they should be able to provide you with a quite solid estimate of how much time a particular project should take to complete.

Our preference for working with writers is always a per project rate, so you know exactly what you're getting into and it's consistent as you continue to work with your writer.

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Rates for writers can show a great deal of variation, but it's important for you to decide who is going to provide the best quality and thorough work for you. Asking if research and proofreading is included in their work is not something to be shy about. You may also want to ensure they have a third party proofreading the work. As you probably know, it's often much harder to see errors in your own writing.

Any professional writing service claiming their work is proofread should have an actual proofreader on staff. If they don't, it doesn't mean you can't consider working with them, it just means you need to take this extra work into account when you hire them.

- *Does the writing service offer special rates and/or priority for ongoing work?*

When you are considering a writing service for ongoing writing work or bulk projects, this is something you might want to keep in mind. Many writers and writing services will give discounts for both of these circumstances.

- *When does the writer or writing service invoice clients?*

Since not all people work the same way, it's important to find out this information. Do they bill their client once the project is complete? Do they bill weekly or monthly? Are there any specific payment terms? If you're hiring your writer for a one-time project, it makes sense for payment upon completion of the project. However, if you are giving them ongoing work, monthly billing is usually the norm.

- *Do they require you to make a deposit? If so, how much of a deposit do they require?*

Although paying a deposit on a project is fine, never pay 100% upfront. While the majority of contractors practice honest and ethical business behavior, there is always a possibility you could stumble upon a contractor who will accept payment in full and then never complete the work. And honestly, from our experience, writers tend to be that much more motivated to complete the project in a timely manner, as well as with a higher quality, if they are expecting payment.

If you have established you are going to be work with a writing service on an ongoing basis, with your working relationship already in place, they should be billing you after work is completed, and this usually on a monthly basis.

- *Will you be paying them via PayPal, check, or some other method?*

In today's virtual world, PayPal is pretty standard as a means of payment. However, not everyone does it this way so it's best to be certain. If you yourself don't use PayPal, be sure to inquire about alternate methods of payment.

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Keeping Your Writers

When you've found some writers that fit well with you and your business, you had better hang onto them. Some tips for keeping your writers include:

- *Provide work continually.*

You can't simply give your writers one or two tasks a month, or only when you need something and expect to have them sitting there waiting for you – especially in the case of solo writers. Without some sort of ongoing work to depend on from you, they can and will move on to bigger and better projects.

- *Have patience while your writers learn.*

If you hire a writer that is clearly horrible and can't string two sentences together, by all means, move on. If it's a case of getting the proper voice and a good working knowledge of your point of view however, you might want to take the time to work with your writer. Communicate your needs and style with them, and foster what could be the beginning of a great working relationship.

It's very important to keep the lines of communication open. If you simply correct mistakes yourself and move on, not only are you going to be making a lot of corrections, but you are denying your writers the opportunity to learn how they can better serve you in the future.

- *Pay them on time, every time.*

Without the worry of whether or not your writer will receive their money, they will want to work with you more. Swift payment will make a writer continue to offer you the best they have to give without any hang-ups.

What to Do Next...Thoughts from Alice & Annette

Overall, we want to encourage you to think big when it comes to your content creation, visualizing just how much more accessibility you can have to your target market. When you outline your content strategy for the next month, six months or even a year also consider how the content might be repurposed. Make the most of your time and money! Providing ongoing content in a variety of formats is a great way to ensure you're reaching as much of your audience as possible.

Work towards getting your prospects and website visitors to trust you and talk about you...not to mention the credibility you gain among others in the same market as yourself.

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There is no need to do it all now if you're on a budget. However, it's important to start taking the necessary steps to make it all happen. Create for yourself and your business a focused plan to begin outsourcing some of the content you need most for your business.

Sweep the cobwebs off your blog and start by getting some posts written on a regular basis. Or if the only response you're getting from your autoresponder is an echo, start there.

It doesn't matter what it is, just take that first step and watch the results. Once you begin outsourcing your content, you'll free up some of your time to concentrate more on marketing, which in turn will result in your business making more money.

If you're unsure where to begin your search for a writer, or prefer to entrust your content creation to people who have an understanding of both marketing and content, feel free to contact us. We manage a talented team of professionals in all aspects of content creation.

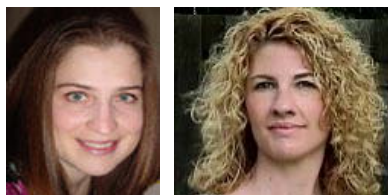
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We'd be pleased to give you a stress-free hand in producing your quality content, helping you maintain and build content strategy and helping you to repurpose the content you already have on hand.

Talk to you soon,



Alice Seba Annette Elton

Alice Seba & Annette Elton

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