

# ▶ How to Use Premium Content in a B2B Marketing Strategy

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# ▶ How to Use Premium Content in a B2B Marketing Strategy

*Content marketing is a powerful marketing tactic for business-to-business (B2B) marketers. Strategic content marketing can boost website traffic and organic search rankings, generate leads, and engage customers and prospects with your business.*

*Much of the content marketers create and share on the web, such as blog posts, tips, articles, and videos, is free.*

*But if you're using content marketing to generate leads, especially in an inbound marketing program, you also need to publish "premium" content.*

*What is premium content and how do you use it in a smart B2B marketing strategy? Here are some answers.*

## ▶ What is Premium Content?



Premium content is original information developed and published by your company on your website about a topic of great interest or importance to your customers or prospects.

Premium content is drawn from your unique knowledge or expertise. It offers information or insights of such high value that your website visitors will be willing to provide their contact details to you in order to access it.

In most cases, premium content:

- ▶ Is directly relevant to the business of your customers and prospects. It focuses on a subject you are often asked about and that customers are dealing with every day;
- ▶ Provides guidance on a key issue or challenge that matters a great deal to customers or prospects, a topic with potentially significant impact on their businesses or profitability;

- ▶ Offers knowledgeable answers to important questions, shares advice, or provides exclusive insights or research on the subject from someone at your company who could be considered an authority on the subject.

Premium content is posted in a secure place on your website. To access it, site visitors complete a web form with their contact information, such as name, title, company name, email, and phone. Marketers sometimes ask a qualifying question or two to learn more about the prospect's needs and their potential as a future customer, such as company size or timeframe for making a future purchase.

Once a site visitor submits the form, the content is made available via a web link or email.

Marketers typically follow a premium content request with additional outreach to foster a potential relationship, sharing other content, invitations, or product solutions on an ongoing basis. This is often called "drip" marketing. Many B2B marketers use a marketing automation platform to manage this process, target communication to the prospect's interests, and track response.

## ► Why Premium Content is So Valuable for Lead Generation

Every B2B marketer wants their website to generate sales leads. Marketers optimize sites with keywords, publish keyword-rich content, purchase paid search ads, and post site links on social media to drive traffic and inquiries.

Premium content takes website lead generation to another level. Getting visitors to raise their hands, identify themselves, and request content creates an opportunity to start a dialogue with a decision-maker who has demonstrated interest in a subject related to your business – a subject you know matters to your customers. It's highly likely the prospect is at some stage of considering a business decision that might require your products or services.



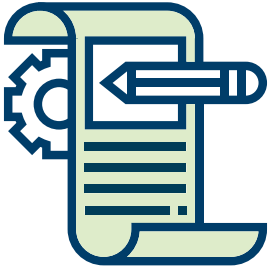
## ► Common Types of Premium Content

*There are several popular formats for premium content.*

- **eBook:** A broad and informative guide to a topic or issue, typically 15-30 pages in length, very visual with a designed cover and formatted pages; often presented as a PDF.
- **White paper:** An in-depth evaluation or profile of a subject or issue, supported by research and written by a subject matter expert or team of experts; typically 4-10 pages in length and formatted as a PDF.
- **Original research:** A report of proprietary research conducted by your company on a critical or timely topic; also very visual, with charts and infographics displaying data and results; usually a PDF.
- **Webinar:** A web presentation of content by an expert using a presentation deck or other presentation tools and presented live online; usually recorded and shared on a website and via social media to extend its shelf life.
- **Interactive tools or templates:** Content that helps a prospect measure or assess some aspect of their business or provides a framework for creating something, like a plan or process; programming is usually required.

# ▶ Guidelines for Creating Premium Content

*Premium content is more in-depth than a blog post or other content that's usually posted for free. Approach premium content strategically as part of an integrated marketing and lead generation program.*



## ▶ Create a plan.

Content marketing is like any other aspect of marketing: It's exponentially more effective when it's well planned and integrated with the other elements of your approach to marketing.

Invest the time in creating a plan that outlines your goals, topics, authors, formats, development process, and promotion.



## ▶ Publish what people are looking for.

You don't have to look very far to figure out what to write about. Listen to your customers and prospects:

- What questions are they asking you?
- What topics are impacting their businesses?
- What's keeping them up at night or costing them money?

Create premium content that offers authoritative answers to their most pressing questions or solutions to their most difficult business problems. Think about the questions people have at each stage of the buying process and align your content with the process.



## ▶ Invest in keyword research.

Keyword analysis tools can help you pinpoint the search terms people are using to find information related to your products and services.

Use these tools and insights from your customers and sales team to identify keywords most important to your site visitors, then build content around those keywords.

# ▶ How to Promote Premium Content

“ It’s fine—in fact, advisable—to post about premium content multiple times on social media. ”

*Premium content warrants a multifaceted marketing campaign to capitalize on its value for sales and lead generation.*

*Here’s how to promote the premium content you’ve created.*

- ▶ **Website:** The first and most important place to promote premium content is your website:
  - Home page feature: Your home page is prime real estate. Give premium content prominence in a featured area near the top of the page.
  - Call-to-Action buttons (CTAs): Add can’t-miss CTAs on the home page and in other places on your site to draw attention to the content, especially on product or industry pages directly related to the content topic.
  - Pop-ups/slide-ins: Use pop-ups or slide-ins to create ads that appear when visitors are on your home page or relevant service and product pages.
- ▶ **Blog:** Tease new premium content on your blog by sharing selected portions of the content and offering readers the opportunity to learn more by requesting the premium item.
- ▶ **E-newsletter:** Display premium content prominently as the lead story in your prospect e-newsletter.
- ▶ **Email promotion:** Create a one-off email blast specifically about the premium content and target it to prospects most likely to be interested in it.
- ▶ **Social media:** Use social media posts to promote the content and link to the offer on your website. It’s fine—in fact, advisable—to post about premium content multiple times on social media. Just be sure to space your posts out over several days, weeks, or months.
- ▶ **Paid social media:** Add paid social media posts to garner more attention, such as boosted posts or ads on Facebook and Instagram, sponsored posts on LinkedIn, and ads on Twitter.
- ▶ **Google Ads:** Use Google Ads to target premium content to prospective readers based on search intent.
- ▶ **Google Display Ads:** Google Display allows you to target websites, apps, and videos with graphical ads that are part of the Google Display Network. Select targeted sites from Google’s massive network to get your ads in front of your target audience.
- ▶ **Direct mail:** Premium content can be an attractive offer in a direct marketing campaign.

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## ▶ How to Promote Premium Content

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- ▶ **Print and web advertising:** If you're running ads in trade industry printed or web media, use your premium content as a bonus offer to get readers to visit your website and respond to your ad.
- ▶ **Your team:** Share premium content with your staff and ask them to post links on their social media pages to the premium content offer on your website. Provide them with social media posts they can quickly and easily copy and paste.
- ▶ **Your dealers and distributors:** Encourage your dealers and distributors to share links to your premium content offer on their websites and in their proprietary communications channels.

Premium content also can play a vital role in customer relationship management. Give customers exclusive early access to every premium piece you publish before it's posted and promoted on your site. Send your content with a personalized message and invite customers to share the content within their organizations.

## ▶ 10 Tips for Success

*If you're ready to make premium content part of your marketing strategy, here are some tips for doing it successfully.*

**1 Develop an engaging title.** You have seconds or less to get someone's attention. Keep it short, simple, and snappy.

**2 Create a colorful, visually interesting cover.** Make the title easy to read at a quick glance. Be sure the cover design works well as a thumbnail image.

**3 Brand it well.** Premium content should be immediately recognizable as a product of your organization. Brand it effectively and integrate the design with your other marketing materials.

**4 Use facts.** Utilize original or third-party research and statistics to define the challenge, characterize the importance or impact of the issue, and prove your points. Be sure to cite your sources.

**5 Include real-life examples or case studies.** Show how your business has helped customers address this challenge or find solutions to this issue.

**6 Be visual.** Use diagrams, infographics, illustrations, photos, or other visuals to explain points, processes, and subjects.

**7 Feature the authors.** Include photos and brief bios of content authors to establish their credentials and your company's position as an authority on the topic.

**8 Maximize the landing page.** Offers for premium content on your website should link to a landing page with more detail and the response form. Restate the value your content will provide, the expertise of the authors, and your company's commitment to being a trusted information provider.

**9 Get professional help with editing and design.** Ask your marketing staff or agency to edit your content, design the graphics, and develop the finished piece to ensure your publication looks professional and reflects your expertise and brand.

**10 Keep at it.** If your first efforts don't produce the results you hoped for, don't give up. Ask a few trusted customers for their opinions on the pertinence and quality of what you've published. You may need to pick a more interesting topic, present content more professionally, or do more promotion. Look also at your contact form; be careful to request only the information you need.

## ► About the Author

Jean Gianfagna is an award-winning marketing strategist who has been creating and implementing successful marketing communications plans and campaigns for more than 40 years.

She founded [Gianfagna Strategic Marketing, Inc.](#), a marketing consulting and creative services company in Cleveland, Ohio in 1992 after holding high-level advertising and marketing management positions on the agency and client side in Washington, DC.

Jean's clients have included global FORTUNE® 500 companies and local and regional market leaders in many industries. Her firm has won more than 50 awards for marketing excellence and she has received national and regional honors for marketing achievement and entrepreneurial success.

Jean is a frequent speaker on marketing topics and publisher of the blog [Smart Marketing Strategy](#).



## ► About Gianfagna

Gianfagna Strategic Marketing, Inc. is a marketing strategy, consulting, and creative services firm in Cleveland, Ohio that helps great organizations do great marketing.

We have a proven track record of success helping marketers communicate more effectively with their most important audiences. Our services include marketing strategy, marketing audits, branding, data-driven marketing, content and inbound marketing, and marketing campaign development.

[Contact us](#) to learn how we can help you.