



An E-Book for Writers and Editors

Unraveling the Mysteries of Publishing Content Marketing

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You and your company have decided to embrace content marketing and increase your opportunities to win new customers. Congratulations!

As with your current marketing materials, customers will judge your content marketing not only for content but also for quality. How well you say it is just as important as what you say.

Content marketing, though, is more intense. Your thought leaders need to know their subject matter and be able to explain it in plain English. The marketing pieces are longer, more complex, and more difficult to create.

You're moving from being a marketer to being a *publisher*. To succeed, you need to know how to *act* like a publisher.

The Publishing Process

You're already using a condensed publishing process with your usual marketing collateral:

1. **Plan the assets or campaign.** Include goals, calls to action, and key performance indicators.
2. **Write the copy.**
3. **Design the piece.**
4. **Edit/review.** Not all marketing departments edit their pieces for quality, though they should; those that don't generally have a review process to ensure the piece follows branding guidelines.
5. **Publish.**
6. **Measure the results.**

Your content marketing is going to be more than a brochure or an email campaign. Reports can be 10 or 20 pages, and e-books can be even longer. They can include links, tables, graphs, and footnotes. Blog posts will need links and images; if you're publishing posts on someone else's site, they may need to meet someone else's editorial standards as well.

To ensure you've put your company in the best possible light, you'll want to expand your publishing process to include more than error prevention:

1. **Plan assets/campaign.** Include goals, calls to action, and key performance indicators.
2. **Write copy.** This may include more research and interviews than in the past.

3. **Developmental editing.** The longer the piece, the easier it is to lose the point of it. Have someone, ideally your editorial director or the assigning editor, edit the manuscript for organization, structure, and goals. If the piece isn't making its argument, now is the time to rip it apart and fix it.
4. **Get approval.** The sign-off process can be much more complicated in content marketing, as you'll need approval from upper management, clients, and other content stakeholders. Whenever you quote a client, be sure the client is happy with how they're represented. It's OK to edit client quotes to help them sound more professional *as long as the client approves the changes.*
5. **Substantive/copy edit.** The more complex the piece, the more that can be wrong. There's also a bigger possibility that you'll leave yourself open for liable, plagiarism, and trademark issues. Protect yourself and your company by hiring an editor to correct for grammar, branding rules, style, and more.
6. **Design.** Make sure your final product looks good and fits in with your company's look and feel. You will skip this step, as well as 7 and 8, for assets that are being published elsewhere, such as in trade magazines or on LinkedIn, however.
7. **Proofread.** The more complex the design, the more you need a second set of eyes. Make sure all company branding and trademark rules have been followed and all typos have been fixed.
8. **Publish.**
9. **Measure.**

Be flexible. Your publishing process should fit your company's and the asset's needs while ensuring a professional piece that is worthy of representing your company.

In-House or Outsource?

Once you decide on a publishing process, you'll need to decide who should do what. You may have everything you need in-house already. Marketers are storytellers and are ideal for researching, interviewing subject matter experts, and writing your pieces.

However, if the added workload will be too much, don't be afraid to hire freelancers writers. Make sure they have good interviewing skills and are familiar with copywriting.

You'll need to review your anticipated workload to decide if your designers can handle the extra work. Does it make sense to hire another full-timer, or would a freelancer be better suited to the work, with the benefit of lower overhead?

If you don't have a staff copyeditor, now is the time to consider one. Consider hiring a freelance copyeditor if you don't have enough work to keep an employee busy. Whichever way you go, your copyeditor should help maintain your house style guide, ensuring all your materials have a similar look and feel and meet branding requirements.

Your copyeditor may be willing to take on the proofreading tasks, as well, if no one on staff has the time.

Where Can You Find the Right People?

As with any other hire you make, be sure the folks you hire for your new publishing process have the right skills. Writers, editors, and designers should be familiar with marketing principles as they relate to their functions. Writers should have strong interviewing and research skills, and editors should be adept at maintaining house style. Designers should understand your customers' reading habits, especially how they skim and scan digital publications.

Good resource for freelance publishing folks include:

- [MediaBistro](#)
- [National Association for Independent Writers and Editors](#)
- [Editorial Freelancers Association](#)



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About the Author



Erin Brenner, owner of [Right Touch Editing](#), has been an editing professional for two decades, specializing in content marketing and website materials. Her clients includes SAP, ITSMA, and Collins Education Associates.

Erin shares her expertise through her work as editor of [Copyediting](#), as an instructor in UCSD's [copyediting certificate program](#), and as a speaker.

Contact Erin at erin@righttouchediting.com to help you with your next project.