Comparing the ROI of Content Marketing and Paid Advertising
1. Distributing Content Through Content Marketing vs. Paid Channels

- Before you can distribute content through any channel, whether through free or paid channels, the content needs to be optimized for the right audience.

- The basic keywords that you’re targeting must be prominent in the content – not in a way that raises Google’s red flag, but in a natural way that proves your content is relevant.

- Before you can get started distributing content across different channels, you first need to understand what each practice entails.

- Content marketing primarily involves creating high quality content and giving it away in order to connect with and nurture a loyal audience that will trust you and buy your product.

- You may have invested money in every aspect of content creation (research, data mining, split tests, graphics, and writing), but now you want to promote it using free methods.

- In addition to social media networks, the free methods for distributing content are:

  i). **In-house blogging:** Some content marketers have grown their blog readership to thousands, if not millions, over the years.

  ii). **Guest blogging:** This is a powerful strategy for distributing your content, because it helps you reach entirely new audiences who’ll be interested in what you do.

  iii). **Earned media:** This refers to free publicity earned through promotion of content, other than advertising.

  iv). **Email list:** Our number #1 free distribution method is my email list. Although we still pay for autoresponder monthly renewals, the value of 1 subscriber is $39.40 – so it’s entirely worth it.

  v). **Blog commenting:** You can also promote your content by writing helpful comments on industry blogs.

  vi). **Community participation:** Community users are the highest engaged set of web users. You’ll have access to thousands of active users, and your content will receive the maximum attention it deserves.

Some of the most effective paid advertising methods that you can use to promote your content are:

i). **Promoted tweets:** Paid or promoted tweets is the way to go if you want to reach more followers on Twitter.

ii). **Facebook Ads:** I’ve noticed that when I use Facebook ad campaigns to send targeted traffic to a high-quality content page on my site, the engagement level is usually high.

iii). **Ad Networks:** You can place targeted ads to distribute your content on ad networks. You can reach a targeted audience, bring them back to your web page, and turn them into
email subscribers. There are lots of ad networks that you can leverage to distribute your content. However, most people rely on BuySellAds

- One of the hottest paid advertising methods right now is promoted pins. Through this method, you can distribute your visual content (infographics, memes, images, etc.) through Pinterest ads.

2. Identifying Marketing Objectives and Common Challenges

- In order to choose your distribution channel – i.e., paid versus free – you need to understand the objectives behind each. That in turn shows you the unique challenges of each channel and helps you craft solid strategies to deal with those challenges.

- Content marketing is actually a tool or practice that enables you to connect the right audience with your valuable content. Content marketing can help you accomplish several goals:

  i). **Brand awareness**: To build brand awareness, you need an organic model that’s authentic – and it’s through content marketing and inbound marketing that you can naturally connect with people on their own terms.

  ii). **Lead conversion**: It’s hard to get a potential customer to give you their personal information without offering something of value in exchange. When people sign up for a demo, register for an event, or gain access to your resource page, you’ve established a connection built on trust.

  iii). **Lead nurturing**: Preparing your leads to buy your product is critical to your success.

  iv). **Customer service**: How well are you using content to create a great customer experience? It’s really hard to attend to your customers from paid advertising, so it’s better suited to being a content marketing objective.

3. Testing Different Paid Channels to See What Converts Better

- Paid channel advertising is a billion-dollar industry. Before you buy a slice of that pie, test your ad campaigns across different channels.

- First and foremost, B2B and B2C companies measure campaign success in slightly different ways. B2C companies often focus on the quick sale, whereas B2B companies are more concerned about collecting user insights that’ll help them make smarter decisions and improve conversions.

- B2C marketers are obsessed with conversions. They want to see how many people clicked their Facebook ads and how many opted in to their email lists.

- If you’re looking to improve your paid ad search campaigns, then learn how to optimize your CTR and lower CPA (cost per acquisition). And if you want to see the paid advertising channel that performs better, this guide will come in handy: Paid Search Ad Testing: Manage to ROI or CTR?
We haven’t yet found a tool to split-test Google Ads and Facebook Ads together, and get accurate results. They both require different platform and ad sets. But you can evaluate them in practice, based on your investment in each. When testing ad sets, keep these notes in mind:

**TESTING NOTES**

- Depending on the size of the adgroup, always test 2-4 ads against each other.
- Try to use a period at the end of description line 1. This will give you an extended headline in positions 1-3.
- Use either of the ad rotation settings "rotate evenly" or "rotate indefinitely" to best split test your ads.
- Using parameters in Bing Ads will give you greater control over your ads.
- The biggest factor in quality score is CTR, so test away!
- Use statistical significance when determining if an ad has enough data to be the winner.
- If you use keywords in your ad they will be bolded.
- Adwords Editor makes creating building and managing ads in bulk easy.

### 4. Designing High-Converting Landing Pages

Here’s a quick overview of what a landing page does for your marketing strategy overall:

- Landing pages are designed as a springboard for users to step further into your site. They do this by being relevant and focused on a single point — such as the user’s search inquiry. They are most commonly associated with pay-per-click pages such as Google Adwords but are certainly not limited to that platform.
- Using landing pages is all about maximizing your return on investment for each customer. The more specific, simple and streamlined a page is, the more likely the user will take the desired action.
- Ideally, landing pages should be used to segment your offers, your users, as destination pages for your pay per click ads, and/or as a way to create anticipation about a product event (and encourage users to sign up as the event comes closer).
- There are certain things that landing pages are not built to do —mainly act as long-form sales letter or simple name-squeeze pages. Your landing page is essentially the “welcome mat” that draws visitors into the rest of your site. Provided that you have a captivating offer that resonates well with them, you’re digitally encouraging them to walk through the front door.
- Some of the best converting landing pages embody the philosophy of "less is more". It’s common to remove superfluous graphics, navigation, testimonials and even customer support options to help the user focus on a single action you want them to take.
• Search engine optimization isn’t meant to replace landing pages or vice versa. SEO adds to landing pages, and when done right, landing pages can in turn increase relevancy in the eyes of the search engine and potentially increase your rankings.

• Landing page design and practices change frequently. The new trend right now is to use an “article lander.”

• According to Adbeat, an “article lander” is a presell page that looks like a news article, press release, blog article, or scientific research study. They can be spread over multiple pages or on a single page.

• One important thing to note is that this article lander doesn’t scream “advertisement.” And that’s exactly what you have to avoid when creating landing pages.

• Provide immense value. No matter what channel your traffic will come from, make sure that you’re offering value first, before asking for anything.

• Whether you’re going to be using content marketing or paid advertising to drive traffic to your landing page, the fundamental building blocks are the same. Here are some of the actionable steps that will increase your conversions:
  i). Optimize for the right keywords.
  ii). Message match.
  iii). Have a compelling USP (unique selling proposition).
  iv). Develop an effective call-to-action.

5. The ROI for Content Marketing vs. Paid Advertising

• 41% of marketers confirm that content marketing has a significant ROI. In fact, content marketing can generate a staggering ROI if you do it the right way.

• Companies that have been consistent at content marketing have generated more leads and significantly improved organic traffic.

• For example, City Index, a financial services company, launched a trading academy to give 8 newbie traders a chance to win £100,000. The company used content marketing strategies to persuade people who had never even considered opening an account to participate in the contest. Just look at the results they generated:
  ● 20 million impressions generated by the #TradingAcademy Twitter feed
  ● 1 million views across all content channels
  ● Over 66,700 clicks generated by the #TradingAcademy Twitter feed
  ● Generated over 1440% increase in social referral visits
  ● 81% increase in unique site visitors
  ● 60% increase in PPC acquisition for brand terms

Note: With both content marketing and paid advertising, you can generate traffic, acquire leads, and turn them into customers – but the timeframe will differ.
Paid advertising could start generating leads within 30 minutes or less, while content marketing will take from 3 days to 30 days to get traction.