

THE 6 TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

That Will Give You the Greatest Value

Here's a fact about your social media strategy:

You want to post valuable content.

You want engagement, virality, retweets, likes, shares, followers, and all the other good things that come to social media marketers. If your social media doesn't promote this kind of activity, then it's not even worth it to keep trying! So the question is, what kind of social media content gets that kind of love? More importantly, what kind of content gives you the most value?

"Value" here is defined in terms of revenue, ROI, KPIs, and engagement. You want to spend your content marketing money in ways that have a substantial return on your investment. That's the whole point of social media, right? So, rather than act on hunches, your mood, or what you ate for breakfast, let's look at the data. I want to show you exactly what types of content will give you the greatest value.

1. Infographics

Infographics are the most socially shared form of content. In 2013, Slideshare reported: "The data's in: Infographics have more virality than presentations and documents!"

It's still true.

Infographics are incredibly engaging. Since humans process visual information faster than words, it only makes sense. The human brain tells us "reading is hard" and "looking is easy."

The takeaway is simple: Share infographics socially, and the social world will share it right back.

Actionable Steps:

Brainstorm blog post ideas that could translate well into an infographic:

Choose the best idea from the list to continue with for your infographic.

Determine the facts based on the research that your readers would love to see in your blog post (shoot for a 10-point infographic to begin with):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

What data do you need? Write down each of the steps needed to collect the data.

Ex. I need to ask for our founder's help to get XYZ.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

- What is the goal of the piece. (When you know your goal you will know your call to action.)
- Write the blog post & include the infographic.
- Write the outline of the infographic based on a summary of the blog post.

Figure out how you'll create the infographic:

- Work with your in-house graphic designer to find time in her schedule to create the infographic.
- If you don't have an in-house designer look into Fiverr to find a freelancer who can help you out.
- Or if you want to create something yourself, check out Canva.
- Optimize your blog with social sharing buttons overlaying your images. A tool like SumoMe's Image Sharer really helps to encourage social shares for your inline images.
- Use CoSchedule to share social messages of your infographic.

2. Interactive Content

Interactive content is all the rage. Interactive media normally refers to products and services on digital computer-based systems which respond to the user's actions by presenting content such as text, moving image, animation, video, audio, games, etc.

The content marketing industry has moved past the static read-it-and-process-it form of content. Instead, savvy content professionals are producing content that users can better engage with. At the beginning of 2015, Ion Interactive published a survey of content marketing trends. Their thesis was, "Clearly, content is going interactive." They quoted William Comcowich, the CEO of Cyber Alert, who said this:

"Content marketing is becoming less about the words you put on a page, and more about the experiences you create for the consumer."

One of the most viral forms of interactive content is the quiz. You've probably taken one of these quizzes before. Quizzes are a two-way form of content. Users do something with it rather than just consume it. Besides, people love to share their quiz results.

The Atlantic famously reported The New York Times' most-shared content of 2013 wasn't an article at all. It was a quiz. If that's true of a news company that produces thousands of articles a year, then how much more valuable would it be for your brand?

Interactive content is valuable for so many reasons. Once you start posting interactive material, you'll never again revert to the old ways.

Actionable Steps:

- Incorporate a quiz into your website.

What kind of a quiz would you want to share?

Think about what kind of questions you'd ask. Aim for 8-10 for your first one:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

- There are some great sites that allow you to create quizzes (like Typeform or Google Forms).
- Share your quiz on social media. People love sharing quizzes.
- Use quizzes to get to know your followers more through your email newsletters.

What kind of questions would you ask to get to know your followers:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

- Send an email out to your followers with your survey/quiz included.

It's always exciting to see what your audience will write down. Then use the information gathered to make your blog/website even more amazing.

This will also help your social sharing, since the goal is to bring people back to your website anyways.

3. Content That Evokes Strong Positive Emotion

If your social content doesn't spark people's emotions, then it probably won't get shared very much. CoSchedule's research discovered that "posts with a higher emotional value get more shares." There are all kinds of emotions, though. What kind of emotional response gets the most shares?

Not surprisingly, it's the happy emotions that inspire people to share.

Buffer's analysis of emotional content found the same trends to hold true. "Positive feelings" and "positive ratings" were correlated with positive emotion in the shared content. If you want truly valuable social media activity, focus on emotion. It doesn't matter what industry you're in.

Emotion is a universal language that evokes similar responses everywhere.

Obviously, your emotional language will vary according to your audience and their particular demographic makeup. Broadly speaking, however, emotional language in social media will produce valuable results.

Actionable Steps:

What will make your readers/audience feel happy when they visit your site?

Pay attention to what kind of emotions you want to bring across your platform.

If you could describe your business in three adjectives, what would they be?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Be sure to use graphics, memes, gifs, and other media that will make your reader feel those ways.

4. Content With Images

It shouldn't be a surprise that image-rich content is incredibly shareable. Data for this comes from all kinds of sources, but some of the most compelling statistics are from Buffer's research.

You can't argue with the facts: **Images are shareable.**

The brain loves images. When you pepper your social media with images, the eyes and the brain gravitate toward it, engage with it, and share it. If you keep up a steady output of image-rich content on social media platforms, you'll be sure to increase your value.

Actionable Steps:

Make a list of the kinds of images and graphics that you enjoy most. Go to your favorite blogs and websites. Write down what you like about their graphics.

Example: 1. Type of Image - www.url.com - I like this image because it has useful information that I can use to get better at what I do. It also makes me happy! The graphic is bright and cheery. I also really love their photos.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

- Take your list that you compiled and look at your own website. Take a look at your blog posts to see if there is a way that images or graphics could help bring across a point better.

What are some ways you could improve the graphics and images on your own site?

- Share your graphics and images on social media. Especially on Pinterest.
- Include a few of them in email newsletters.

5. List Posts

One of the most obvious results of OKDork's study (Buzzsumo) was this:

"People love to share lists and infographics."

Content marketers classify content according to several types. Here is a common classification:

- 1. List Posts** — Content that has a certain number of points, like the article you're reading now.
- 2. How-to Posts** — Content that explains exactly how to do something.
- 3. What Posts** — News articles and general information.
- 4. Why Posts** — These are explaining articles, and they usually include the word "why" in the title.

According to Kagan's data, list posts came out on top. Since he analyzed over 100 million articles, I'd say that data is reliable.

Lists and why-posts proved to have the most reliable social traction, averaging around 21,000 shares per month with a variance of less than 2.5%. Between the two — list posts and why posts — lists won out. Lists narrowly claimed the most social traction at 22.45%.

Content marketing pioneers like Brian Clark have long known the power of list posts. Clark's article "7 Reasons Why List Posts Will Always Work" provides one of the primary reasons why the list is an irresistible form of content — the headlines are magnetic!

Some writers explain that the brain is hardwired to tune into lists. Since this is true, we are more likely to share, engage with, and benefit from list posts shared on social media.

Actionable Steps:

There are a few types of list posts out there.

Examples:

“10 Ways To Make Money By Blogging” - This kind of post will teach the reader 10 different ways to make money by blogging. It also really helps to put actionable tips in there so your readers can follow through with your advice.

“10 Bloggers Who Have Made Money Blogging (& Their Secrets)” - In this kind of a post you could share a list of bloggers and then share their secrets. Link to their websites or blogs. Insert secrets and tips that the bloggers know. Or even take this a step further and interview those bloggers.

“10 Inspirational Videos That Will Help You Make Money With Blogging” - These are always fun. Find some videos that are inspiring and encouraging. Embed the videos into your blog and write up some of your thoughts to go along with the videos.

The different kinds of posts will add variety to your blog.

Brainstorm some possible different “list” post ideas:

Write up your “list” post idea:

Keep in mind that bigger lists do better.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

6. Newsworthy content.

In raw numbers, news articles get more social shares than any other type of article. Here's the challenge. It's hard to be a source that breaks news as it happens. There are two types of businesses that are able to do this:

1. Big news organizations that can afford to retain journalists and reporters around the world. (BBC, CNN, and Al-jazeera, for example.)
2. Niche sites that focus on a narrow slice of news. (Search Engine Roundtable and Mac Rumors, for example.)

Most businesses that produce content are focusing on deep longform content rather than as-it-happens breaking news. If you're not in the news industry, you probably don't want to be producing news articles. Why not?

Because, when analyzed according to industry, news articles — called "what-posts" — were the worst performers. Only in the news, technology, and entertainment verticals are news articles shareable.

According to Hubspot, what-posts are risky, and they are social low-performers:

- What-posts were the riskiest format, showing a high variance of 13.45%.
- What-posts had the lowest social traction, earning 17.88% of total shares.

If your niche is news, entertainment, or tech, what-posts may be valuable on social media. Otherwise, you're better off sticking with some of the other methods in this article.

Actionable Steps:

What is newsworthy in your niche?

- Go to the place where your readers and followers are spending time. (Twitter, Instagram, and Influencer's blogs in your niche.)
- Look through the hashtags your readers use the most. Then search that hashtag to find newsworthy topics.

What hashtags do your readers use the most? Write them down.

- Check the comments on your blog and on other blogs in your niche.

What do the people in your niche want to know about?

- Create a newsworthy post with the data you've found.
- Use the hashtags you found earlier to share your posts on social.

Now...

Before you share anything, learn what your audience wants. Remember, just because something has data-backed share value does not mean that it's going to give you the same results.

When your ready to create social media content that will give you the greatest value get your 14-day free trial of CoSchedule today! It's your social media and editorial calendar for everything!



The marketing calendar for everything.



“CoSchedule is the easiest-to-use editorial calendar around, and includes a robust layer of social sharing functionality that makes it a no-brainer for me and my team.”

–Jay Bear, Founder of Convince and Convert



Michael Hyatt
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