

Content Marketing *Survey Report* 2013

January 2013

BY LISA PARMLEY

BusinessBolts.com

Copyright © 2013 BusinessBolts.com

Hello,

Welcome to our 1st ever annual study of the content marketing industry.

The main drive of this 25-page report is to discover how marketers are using and benefiting from content creation and distribution.

Inside these pages we uncover how marketers are using content marketing in their strategies, the type of content they are using, the benefits they are seeing, and the growing needs within the content marketing industry.

How to use this report: If you're a marketer then you can compare how you're using content in your traffic generation and marketing strategies with others. You'll be able to see at a glance how your time and efforts stack up and what you might want to increase in the future.

If you're helping small businesses grow, you can use the statistics in this report to help show your clients how important the use of content marketing is to their growth.

If you're a service provider, you'll gain ideas from the needs of those surveyed and hopefully strive to fill them.

Inspiration: The report is inspired by Michael Stelzner's Social Media Industry Report.

If you find value in this report and would like to pass it on, please refer the original page below:

<http://www.businessbolts.com/content-marketing-survey-report.html>

All the best ...

Sincerely,

Lisa Parmley
Founder, BusinessBolts.com

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Data collection	4
Summary	5
Use of content marketing	6
Benefits	12
Content creation	16
Services and tools	19
The future	22
Demographics	24
About	25

Introduction

The Content Marketing Survey Report 2013 uncovers trends and statistics on the content marketing industry. We hope to conduct this survey yearly in order to keep tabs on this expanding industry.

Why content marketing?

Content creation and distribution are at the heart of many marketing strategies. These include search engine optimization (SEO) as well as social media marketing.

Both SEO and social media marketing bring in large amounts of traffic due to the optimization and distribution of content (which can include video, audio, images, and text based content).

Content marketing differs from many forms of advertising. Valuable content acts as a magnetic force for marketers and helps drive traffic as well as increase conversions with less friction than traditional sales pitches.

In this report we attempt to find out more about the use of content in online marketing strategies. Both content creation and distribution are examined.

Data Collection

An email invitation to participate in the survey was sent to a list of people signed up to an online marketing newsletter.

The initial email was followed up by several emails. We encouraged respondents to pass the survey link around which resulted in a broad sample of individuals filling out the survey.

A total of 265 individuals completed some or all of the online survey. The individuals include small business owners, marketers, or people actively working on starting a small business.

All data submitted was reviewed and evaluated for reasonableness and entries that were thought to be outliers were deleted.

This was the first time we conducted this survey. Suggestions for next time are welcome.

Summary

The goal of the survey was to understand how marketers are using content to grow and promote their business. Here's just a little preview of what this report will show you:

- The majority of marketers (74%) use content marketing to increase traffic and promote their brand.
- A pressing question of marketers is how to use content to gain the biggest SEO benefit.
- Marketers want to know how to find good writers.
- The majority of marketers are not outsourcing the creation of their content (but would like to) which leaves huge opportunities for freelance writers and other content providers.
- Marketers are seeing massive benefits from content marketing even with minimal effort and minimal spending on content creation. The biggest benefits come in the form of increasing their traffic.
- The top content format are articles (74%). 38% of marketers are creating videos and even more (53%) plan to create video this year.
- Wordpress is the most widely used platform for publishing content. Many marketers would like better tools and plugins to make publishing their content faster and easier.

This is just a small sample of the findings within the report. We cover many other aspects of content marketing and also break out the trends for the high earners where possible.

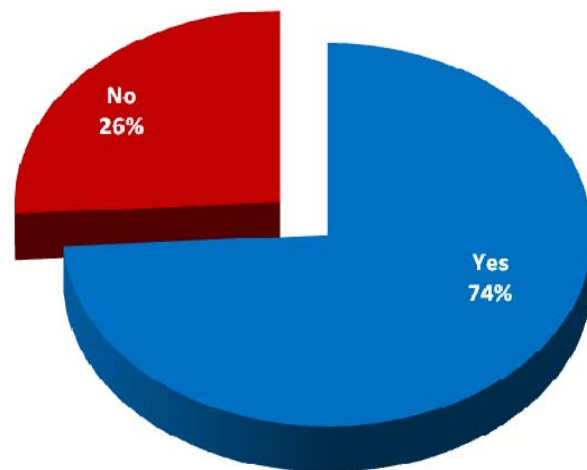
Use of content marketing

Before we asked if those surveyed used content marketing in their business, we gave a short description of how we define content marketing.

- *Content marketing is all marketing that involves the creation and sharing of content to attract and engage potential prospects and customers.*
- *If you post articles to your site, produce audio or video, create images, or use PDF reports in your marketing then you are using content marketing.*
- *Content is needed for SEO and is also used in social media.*

% Using Content Marketing

Once defined we asked those surveyed if they use content marketing to promote their business. 74% of those surveyed indicated they used content marketing for promotional purposes.



Top content marketing questions businesses want answered

Next we asked, "What is the top content marketing question you want answered?".

150 people answered this question. We grouped the replies and ordered them by popularity. These are the top 10 content marketing questions marketers want answers to.

#1. SEO

The number-one question marketers want answered is how to use content marketing to gain the most SEO benefit. They want high rankings in the search engines for their content.

Here are a couple of the exact questions asked:

- *Which form of content marketing gives the best SEO boost?*
- *How to best use keywords in content?*

#2. Finding good writers

The second most popular question asked by marketers is how they can find good writers for their content marketing strategy.

Here are a few sample questions from those surveyed:

- *Where can I find high quality writers?*
- *How can I get a reliable outsourcers?*

#3. Quick and easy

Marketers want to know how they can write their content quickly and easily. Based on the replies it's evident that content creation either is not an activity they want to spend much time on or they want to produce more content in the same amount of time.

Here are a couple of sample questions:

- *How to get more quality content out faster?*
- *How to create high quality content easily and quickly?*

#4. Media Type

There were a lot of questions on the most effective media type for content marketing. Many of the questions were geared toward video. This indicates many marketers are wondering if they would see a better return on their investment if they created video instead of or in addition to text-based content.

Here are a couple actual questions:

- *What is the most effective media?*
- *Where is content marketing going? Video, audio, or images?*

#5. Stand Out

Marketers want to know how they can create the type of content that will attract attention.

Here are actual questions that were sent in:

- *How to stand out with your content?*
- *How can I create content that keeps the visitors attention?*

#6. Best Strategy

Many marketers are wondering what the best strategy for content marketing is. They want to maximize their efforts to give them the best results.

Here are a couple of exact questions:

- *What is the most reliable way to use content marketing to promote my business?*
- *What are the most effective methods that are currently working?*

#7. How Much/How Often

Marketers are wondering what the optimal rate is for producing new content and how much content is enough.

Here are actual questions asked:

- *How much is enough?*
- *Is posting once a week good enough or sufficient?*

#8. Content Topic

Marketers are asking how they can uncover the best topics to write on for their industries.

Below are a couple of actual questions:

- *How to find the topic to write on?*
- *How to generate fresh ideas?*

#9. Length

Many marketers are trying to figure out what the optimal length is for a piece of content. By the questions sent in, it's unclear if they mean for search engines or readers, but likely they want to know the optimal length for both.

Here are a couple of actual questions sent in:

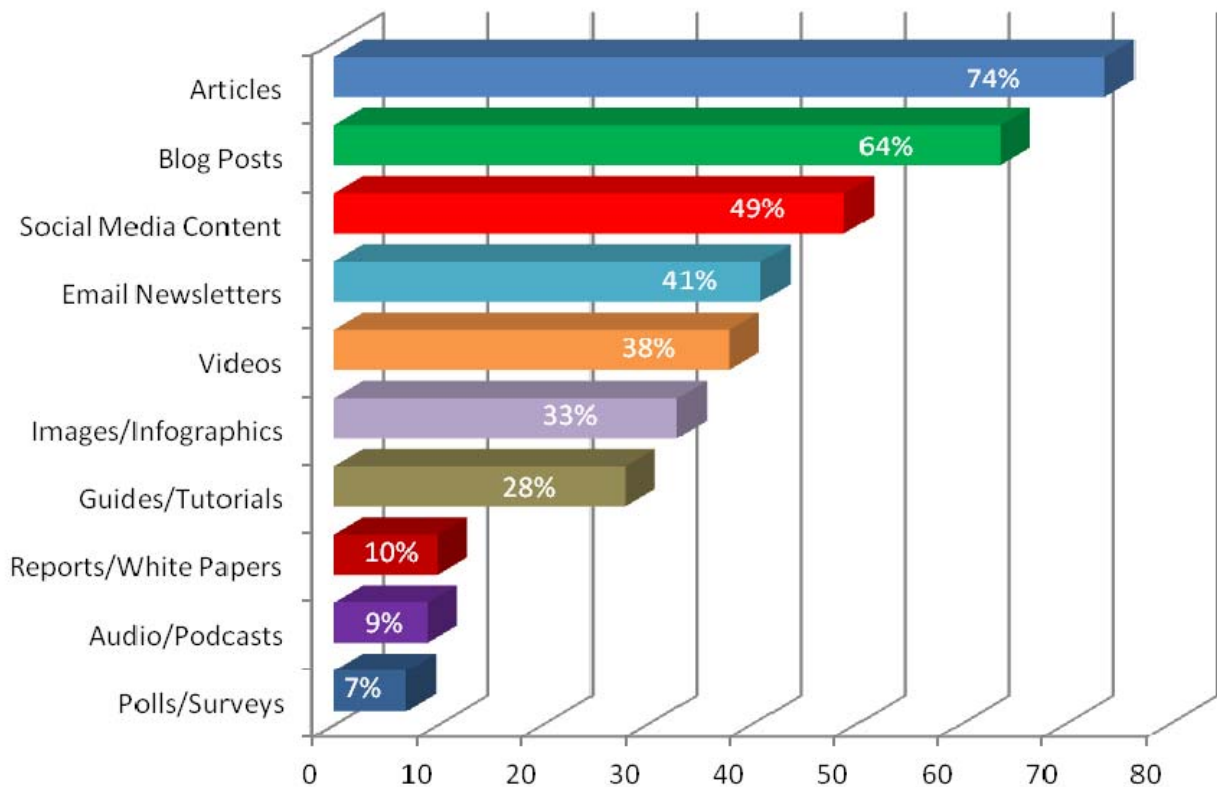
- *What's a good average length for a piece of content?*
- *Optimum length of content on a website.*

#10. Syndication

Marketers are trying to learn how to best syndicate their content. A few asked about social media, but most of the questions were very general like those asked below:

- *How to syndicate my content for best results?*
- *Best places to put content other than your blog?*

How are you using content to promote your business?



Respondents were able to select multiple answers to this question.

The results show the top 4 media methods and channels by those surveyed include articles, blog posts, social media content, and email newsletters.

74% of the respondents reported they used articles in their marketing strategy. Blog posts came in second with 64% of marketers employing this method. 49% of

marketers use content marketing within their social media strategy. 41% use email newsletters as a content strategy.

Videos were used by 38% of those surveyed while only 9% reported they used audio/podcasts as part of their business strategy.

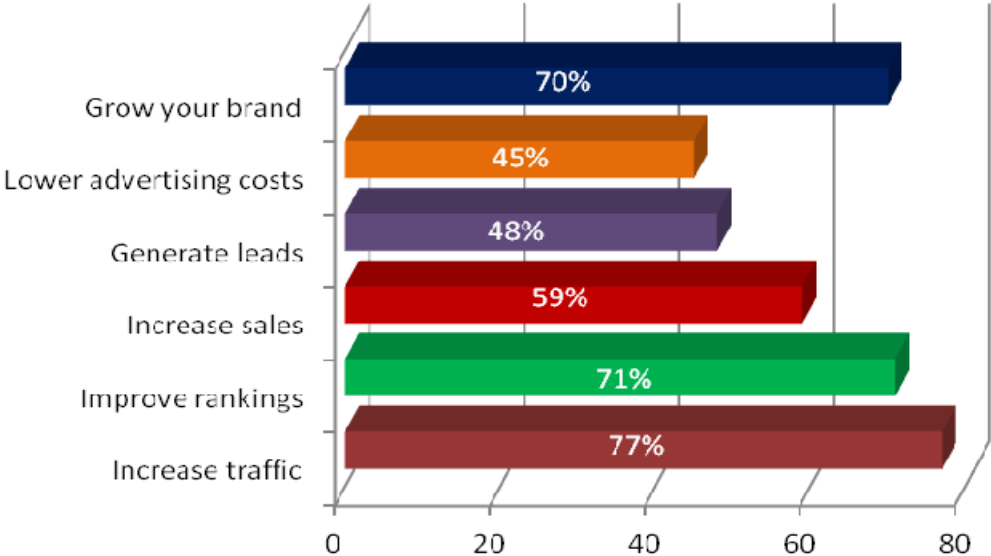
Trends with high earners:

Of those who reported revenues above \$10,000 a month, videos were used by 53% and audio/podcasts were used by 13%.

Of the respondents as a whole, 41% used email newsletters while those earning \$10,000 a month and above reported use of email newsletters at 56%.

Benefits

We wanted to look at the benefits businesses are seeing from content marketing.



The 3 biggest benefits reported were increasing traffic (77%), improving search engine rankings (71%), and growing awareness for the brand (70%). Increasing sales came in 4th at 59%.

This demonstrates how effective the creation and distribution of content is for many of the businesses surveyed for generating traffic.

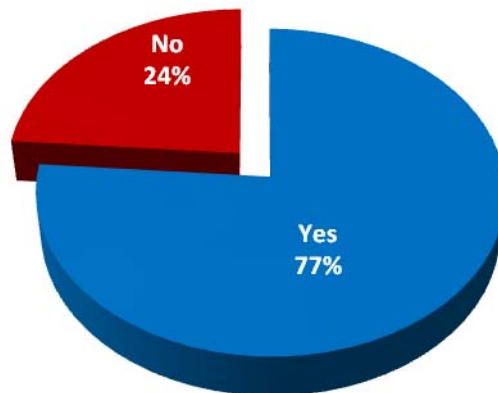
On the next few pages we'll break down each benefit and show the trends for the highest earners from those surveyed (businesses with revenues over \$10,000 a month).

Has content marketing helped you increase your traffic?

77% of those surveyed reported that content marketing has helped increase their traffic.

Trend with high earners:

79.4% of those surveyed earning \$10,000 a month or above reported yes.

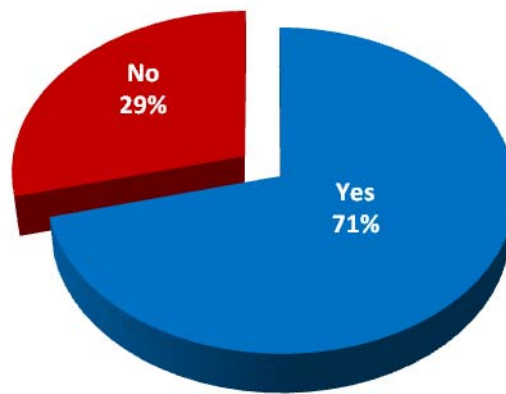


Has content marketing helped you improve your search engine rankings?

71% of those surveyed reported content marketing has helped them gain higher rankings in the search engines.

Trend with high earners:

79.4% of those earning \$10,000 a month or above reported yes.

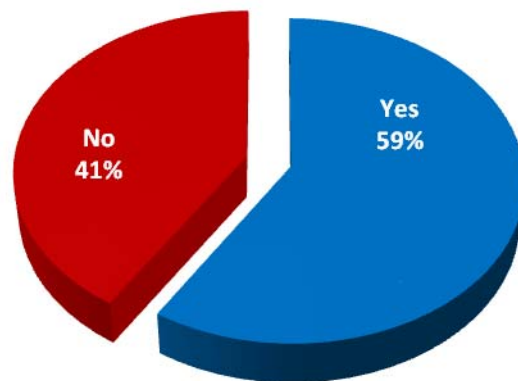


Has using content marketing helped you increase your sales?

59% of those surveyed reported that content marketing has helped them increase their sales.

Trend with high earners:

69% of those earning \$10,000 a month or above reported yes.

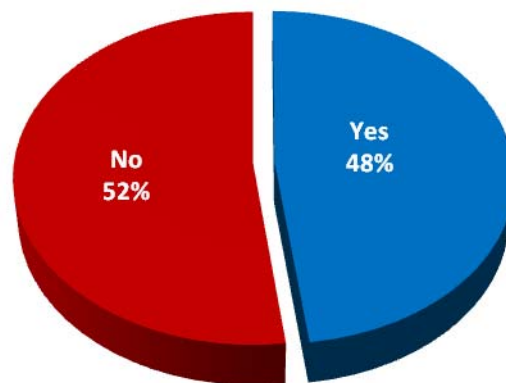


Has content marketing helped you grow an email list (generate leads)?

Just under half of those surveyed (48%) said that content marketing has helped them generate leads and grow an email list.

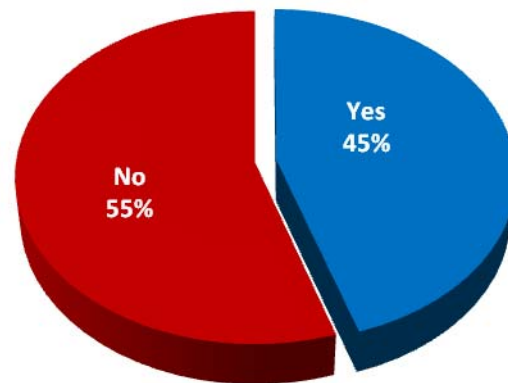
Trend with high earners:

54% of those earning \$10,000 a month or above reported yes.



Has content marketing helped you lower your advertising expenses?

45% of those surveyed reported that content marketing has helped them lower their advertising expenses. Many may be running content marketing campaigns in addition to paid advertising campaigns.

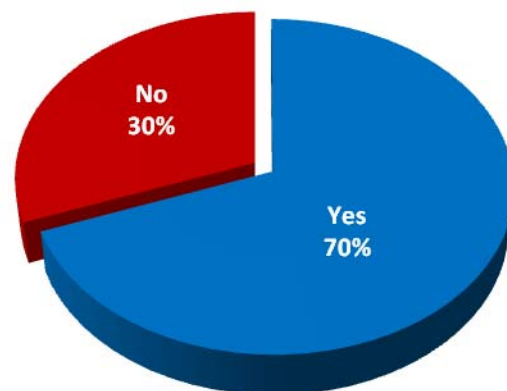


Trend with high earners:

Fewer (36%) of those earning \$10,000 a month or above reported yes.

Has content marketing helped you grow your brand and increase awareness of you or your company?

70% of those surveyed reported that content marketing has helped increase brand awareness.



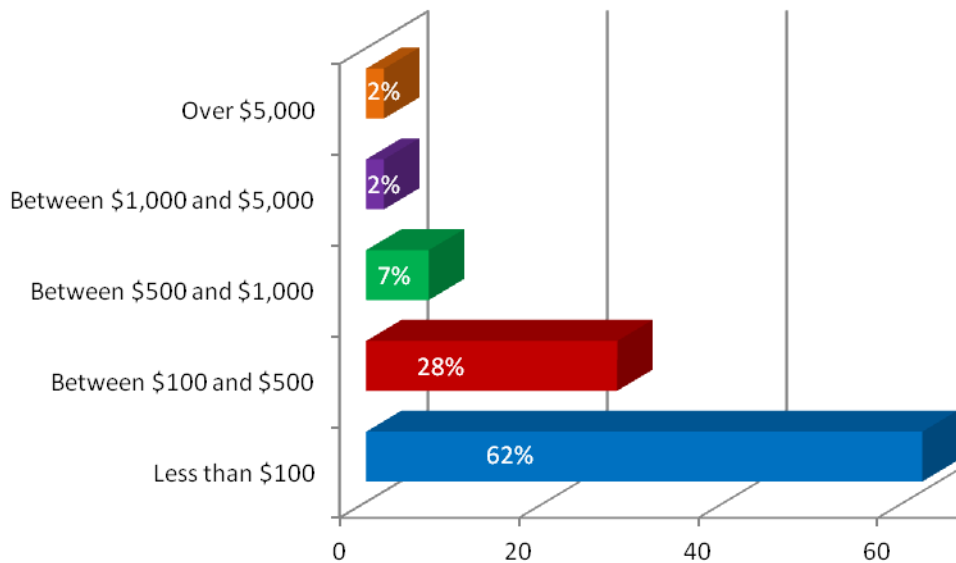
Trend with high earners:

The same amount (70%) of those earning \$10,000 a month or above also reported yes.

Content creation

In this next set of questions we wanted to see how much emphasis businesses were putting on the creation of content in time or dollars.

How much money does your company spend on content creation per month?



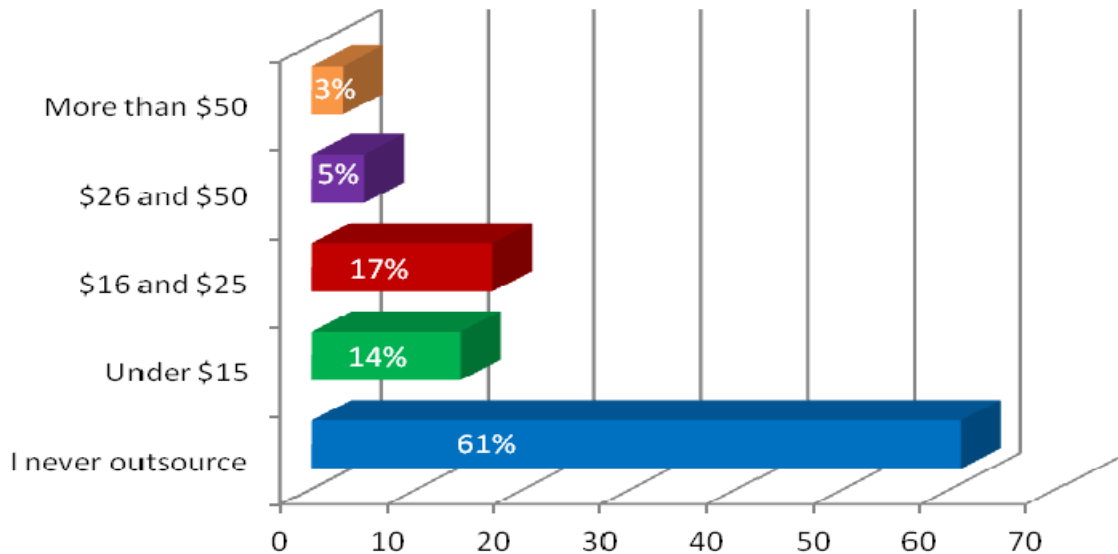
The overwhelming majority (62%) selected less than \$100 a month.

This indicates spending money on content creation is not a top priority for the respondents as a whole. 28% indicated they spend between \$100 and \$500 a month on content creation.

Trends with high earners:

Of the respondents who reported revenues of \$10,000 a month a much different set of percentages were indicated. A lower percentage spent less than \$100 a month (36%). 33% reported they spend between \$100 and \$500 a month while 17% spend between \$500 and \$1,000 a month. 8% of the high earners reported spending between \$1,000 and \$5,000 a month while 6% spent over \$5,000 a month on content creation.

On average, what do you spend for a 1,000 word piece of content?



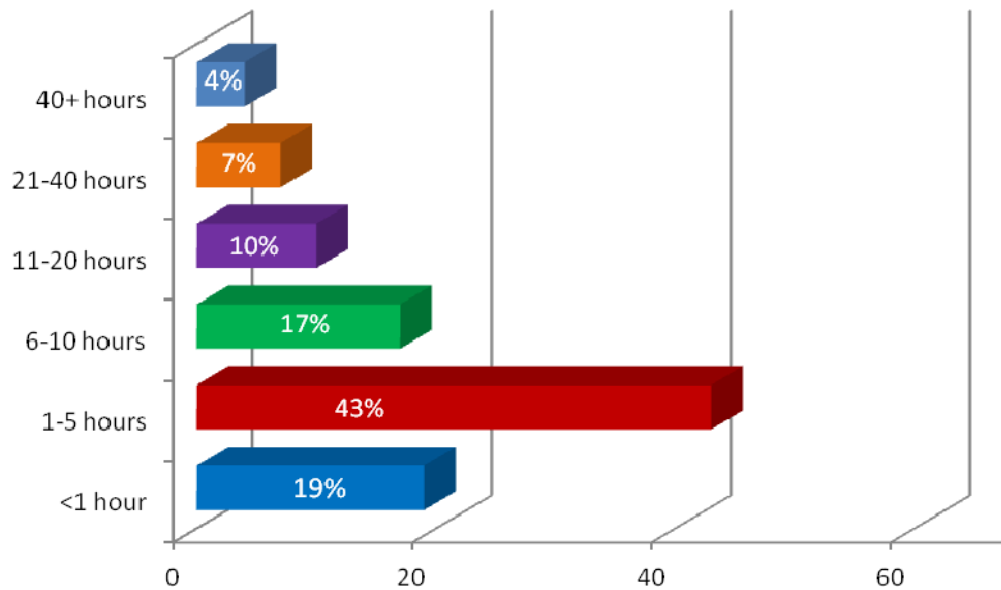
At 61% the overwhelming majority of those surveyed create all their written content on their own and never outsource. 14% said they spent less than \$15 per 1,000 word article.

17% stated they spent between \$16 and \$25. Only 3% stated they spent more than \$50 on a 1,000 word piece of content.

Trends with high earners:

Of the respondents with revenues at \$10,000 a month or above, only 3% said they paid under \$15 per 1,000 word article. More spent \$26 and above with 11% spending between \$26 and \$50 and 9% spending more than \$50.

How much time does your business spend on content creation per week?



The most popular answer was between 1 and 5 hours a week (43%). 17% spent between 6 and 10 hours a week creating content.

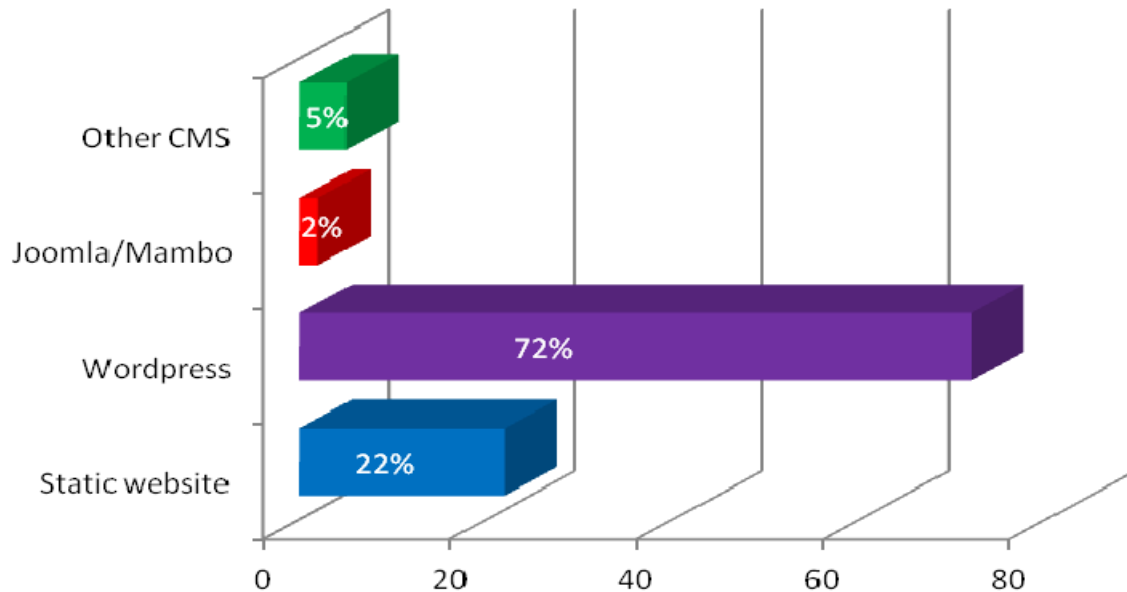
By itself, this question might lead to the belief that businesses are outsourcing the creation instead of doing it in-house. However as shown from the previous questions, those surveyed are not spending a high amount of money on the creation of content.

Based on the benefits section of the survey, marketers are seeing high returns on SEO, traffic, and branding even with small budgets and limited time spent on content creation.

Services and tools

This next segment of questions was targeted at determining what services and tools are used and needed in the industry.

How do you publish your content?



At 72%, the overwhelming majority of marketers use Wordpress for their publishing platform. Static websites built with Dreamweaver or other HTML editors came in second with 22% of the respondents selecting this option.

Joomla/Mambo are losing favor to Wordpress and other content management systems at 2%.

What services and tools do you use to create and market your content?

We collected open-ended answers to this question.

We grouped the services and tools into the following categories; social media platforms, freelance writers, software, video, checking uniqueness, generating ideas, and automated tools.

Here are the most popular services and tools used by marketers to create and market their content.

- **Social media platforms:** Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and Google+
- **Freelance writers:** Elance.com, Freelancer.com, Textbroker.com, iWriter.com
- **Software:** Camtasia, Powerpoint, Adobe software
- **Video:** YouTube, Vimeo, Animoto
- **Checking uniqueness:** Copyscape
- **Idea generation:** Google Alerts
- **Automated tools:** Content spinners, article distributors

What tools do you wish existed?

In order to determine what's missing for businesses and marketers using content marketing to drive traffic and sales we asked what tools they wish existed.

Here is the list of the top tools marketers wished existed to help create and promote content in order of popularity:

- [Website creators](#)
- [Quality writers](#)
- [Research tools](#)

Many of the respondents indicated they wanted easier website creator options. This includes wordpress plugins to allow building webpages faster and easier.

Most of the responses were general. There were a few respondents who detailed they would like wordpress plugins to help format their content.

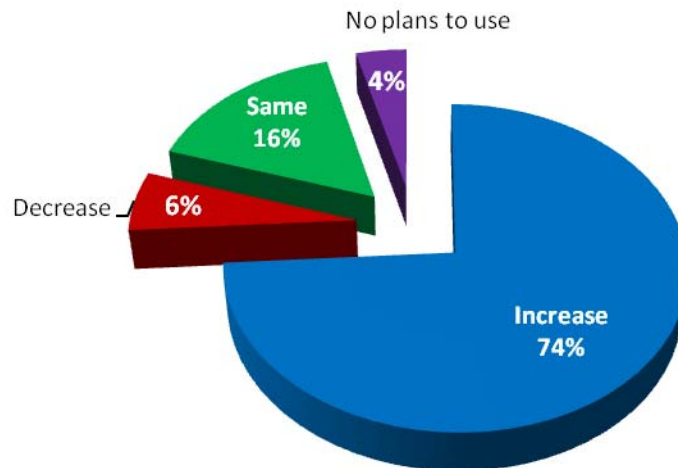
The need for quality writers was made apparent once again in this section. Lastly the respondents reported they would like better research tools to help them find hot topics to create content about.

The future

In order to gauge the growth of the content marketing industry, we asked the respondents two questions based on their plans for the future. Here they are along with the results.

Would you like to increase or decrease your content marketing efforts in 2013?

Over 74% of those surveyed indicated they have plans to increase their level of content marketing in 2013. Only 16% plan to keep their levels the same.

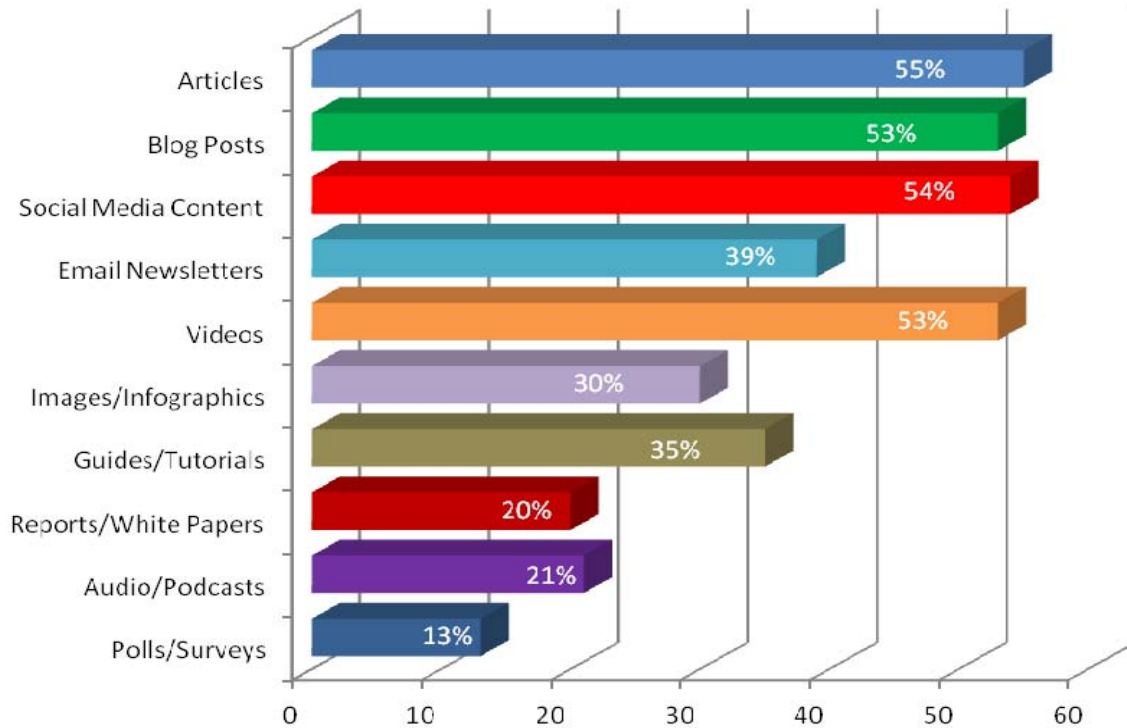


Very few will decrease their content marketing efforts or not use this strategy at all.

Trends with high earners:

Of those with revenues at the \$10,000 per month mark or above, 0% planned to decrease their content marketing efforts in 2013 while only 3% said they had no plans to use content marketing.

If you'd like to do more content marketing this year, what do you plan to increase?



The top 4 types of content the respondents would like to increase include articles (54%), blog posts (53%), social media content (54%), and videos (53%).

Demographics

The following questions were asked to determine the background of those surveyed.

The largest segment (33%) of the survey participants had been involved with online marketing between 1 to 3 years. Most of those surveyed (71%) were solo entrepreneurs working with or without outsourcers and 87% were in the B2C sector.

How long have you been actively involved with online marketing?

Less than 1 year	29%
1-3 years	22%
4-6 years	20%
6 or more years	19%

What is the current size of your company?

Solo	46%
Solo + outsourcers	25%
Under 3 employees	11%
Under 10 employees	8%
Between 10 - 100 employees	9%
Over 100 employees	2%

What industry are you in?

B2B - 13%
B2C - 87%

About

BusinessBolts.com helps small businesses increase their web traffic and conversions.

Lisa Parmley is the founder of BusinessBolts.com. She started her online publishing business in 2001 by creating and offering a test preparation training course. Along the way she has worked with some of the education industries top earning companies.

In 2009 she created an SEO training program that has helped well over 1,100 marketers and businesses increase their traffic through SEO.

BusinessBolts.com is her latest endeavor.

A note from Lisa:

I'd like to thank-you for checking out this annual report! If you found value in the report, please pass it around by referring to the original page:

<http://www.businessbolts.com/content-marketing-survey-report.html>

I appreciate your support and look forward to helping even more small business owners thrive online.

All the best ...

Sincerely,

Lisa Parmley
Founder, BusinessBolts.com