



Think like a Publisher, Data for content

**For cross-silo content that makes impact,
and contributes to your business objectives**

By Fleur Willemijn van Beinum
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i-DEPOT #117757



Foreword and outline thinklikeapublisher.com

Why I wrote this book

I thrive on raising the content bar. Inspiring others that content actually is a lot of no-nonsense and it ain't rocket science. Actually, it is quite simple. Show and tell your passion and 'why you do what you do' to make others enthusiast on your brand and its products.

That's brand marketing and storytelling. A combination between marketing, public relations, corporate communication, HR for talent and customer care with webcare. Follow up with performance (content) marketing to close to deal. In this way content can contribute to your business objectives and tell your brand story in one funnel.

Brand values 2020

Next to this, due to COVID-19, BLM and other society changes in 2020, the brand values become more important than ever. Your mission and vision matter. How can you as a brand make the world a better place and that you are not in it for just and only the money.

Fair production, sustainability and diversity, inclusivity and representative for everyone and everybody.

Thinklikeapublisher.com

In my book, published via my website, I collect the insights, learning, visions and opinions from the best in class. Using an unlimited amount of sources, combined with my own experience, expertise and knowledge, I hope to inspire you.

Four main elements, once the corresponding content is online, I add the link. A sneak peek of what to expect in 2020. Going with the flow, some of these paragraphs will change and update over time.

1. First, build some solid [basics](#) and fundamentals with a firm strategy and identity.
Download the PDF
2. Second, create a content structure based on [data](#) and using tags, themes or topics
3. Third, set up a central and agile content team
4. Forth, get your [tools](#) and processes in place

Interviews

From theory to operational excellence. Deepened by interviews with the most inspiring peers from top-class agencies and amazing brands. From the big, international and corporate to the start-ups and pro-athletes. [All interviews](#)

Finding a publisher is damn difficult.

Honestly, getting denied time over time again isn't that bad, feedback improved my writing and made the book to what it is today. Yet, what is content if it doesn't reach the audience. If the knowledge stays on my computer, nobody benefits. Hence, flipping the perspective and practicing what I preach, I decided to publish by myself, online, piece by piece.

Week by week I publish the individual chapters and paragraphs of my book. Each has its own release, indexed by tags. At the end of each chapter, you can download the PDF with the collection of the releases that create the chapter.

On thinklikeapublisher.com you can bounce from release to release by using the tags, you can search for topics or you can just go with the flow and read what resonates.

'Practice what I preach. From getting denied by publishers to digitally publishing by myself. Scarry as sh*t and gives energy like hell. Loving every moment of it.'

Data for content

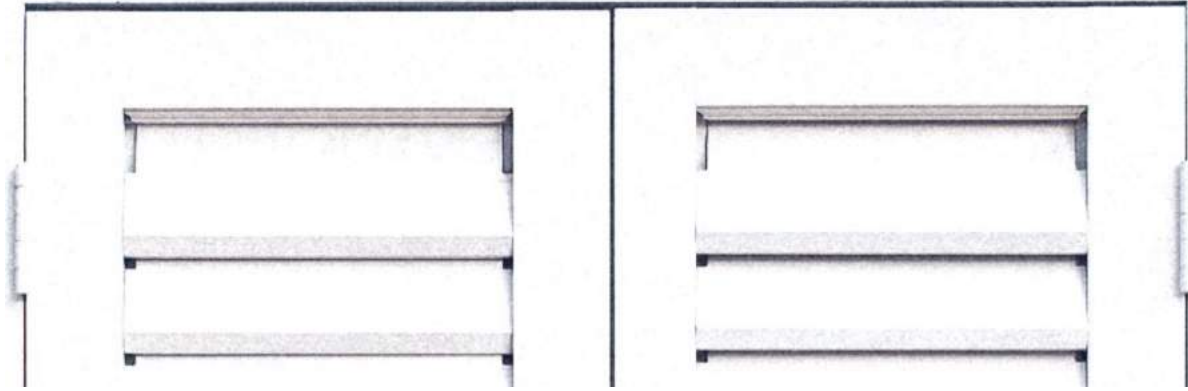
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Published items of Chapter 1.

[Download](#) the PDF

Basics and fundamentals for content

- It starts with a belief
- 3 Key takeaways for content excellence
- 4 Elements of how to think like a publisher
- How to set up a newsroom
- How to find great visuals
- To blog or not to blog
- Share content from others
- 'How to keep your CFO on board for brand-building' by Les Binet
- Your why and leadership
- The content basics and fundamentals
- Cross-silo content
- Long term brand building content
- Content pledge: contribute to business objectives
- Content painpoints
- 'Epic content marketing tips' by Joe Pulizzi
- Start up to scale up
- Sense of content urgency
- We hate ads
- Be Distinctive
 - 'Character Gives Respect' by G-Star RAW
 - 'Content to stand out' by Flinders
 - 'Stick to Your Brand Voice' by WodBottom
- Build a brand before products
- Reputation management
- Brand safety and content



How to structure content

Once you know the trick, it's very easy

Long story short: structure in your content brings cohesion, defines the gaps, and simplifies planning. Opposite, the lack of structure makes your storytelling a lot harder, less effective and your audience drops out. No matter how much media budget you spend.

What you will learn

1. Tree diagram for an overview
2. Themes for content structure and using tags
3. Finding the gaps: content as proof
4. Easier content planning

1. Create a tree diagram

No real need to explain why cohesion within your story and content is important, do I? Quite a few struggle to get grip on their content and bring structure in their story. Creating this construction is the more difficult part. It provides a logical flow from one topic to another and aligns all topics with the brands' mission statement, vision, purpose, or claim. Once you know the trick, easy does it.

My personal favorite is a pretty old school. Yet it works like magic, every time again. Maybe the simplicity is the golden nugget to get the overview. Divide what you want to tell into themes, in line with your claim.

As a diagram speaks louder than words, visualize the structure. Three 'rules' for the tree diagram: Topics on the higher level are more general than the sub-topics on the lower level. Meaning the 'lower' you get in the tree diagram, the more detailed the (sub)topic per content item. Rule of thumb: stick to one (sub)topic per content item. If you have several, create several content items within the topic.

Topics per diagram-level should match up on the same level. For example, you can have the topic 'alcoholic beverages' with the sub-topics 'beer', 'wine', 'spirit'. The content item-specific on 'Gin' ranks within 'spirit' and cannot be ranked within 'alcoholic beverages'.

Rank on themes. The highest level is the brand 'claim', directly divided into general themes, which are split up in detailed stories that provide the proof of the claim.



2. Themes

This is pretty easy once you look beyond sales and think of your 'why'. The first step is to check your 'why you do what you do'; who you are and why you are different than your competitors. This usually is anchored in your purpose, mission, and vision. Simply highlight the keywords. See the automotive example below.

These keywords are your main themes. If needed, you can add one or two more themes. The secret of success is to keep it simple and stick to your core, your 'why'. Rule of thumb is to have a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 8 themes to keep the focus. Double-check if your themes correspond with your leadership claim. If these do not merge seamlessly, you have a brand identity problem.

The setup of your themes is absolutely a bespoke exercise and there is not a default model. How to divide and balance your content between them, depends on your brand, your strategy, and objectives.

Use Google data to define

With smarter usage of Google, you can produce content your audience actually wants to read. Pretty much an open door, you should use these insights to (re)define your themes to structure your content. Imagine, you are a coffee company and the research shows your audience wants to know the difference between arabica and robusta, light roast, and dark roast. This could be your first theme to explain the basics of coffee beans.

The same goes for when your audience is looking for how-to and recipes for a cappuccino. And they want to know the difference between an iced coffee and a cold brew, or a ristretto and espresso... here you have your second theme.

Read more on '[Data for content](#)'

Naming the themes

The naming of themes is also a bespoke exercise with the biggest pitfall to think inside-out. The naming of the themes is audience focused. Think about what words your audience is actually looking for and those to name your theme. Sounds pretty obvious, in practice, this is often overseen and forgotten. Resulting in theme names full of inside-out BS marketing jargon.

E.g. the theme is 'electrification', the actual name of this theme should be 'electric driving' or even 'EV'.

Rule of thumb: keep it short and simple, do not try to impress.

Hack: use the keywords your audience most likely will use in Google.

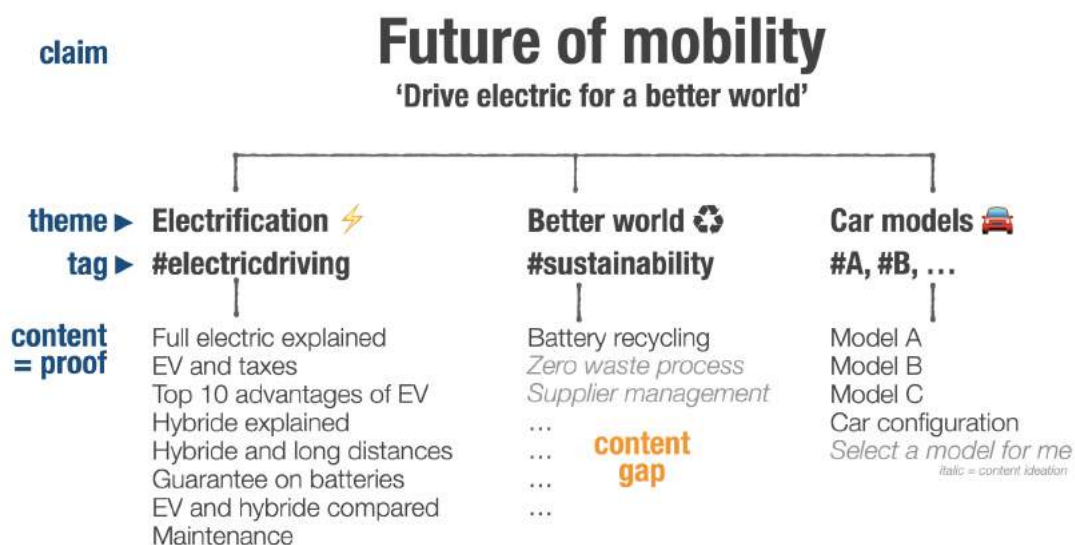
Themes and

Topics, themes, or tags. Three different words, with more or less the same meaning. Once you get into the actual content production, I prefer 'tag'. Effectiveness of using # is already proven on social and adapted on the websites for search and discovery.

A great example is the tagging used by news.airbnb.com to unlock the content and set up the pages and landing pages. The same trick applies to thinklikeapublisher.com.

Integrate

If you actually want to be Google-found on your themes, integrate these as the backbone for the navigation of your website. If 'electric driving' is part of your leadership claim, then 'electric driving' is in your main website navigation. Sounds pretty much like a no-brainer. In reality, most brands forget this important detail.



3. Content as proof and finding the gap

Your content supporting the theme is the actual proof of your claim. In other words, if you do not have enough in-depth content within your theme 'sustainability', you are not credible. And you are perceived as a fake. This lines up with your proactive defense reputation content.

Plot the existing content on your themes to discover the gaps in your communication. Know what content is still needed to endorse your leadership. Next to that, you can also discover an overload of content on a specific theme.

If your content publication is off-balance over the themes, ask yourself if you selected the right themes or if you are lacking in content production.

4. Easier content planning

Once you have the birds-eye overview on the proof in your content, it gets easier to plan. Four advantages: long-form or short-form, prevent duplicates, facilitate ideation, and nay-saying.

Long-form content needs

You know which of your themes are in need and suitable for more explanation and background information. By creating in-depth long-form content you can claim your thought leadership and share your knowledge on this topic. By developing the long-form content you differentiate from your competitors and you can stand out. With a very nice side effect, you rank higher in SEO.

Read more on ['Long-form content on the rise'](#)

No duplicates

By having the visual overview, you can spot if you already have (sufficient) content on the specific topic. Then decide to update or expand the existing content or replace it with something new.

Content ideation

Another advantage is that you can use the tree diagram to plot new ideas for content items. As soon as you think of a new content item, plot it within a theme. In this way, you can create a hands-on tangible ideation list of content items for future usage.

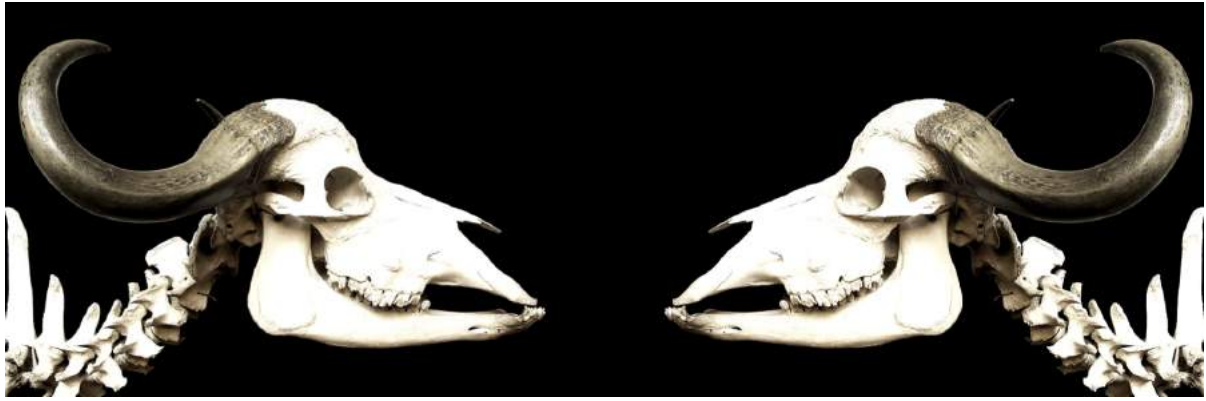
Nay-Saying

Last but not least, having the themes helps you to say 'no' to content that is off-topic. Often there is some internal desire to produce ego polishing content that cannot be plotted within one of the themes. Having this theme-based content structure makes it easier to focus and politely decline any non-strategy based content requests.

Source and notes

With thanks to the book 'Schrijven met Effect' by Mariet Hermans, unfortunately only available in Dutch. Small note, the first few chapters are interesting for the 'how-to develop the tree diagram'. The rest of the book is more for students learning how to write a thesis.

The diagram of the automotive example is completely fictional and not related to any of my clients.



Data for content

'I promise you, you will be surprised by the outcome'

A data-driven content strategy is easier and cheaper than you realize. With smarter usage of Google, you can produce content your audience actually wants to read. As the days that brands dictate what they communicate, are over by now. Time over time again I am shocked by the inside-out content arrogance by brands. It is time to flip and to capture your audience's needs to produce content. And to have your content efforts contribute to your business objectives.

Don't be ancient. Do your homework before you start producing content. Three easy steps:

1. Research: Google data and other data
2. Plot the outcome on your [themes](#)
3. Competitor SEO analysis

* Warning: this is a long read *

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'In God we trust; all others bring data', W. Edwards Deming

Fleur Willemijn van Beinum



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Research: Google and YT data

A simple, cheap, and excellent check to gain insights into what your audience actually wants. In a nutshell: discover the Google and YouTube search queries related to your industry, brand and products. I promise you, you will be surprised by the outcome.

Having done this research for several clients, time overtime again, the top 3 searches revealed content needs the brand never imagined.

They all have in common that the searches relate to the 'help' content, the bare basics of your products. None of them had this specific content in place. The good news is, neither had their competitors.... From the different roasting processes of coffee beans, the how-to booze recipes plus hacks, to the specific details on the local road-taxes and warranty related to electric cars.

This Google and YouTube research will cost you roughly between € 7k for local and € 15k for global. With the condition, you have a crystal-clear and tight briefing for your agency. This can be your media agency or your creative agency. You can also hire a specialized data agency. Keep in mind it takes more time to brief a new agency as they do not know your brand and are not familiar with the organization.

Speaking from experience, my advice: use your creative agency. As the media agency is more inclined to develop an SEO and SEA strategy. That is exactly not what you are looking for. You want to gain insights into the audience's needs to use in your (creative) content strategy.

How to brief your agency

As this type of research is quite new for agencies, a few suggestions for what to include in the brief. Drill down the desired output and make sure they get your objectives and what you are looking for. Your executive brief should fit on 1 A4 in simplicity. If you need a death-by-powerpoint-deck, you have to learn to brief. The better your brief, the better the outcome.

- Objective: insights for content strategy
- [Themes](#): list of topics you want to be found on
- Keywords: industry, brand, and product
- Competitors names: stick to main competitors
- Countries or region: stick to the most important
- Language(s)

Don't include the details of your audience or personas. Keep it open to discover.

Ask the agency to do broad research. The goal is to find out if there are more keywords or specific combinations used. Can these be grouped, is there a common theme, is there a trend? What are the top 10 searches for your industry, brand, and your competitors?

Research: Google Analytics

Do a scan of your website and deep dive into the GA. What are the most and least visited pages? Include the origin of the traffic in this overview, the internal and external sources. This gives insights into how your www is actually used and what generates traffic.

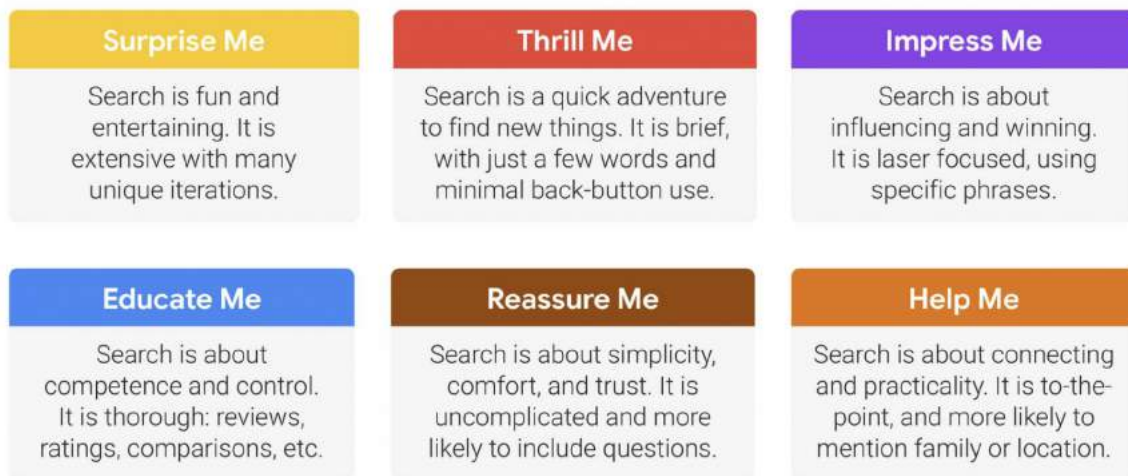
This research often reveals a dis-balance between your content production and the actual audience behavior. If the majority of your content is on product features and the top 3 pages are 'sustainability', 'marketing campaigns', and 'contact' — then you have some amazing opportunities to stand out and to be distinctive. And you have some work to do.

Research: Google content needs

Research by Google and Kantar (2018) reveals the [needs of the audience for the content](#). In a nutshell, there are six categories: 'surprise me', 'thrill me', 'impress me', 'educate me', 'reassure me' and 'help me'. Note these are consumer-focused and not product or feature focused.

Plot your existing content and planned content against these categories. Do they line up or are you way

off track and too much inside-out focused? Again, to create an impact with your content, your audience's needs are central. That defines what they actually want to read. It is not about you as the brand and about your products.



As Vogue wanted to increase their online readers base and their reach, they flipped their perspective. Research amongst their readers revealed their content needs. No surprise these align with the Google categories.

With some local differences in the order of importance:

1. Inspire me: the minority of actual content — most wanted
2. Teach me
3. Entertain me
4. Keep me up to date: 38% of actual content — least read content by the audience
5. Make me socially responsible: 2% of actual content — 53% of the audience wants this
6. Connect me

Easy to change category

There is no direct need to produce new content once you know the preferred categories. It is easy to adapt the 'keep me up to date' to 'inspire me' content. First, write a more inspiring title, and second, showcase different perspectives and points of view in the text itself.

Please view the talk by [Sarah Marshall, head of audience growth by 'Vogue International'](#) to get all the insights and details.

Research: Customer care and webcare

This department has the first line of (social media) contact with your audience. They know as nobody else what triggers them, their questions, and frustrations. Use them as a source to define what content is needed.

A few years ago, I was responsible for the setup of the new in-house webcare department for an insurance company. As sitting next to the boys and girls, I was reading and listening in on their conversations. Noticing the majority of the cases were questions by pregnant women on the insurance

coverage.

Presuming our clients preferred to be independent and actually not wanting to chat with us, and presuming we do have these insurance conditions and fine print online... we concluded that our www-information was too hidden and scattered on several pages. And when the content was found, it was not clear enough. Hence, we did the content audit and rewrote the existing content. Furthermore, we created a merged overview-page with all pregnancy-related information. Provided with a short url and a targeted social campaign, we decreased the workload on the webcare team by significant numbers.

Plot the outcome on your themes

Pretty much an open door, you should use these insights to (re)define your themes to structure your content.

Imagine, you are a coffee company and the research shows your audience wants to know the difference between arabica and robusta, light roast, and dark roast. This could be your first theme to explain the basics of coffee beans.

The same goes for when your audience is looking for how-to and recipes for a cappuccino. And they want to know the difference between an iced coffee and a cold brew, or a ristretto and espresso... here you have your second theme.

Read more on '[How to structure content](#)'

Competitor SEO analysis

Once you know what content to produce, [check out your competitors](#), and how they rank on SEO.

Sneak preview how-to:

- Open an anonymous window in Google,
- type in the keyword and
- make a list of the first 10 content items.
- Check these pages on their H1, H2, and url,
- use these insights to produce your own content accordingly.



Analyse your competitors content

This is so obvious and simple, yet actually never done by anybody

General benchmark, give or take, about 50% of your www traffic comes from SEO. Or should come from SEO.

No need to explain an SEO strategy drives organic growth, is a 'cheap' way to drive traffic, and therefore is an indispensable part of your content strategy. Yet, once you [know what content to produce](#), you have your [themes](#), and you decided to [go short-form or long-form](#), how to crack the code, and get a high ranking?

Simple, check out your competitors. This is so obvious and simple, yet actually never done by anybody. It's a bonus and you take your advantage.

“



'This is so obvious and simple, yet actually never done by anybody.'

Fleur Willemijn van Beinum



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How to do the copy analysis

It sounds complicated, actually, it is pretty easy once you know the trick. The keyword competitor SEO analysis for one keyword should take you about one hour. Start with your main themes, about 4 to 8. And you can always expand this SEO competitor analysis to all other keywords you want to be found on.

- Pick the keyword you want to rank on, in line with the core of your content piece and themes.
- Tip: open an incognito browser window to prevent your former search to influence the results.
- Go to Google and type in the keyword. Look at the organic top 5 or 10 first page results. Pick the credible sources. Reference: only select the links you would click on yourself and discharge the dodgy ones.
- Copy-paste the H1 and H2 headers from those pages and put them in excel. If there are a lot of H3, include these as well.
- Include the url in the excel. Learning by doing, I forgot this in the 'content' example.
- Make an analysis, break the H1 and H2 copy down in common topics and similarities.

- Tip: look at the style of writing. Depending on your industry, this writing can be very functional and not fancy marketing-driven at all. You should always write a 'what's in it for me' copy, based on the needs of your audience. People google to find an answer to their question and to fulfill their needs, not to pro-actively read your beautifully written marketing sales pitch.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	title How to develop a content strategy: a start to finish guide	title content strategy basics	title what is content strategy	title developing a content marketing strategy			
2	H2 what is content strategy	H2 creating a comprehensive strategy and governance	H2 Content Strategy definition	H2 content marketing strategy			
3	H3 whom you're creating content for	H2 content lifecycle	H2 what do content strategists do	H2 content strategy			
4	H3 the problem it's going to solve for the audience	H2 best practices for creating meaningful content	H3 business intelligence	H2 content plan			
5	H3 what makes you unique	H2 references	H3 process, governance, auditing	H2 Do I really need a content marketing strategy			
6	H3 the content formats you'll focus on		H3 audience research	H2 What should my content marketing strategy include?			
7	H3 the channels where it'll be published		H3 strategic vision	H2 Do I need to share our content marketing strategy with other teams in my department?			
8	H3 how you'll manage creation and publication		H3 tone of voice and brand identity	H2 How often should I update my content marketing strategy			
9	H2 why do marketers need to create a content marketing strategy		H3 ideation				
10	H2 how to create a content marketing strategy		H3 channel strategy				
11	H3 define your goal		H3 execution plan				
12	H3 conduct persona research		H2 How to design a content strategy				
13	H3 run a content audit		H2 Models of content strategy				
14	H3 choose a content management system		H3 the brain traffic model				
15	H3 brainstorm content ideas		H3 elements of content strategy model				
16	H3 determine which types of content you want to create						
17	H3 blog post						
18	H3 ebooks						
19	H3 case studies						
20	H3 templates						
21	H3 infographics						
22	H3 videos						
23	H3 podcasts						
24	H3 social media						
25	H3 publish and manage your content						
26							
27							

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	Keyword "Hybride auto"									
2	Google.nl ORGANIC SERP									
3										
4	#1	#2	#3	#4						
5	URL https://autosiers.nl/11-beste-hybride-auto's	URL https://www.vishovag.nl/blog/hybride-auto-kopen-waar-moet-je-op-letten/	URL https://bynco.com/nl/blog/beste-hybride-hoge-instap/	URL https://bynco.com/nl/blog/10-beste-hybride-auto's/						
6	H1 De 11 Beste Hybride Auto's	H1 Hybride auto kopen, waar moet je op letten?	H1 TOP 10 BESTE HYBRIDE AUTO'S MET HOGE INSTAP - BYNCO	H1 Wat is een hybride auto?						
7	H2 Welke hybride vormen zijn er?	H2 Wat is een hybride auto?	H2 Kia Niro plug-in hybride	H2 Serieële, plug-in- en range-extender-hybriden						
8	H2 De voor- en nadelen van een hybride auto	H2 Wat zijn de voordelen van een hybride auto?	H2 Toyota C-HR Hybrid	H2 Top 10 Hybride auto's						
9	H2 Overzicht van de beste hybride auto's	H2 Welke nadelen heeft een hybride auto?	H2 Toyota RAV4 Hybrid	H2 1 - Hyundai Ioniq Plug-in Hybrid						
10	H3 Wat zijn de beste hybride auto's?		H2 Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV plug-in hybride	H2 2 - Toyota Prius Hatchback						
11	H2 Hybride modellen per merk		H2 Volvo XC60 plug-in hybride	H2 3 - Toyota C-HR Hybrid						
12			H2 Volvo XC90 plug-in hybride	H2 4 - Mercedes E350e Hybrid						
13			H2 Range Rover PHEV plug-in hybride	H2 5 - BMW 530e iPerformance Hybrid						
14			H2 Range Rover Sport P400e	H2 6 - Mercedes C350e Hybrid						
15			H2 Range Rover PHEV plug-in hybride	H2 7 - Audi Q7 e-tron Hybrid						
16			H2 Range Rover Sport P400e	H2 8 - MINI Countryman Cooper S E ALL4 Hybrid						
17			H2 Porsche Cayenne E-hybrid plug-in	H2 9 - BMW 530e iPerformance Hybrid						
18			H2 Audi Q7 e-tron plug-in hybride	H2 10 - Toyota Prius Plug-In Hybrid						
19			H2 Audi Q8 hybride							
20			H2 Mercedes GLC 350e							
21			H2 Mercedes GLE 500e							
22			H2 Bentley Bentayga Hybrid							
23			H2 BMW X5 eDrive40e plug-in hybride							
24			H2 MINI Countryman Cooper S E ALL4 plug-in hybride							
25			H2 Lexus NX 500h hybride							
26			H2 Lexus RX 450h hybrid drive							
27			H2 Welke hybride auto's met hoge instap worden binnenkort nog geïntroduceerd?							

Go pro for copy

Now you know the difference between your competitors and your own copy. Three more tips. First, get the copy pro on board for writing the content. It is an art, it is craftsmanship. The copy will make or break your content and your SEO ranking.

Second, involve your technical agency for the nerdy stuff in the backend to optimize for SEO. A part of the ranking is a threesome between the message, the copy and visuals, and the coding.

Last, not least. Obviously, there is much more to ranking on SEO than mentioned in this short blog. Think about URL structure, the naming of visuals, alt text, and meta tags.

Deep-dive in the nerdy details, do your homework, and optimize continuously. SEO is not a one-off, nor limited to copy.

Google and Bing

Usually, in the EU, we focus on Google. Yet, don't rule out Bing as a search engine. It is on the rise due to voice search, Bing is the go-to source for Alexa and Cortana if they cannot find the answer

immediately. Great insights on [voice search](#) by The Drum.

Sources

A bit from myself and a bit stolen with pride from Content Marketing Institute <https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2019/11/rank-blog-top-google/>. And others <https://blog.parse.ly/post/1511/the-ultimate-referral-guide-to-your-audience/>, <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/advertising-channels/search/google-website-seo/>.

And some more background on SEO and the options to improve your ranking <https://expresstext.net/blog/search-engine-optimization/>



Minimal viable content pages

Use data to produce expensive content for what works

One of the biggest 'complaints' about content is that it is expensive. Expensive to produce and expensive to publish. Aside your ego gets dented when that all that expensiveness isn't doing what it is supposed to do.

Flipping the perspective, start with cheap minimal viable content. Use data. Then expand and scale up with expensive content for what works. It sounds simple and it is simple if you consider a few steps.

“



Start with cheap minimal viable content. Expand and scale-up the pages that works. Only then start producing that expensive unicorn sparkling content.

Fleur Willemijn van Beinum



”



SEO to start

Your biggest friend is data. First, you start with SEO as the main traffic driver. SEO is for 'free', no media budget needed.

Keywords

Get your main keywords in line with your content structure. Read more in '[Data for content](#)' how to get them.

To start, focus on one keyword or a specific combination of keywords for your pilot project.

Then '[Analyse your competitors content](#)' for better SEO ranking. Steal-copy-paste-and-adapt with pride. Build a bunch of SEO optimized pages around this specific keyword.

Content pages

Create about 5 to 10 different landing pages for that one keyword. Each page with a different setup, different angle, different content. Variation is key. At the same time, you use 'cheap' content. The bare minimum text and visuals to answer the search query by your audience.

Minimal viable content

Meaning, do not produce expensive videos, go overboard in extensive long reads, create whitepapers, set up sales funnels, inspiring infographics, etcetera. Use an excellent copywriter and get great non-stock [visuals](#). And you are good enough to start.

This 'minimal viable content' concept is stolen from the [MVP](#) in agile product development. If it works for products, for sure it can work for content. It is the philosophy and mindset that makes you nimble and fast to iteratively learn what works - before investing all of your budgets.

Data

Analyze weekly or monthly which pages are visited the most. Ergo, which page answers the search query and information needs by your audience. Rank the highest number of visitors, and score on the call to action.

This analysis takes time. After about 3 to 6 months you have a trend. Delete what doesn't work. Expand what works.

Now is the time to create that really kick-ass unicorn magic sparkling content. Spend serious time and money to produce this. Now it is worth the investment because you already know what works and what doesn't.

Rinse wash repeat

Do it again for the same keyword. SEO is a continuous process and does not end. Due to changes in your audiences' needs, changes in SEO, and changes in society, you always need to be monitoring and analyzing to learn and improve.

And do it again for your other keywords.

Expand to paid channels

Once you know what works, expand the distribution. From SEO to other channels as social and SEA. Now is the time to invest your media budget for boosting.

Use your [content eco-system](#) for the overview.

Budget savings

By producing and boosting 'expensive' content for what actually works, you can save yourself a lot of budget and time.



How to measure your goals and progress

Transparent, simple and keeps you accountable with OKR

Defining your goals, measure them and keeping yourself and or the company accountable is easier said than done. A common struggle, with an easy fix. Let me explain the magical OKR concept first before going into the theoretical details. With something almost everyone personally can relate to 'how to lose 15 pounds'.

Defining your goals, measure them and keeping yourself and or the company accountable is easier said than done. A common struggle, with an easy fix. Reading '[Measure What Matters](#)' blew my mind and works like magic. Simple. Transparent. No-nonsense.

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'Find your why, define your goals and the specific actions within your control to get there. Track on a weekly basis. Figure out the obstacles and solve them. Take ownership. What is causing your obstacles and then make the changes.' <https://benbergeron.com/>

Ben Bergeron, one of the top coaches in the sport of CrossFit

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Explained by example

Let me explain the concept first before going into the theoretical details. With something almost everyone personally can relate to 'how to lose 15 pounds'.

All the credits to the podcast '[Chasing Excellence](#), '#116 Turning broad goals into concrete action' by Ben Bergeron. Stolen with pride. I have written down a part of his show, edited to improve readability.

Turn a broad goal into concrete actions

'How can you turn a broad goal into what you can do today to achieve it? How to have a system of accountability that allows you to be effective on a regular basis?'

'One of the solutions to make things happen is accountability.'

First step 'Why'

'You begin with the higher level ideas. the 'why' behind it'. For example: 'I want to get in shape'. Ask yourself 'Why do you want to get in shape?'

'You have to answer that question first. You can't leave it at that. Because what happens is that, if your 'why' doesn't hurt enough, you are not going to do it.'

'You have to figure out, what it is you are trying to solve. How important is that to you? If it is something like 'I need to get in shape because if I don't ...' or 'I need to change my lifestyle, if I don't, the doctor said, I am going to die in six months.' That's a pretty big why. Most people in that situation change what they are doing.'

'You have to start with a really big thing, with a big why. If the why is not big enough you will not be as successful as you could be.'

'You need a big why to withstand some struggle and adversity along the way. And you are going to be excited to be held accountable along the way.'

Second step 'get specific'

'From there you need to get specific. From motivational qualitative specific metrics (mission and vision) into specific objectives to narrow it down to one thing. What fires you up and gets you out of bed. From there, break it down into smart, measurable key results.'

'Have between 3 to 5 goals (and key results).'

'Then you break these goals into quarters, as landmarks. You can hold your attention for about three months. And at the end of these 90 days, you have a quarterly check-in and you ask yourself how you did. Schedule this in your google calendar en hold yourself accountable.'

'This is the magic. This is the accountability everyone else is missing when they make New Year's resolutions goals. They start and they are going for ten days and then the end of the year comes up and 'I don't really remember what they were...'

'Every single quarter you are going to check in to see if you are tracking to hit your one years' and you can have different quarterlies along the way.'

Example: 'How to lose 15 pounds' and your why

'For example, you want to lose 15 pounds this year. The first question I ask is 'why?', Because what you created there is the metric. I don't know if that really gets you geared up or not. So 'why do you want to lose 15 pounds'?'

'I want to lose 15 pounds because I want to look more confident on the beach.'

'Why do you want to look more confident on the beach?'

'Because I am looking for a romantic partner.'

'Now we are getting to something, this is actually a meaningful thing. You want more confidence. It is not about those 15 pounds. What you want to do, is to have more confidence to find a potential partner. Now we are getting to your real 'why'. What we do is to spend some time formulating this, that resonates, that's real. Losing the 15 pounds is one of the things to get to your end goal, finding that romantic partner. Now we have the why behind that.'

We got two things now:

- the big overarching thing that makes it a bit sexier and rememberable: the why is to 'find a romantic partner'
- the specific objective is to 'lose 15 pounds next year'

Objective and key results [OKR]

'From there what we do is to define 'what do we believe we need to do in the next 90 days to get there'. Break it down into quarterly objective(s). And put these completely inside your control. 'You can't just say I need to lose 5 pounds. We need to turn that objective into actionable and controllable things that are going to help you lose those 5 pounds, your key results.'

'The 90-day objective is to 'lose 5 pounds.'

'The corresponding key results are what you need to make sure you do, to lose those 5 pounds in that quarter.'

What are the things you must do that are totally in your control?' Your key results can be, like, 'no desserts' or 'no eating out' and 'working out consistency'. Now, let's make these three super-specific and measurable.

- 'You are going to CrossFit 4 days a week'
- 'you are going to eat out only once a week'
- 'no desserts except for Saturday night'

The secret is the check-in

'Now we have this... Every single week, at the same time, we are going to check-in. With a coach, with a business partner or with yourself. We are going through your key results and track how did we last week. And you are going to hold yourself accountable.'

'It is amazing what checking a box does for people. It is amazing what social pressure can do. This is the secret sauce.'

'You go through the specific results: 'done' or 'not done'. If you have a miss, talk about why you missed that. Now we are doing something, we are solving an issue. Then we are getting to that cause again, zoom out and ask 'why' you had a miss.'

'It was really tough.'

'Why was it tough?'

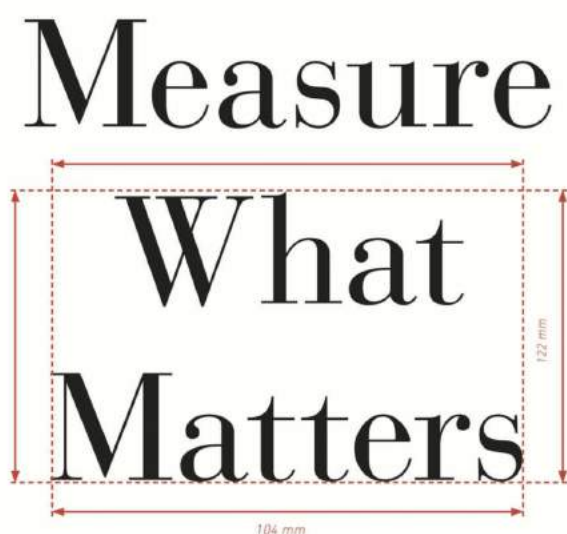
Pull it back a few dominos and we might find things like obstacles we didn't even realize; like 'my schedule is this', or 'we are not grocery shopping enough' or ... we might find so many things. Now we are solving things along the way to clear the obstacles that allow you to achieve your goal. And become accountable on a weekly basis.

If you rinse, wash, repeat that process, 12 times over a quarter, we get to the end of the quarter and we do another check-in. Depending on the result, create the next set of accountabilities for the next quarter. Find you why, define your goals and the specific actions within your control to get there. Track on a weekly basis. Figure it out the obstacles and solve them. Take ownership yourself. What is causing them and then make the changes.

The power is being accountable

The power is in the peer pressure. Being accountable to some else, to do this in person, look them in the eye and say 'I didn't do that'. We, human beings, feel the responsibility towards each other to follow through to our word. It creates a lot of accountability along the way. (Not saying you cannot do it on your own as well.)

This is the secret to get your business to move forward, This is the secret to get your yearly goals and resolutions, to move the needle for you personally. You need to answer on a weekly basis if you are doing these things to achieve quarterly objectives that stack up to your one year.



**OKRs: The Simple Idea
that Drives 10x Growth**

OKR theory explained

A simple goal setting system and to keep track of your progress is the 'Objective and Key Results' [OKR] methodology. It describes your 'what we think is important and why this is important' plus 'how do we get there'. In the meanwhile, it smashes those nasty departmental silos.

In all honesty, the terminology 'OKR' falsely appears to be a buzz word. It is anything but. Continue to read and give it a go, it really works and moves the needle. From business objectives into personal objectives. I tried and tested with a project for the Olympics Tokyo 2020 and writing this book.

This OKR methodology blew my mind. I never heard about it and it feels like the best-kept secret.

Simple and transparent

I like it because of its simplicity, transparency, openness and no-nonsense approach. It gives a tangible measurable direction with accountability and clarity. As all is written down, openly communicated and available for all employees in the company, everyone knows what everyone else is doing and can help each other.

'With the eruption of social media, transparency is the default setting for our daily lives. It's the express lane to operating excellence. Yet at most companies today, goals remain secrets.' This OKR methodology embraces this transparency to enable the entire company to work towards the same goals. Everybody knows the projects the others are working on, therefore it also becomes easier to say 'no' to requests that are not in line with your OKRs. It makes objectives objective, written down in black and white.

This is used by brands like AOL, BMW, Disney, Dropbox, Exxon, Google, Intel, LinkedIn, Oracle, Samsung, Slack, Spotify, and Twitter. If it works for them, for sure it can work for me and you. Described into detail by John Doerr in 'Measure What Matters: How Google, Bono, and the Gates Foundation Rock the World with OKRs'.

Objective 'what'

You set your objective, 'what' is the most important for the next three, six or even twelve months. What will move the company — and you — forward. The attribution to the business value has to be clear, otherwise, there is no need to invest time and effort in the objective.

Ideally, you stick to 3 or a maximum of 5 objectives quarterly to keep your focus. Significant, concrete, action-oriented, and inspirational. And have one owner for the accountability. If your objective doesn't fit in one line, it is not clear enough. If you wrote it down in 5 minutes they probably are not good, think. First, you set the company OKR, then for the team followed by the individual OKRs. By being open and transparent on all objectives from top to down, the entire company can truly work as a team. And help each other.

Key Result 'how'

This is the 'how' you are going to get to the objective. Very detailed and specific and time-bound, aggressive yet realistic. Most of all, measurable and verifiable. Describe the desired outcome, not the activities. Mostly a maximum of five KR's is what you need to reach the objective.

Four benefits

The four direct benefits of the OKR methodology is to bring focus and commit to priorities, to align and connect for teamwork, to track for accountability, and to stretch for amazing.

Time path

- 4–6 weeks before quarter: Brainstorm Annual and Q1 OKRs for Company. Senior leaders start brainstorming top-line company OKRs. If you're setting OKRs for Q1, this is also the time to set your annual plan, which can help guide the direction of the company.
- 2 weeks before quarter: Communicate Company-wide OKRs for Upcoming Year and Q. Finalize company OKRs and communicate them to everyone.
- Start of quarter: Communicate Team Q1 OKRs. Based on the company's OKRs, teams develop their own OKRs and share them at their meetings.
- 1 week after Start of quarter: Share Employee Q1 OKRs. One week after team OKRs are communicated, contributors share their own OKRs. This may require negotiation between contributors and their managers, typically in one-on-one settings.
- Throughout quarter: Employees Track Progress and Check-in. Throughout the quarter, employees measure and share their progress, checking in regularly with their managers.
- Near end of quarter: Employees Reflect and Score Q1 OKRs. Toward the end of the quarter, contributors score their OKRs, perform a self-assessment, and reflect on what they have accomplished.

An example by Intel

Objective: 'Demonstrate the 8080's superior performance as compared to the Motorola 6800'

Key Results:

- Deliver five benchmarks. Develop a demo.
- Develop sales training materials for the field force.
- Call on three customers to prove the material works.'

Another example

Objective 'Win the Indy 500'

Key Results:

- Increase average lap speed by 2 percent
- Test at wind tunnel ten times
- Reduce average pit stop time by one second
- Reduce pit stop errors by 50 percent
- Practice pit stops one hour per day

Read the book

This is just scratching the surface with the essence described in a nutshell. On my personal recommendation, read this book, try it for yourself and never look back. ['Measure What Matters: How Google, Bono, and the Gates Foundation Rock the World with OKRs'](#) by John Doerr.

Think like a publisher, the book

www.thinklikeapublisher.com

During the past 20+ years working as a consultant in digital and content, I have seen time and again the frustrations with digital, content and social. The C-suite knows the importance and realizes that their dependence on Facebook and Google is not sustainable for the future. They realize you can use the 'softer' content to fill the top of the sales funnel. Why is making this change so difficult?

First, they don't know 'how to' change. You don't know what you don't know. Shifting the strategy with a long term focus on content balancing between brand-building and brand performance is absolutely bespoke. There is no golden nugget. Every brand, organization and internal culture is different.

Second, unspoken, fear to change. Breaking with the traditional marketing culture is not easy. It takes balls to really make the change and shift the focus. Next to all this, it takes time before getting the benefits and sales revenue.

Shortcut to the [table of contents](#) of the book

My advice

Sometimes you have to look to the past to find the answer for the future. To excel in the digital content game, you sort of publish your own daily newspaper or weekly magazine. Brands become their own publisher.

Collecting great inspiring insights from the best, for many years. All combined in my book 'Think like a publisher'. To share the knowledge and to raise the content bar. From theory to operational excellence.

Deepend by interviews with the most inspiring peers from top-class agencies and amazing brands. From the big, international and corporate to the start-ups and pro-athletes.

Digital publishing



Finding a publisher is damn difficult. Honestly, getting denied time over time again isn't that bad, feedback improved my writing and made the book to what it is today. Yet, what is content if it doesn't reach the audience. If the knowledge stays on my computer, nobody benefits. Hence, flipping the perspective and practicing what I preach, I decided to publish by myself, online, piece by piece.

Thinklikeapublisher.com

Go to my website to read more blogs, or follow me on LinkedIn or Twitter for the newest and update.

Me-marketing

If you want to hit the ground running with content strategy or do data research, don't hesitate to nudge me for help. With over 20 years of experience and helping great inspiring international clients, happy to share my knowledge and experiences.

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