

Content Couching

How about some ideas for ways to couch your content? Here's 52 ideas (that's one for every week for a year) to give you some ideas when your brain locks up in front of the blank screen.

1. Top 5 or Top 10 List - For example, "Top 5 Best ____" or "Top 10 Favorite ____" or "3 Things You May Not Know About ____." These are just examples, but rank things that are relevant to the work that you do, give your two cents about it. People tend to like lists with a defined length. We're all pressed for time, and offering people a list communicates, up front, the amount of time needed to get through the post or email.
2. 5 Ways To... - Similar to the last concept, but with a slight twist. You don't have to do 5, this is just an example. You could create content about "3 Ways to a Better ____" or "7 Myths About ____." Again, these are examples, but the format is one that can be wrapped around many topics.
3. Check Your Email Inbox and Outbox - You may already find that you've been answering or responding to emails that could easily be adapted to a blog post or an email blast for a larger audience. Did a client (or potential client) ask you a question that you answered in an email? If you've responded, you've already written the majority of your content. Adapt your answer and share it with your audience – they may have had the same thoughts/questions.
4. Share Links - As you read something interesting (and relevant) online, put a link to it on your blog or in an email blast and include a paragraph or two that contributes your own two cents. This type of content is great if you don't have a lot of time to think/write but want to share something.
5. Create a Quick Video Instead of Typing It - Sharing video can really bring the reader into the experience with you. Share video of the things that you do, the people that like you, important announcements, something entertaining you've created. Let readers invest in the experience with you.
6. Interview Somebody - Interview somebody interesting - perhaps they're a part of your company, perhaps a client, perhaps somebody with no natural affiliation to your company. Record it, or write about it (or both). But like any of your content, make sure that it would be something valuable to your audience.
7. Share Lessons Learned -Recap and review the things you've learned at the last event, seminar, workshop, webinar that you or your team attended.
8. Show and Tell - Highlight the latest work your company has created. Discuss any company news or awards. Make sure it's interesting to your audience.
9. Comment on Current Events - What's going on in the world/news? What's going on in your industry? Anything relevant to you? Talk about it. Share your opinion on it. Give your perspective on it.
10. Share Your Favorites - Share your favorite things: books, movies, locations, websites, food, etc. But keep in mind the magic rule: It must be valuable and relevant to your readers. For example, if you're going to share that The Princess Bride is one of your favorite movies, tie it back to your brand - talk about the examples of dedication and perseverance. This can be a fun post, but if there's not some tie back to your brand, it won't have as much value in the long run.

11. Take a Poll - Get people's opinion on a topic. Engage them. Polls should be much shorter than a survey.
12. Ask a Question - Get your customer's opinion. See what they think and engage in dialogue. It doesn't have to be a review of your company or product. It can be as simple as "What are your favorite summer activities?" or "What are the best ways to save money during the holiday season?" You never know, you may learn something more about your audience that you can use to craft messaging that really resonates with them.
13. Guest Author - Invite somebody interesting (and relevant to the topics/writing on your blog) to be a guest author on your blog. This also tends to encourage that guest author to share the post with their network, further spreading the content.
14. Charity Work - Do you work with charitable organizations? Do you donate time or services? Share those charitable organizations with your readers. This isn't an opportunity to brag endlessly about your altruism. Use this as an opportunity to brag about the charitable organization. Don't worry, you'll still look good.
15. Employee Spotlight - Write about what makes them special. Be sure to include content that ultimately reinforces your brand.
16. History Lesson - Avoid the boring details, but tell an engaging and interesting story from your company's history. Make sure to relate it back to the brand strengths that you cherish today.
17. Contests - Ask your readers to compete. Have them create something, share ideas, share stories, be the first to complete something. Make it relevant to your brand, make it fun and/or interesting, and think through the logistics. Offer an incentive, be it big or small, to the winner(s) – the best incentives are free products or services from your company. Word to the wise: if you're running a contest on Facebook, be sure to follow their rules (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site..
18. Address Comments - Look through blog (or social network) comments and questions and address one. You may even choose to highlight a few and give responses/insights/clarifications.
19. Predict the Future - You don't have to be incredibly bold in your predictions, but show some expertise in your industry and tell us what you think is coming around the bend. If you're right, you look brilliant!
20. Step by Step How To - Give a short how-to lesson. Incorporate photos or videos.
21. Music Video - If you're so bold, create a music video featuring your employees. It can be a lip sync to an existing song, or you can create all new lyrics. Something like this take a bit more time to plan and produce, so start early.
22. Share a Relevant Comic Strip - Or create a new one yourself. Careful, though, humor can be tricky. Know your audience.
23. List Common Mistakes - For example, if you sell cars, post a list of common mistakes that people make when car shopping or negotiating for a deal. There's great value in people feeling like an insider.

24. Relate Lessons to Current Events or Celebrities - Choose wisely and know your audience. The idea here would be not to take a controversial position on anything but rather keep your information timely or relatable. For example: "What the Presidential Election can teach us about _____" or "10 _____ Lessons Learned from Kim Kardashian"
25. Issue a Challenge - Challenge your audience to do something, create something, etc. And share the response (bonus content!).
26. Share Your eBook or White Paper - When you've spent the time to create something special, share it with your network. If it's something that needs to be purchased, give your network a free sneak peek into the content.
27. Share Somebody Else's eBook/Paper - Don't have an eBook or White Paper to share? That's OK. Share one that you really like. Provide your two cents on it and share a link to where people can find it if they're interested.
28. Share Your Presentation - Recently make a speech or give a presentation? Share the highlights, the main points, or even the whole presentation (Slideshare.net is a great place to house those slides for sharing).
29. Lessons from the Classics - Write about what you learned from a classic quote, poem, book, parable, etc. Example: "Why cooking is like The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost."
30. Ask for Help - This one is scary to some people because they're worried asking for help will make them appear inept. But, keep in mind that you're using content as a means to create a relationship that advertising and sales cannot. In a group, network or relationship, we want to feel like we provide value. Therefore, look for opportunities to ask your network to give their opinion or help you make a decision or provide information that you can use.
31. Take a Survey- And share the results as part of your content. Would your audience be interested to know what the survey reveals as customer's favorite product or service?
32. Testimonials - When somebody says something really nice about you or one of your employees, share that with your network. There's a balance in not coming across as braggarts, so choose carefully.
33. FAQ- Share some answers to questions you get frequently. People may have those same questions, and your answers may lead them to the next step in their decision making process.
34. Photos - Share photos from an event, from around the office, from the warehouse. Something interesting is happening somewhere - get a picture of it and share.
35. Holidays - Post something relevant to the current holiday or season. Looking for the perfect holiday to couch your content? There are hundreds of silly holidays that might fit just perfectly. Ever heard of National Chocolate Day, or perhaps National Fresh Breath Day? See if there are some wacky holidays (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. that might fit within your content strategy.
36. Share a Joke or Riddle - Again, be careful with humor and know your audience.

37. Share Work in Progress - Show people what you're working on. Get them excited. You can share a picture that shows just enough to be intriguing without giving away the big reveal. Again, people will feel like an insider which bonds them to your brand even more.
38. Share Stats - Whether they're statistics you obtained through primary or secondary or primary research, if you believe your audience would find them interesting, then share! For example, did you know that 75% of people don't know that they can get home insurance from their auto insurance carrier?
39. Most Popular Products or Services - Let others know what your most popular products or services are. Chances are, even if they're the most popular, some don't even know about them. Position this information in a way that is engaging, but doesn't come across as being too "salesy."
40. Audio or Video Podcast - Create your content with an audio or video recording.
41. Give Something Away - Don't ask for much in return (perhaps contact information). The giveaway can be modest or really enticing.
42. Case Study - Also known as a Before-and-After. Feature a product or service and show pictures or video if applicable.
43. Host a Webinar - This is simply a short presentation that allows your audience to tune in regardless of geographic location. What's more, you can record the webinar and post it later (bonus content!).
44. Ask for Feedback - Maybe share your marketing, your brochure, your new site, your new tagline. "What do you think?"
45. Ask Your Audience What They Want - Bold, but if you really want to know what people want, you can simply ask them. Listen closely and respond with finding a way to give people what they want. They'll stay more engaged if you provide them what they're looking for.
46. Break Up Your Posts - If you have a piece of content you've spent some time developing, break it up into two or three parts. This will extend the volume of content you're posting, as well as keep people wanting more and looking forward to the next post.
47. Anecdotes - It's fun to simply share stories and anecdotes. Have something interesting to tell that could relate back to a product, service, or brand pillar? Share it. For example, years ago GovGab (a federal government blog) shared a story. The author recounted a time he was in the grocery store. From the other aisle, he could hear a woman shouting his name: "Bobby! Bobby! Come here!" He went to investigate only to find the woman was calling to her child. "How many other people have the same name as I do?" the author thought to himself. The article then linked to a federal resource in which you could find information about your name, and even information about how to change your name. They found a brilliant way to make what would be otherwise very dull content (a page about naming services) into an engaging story. Find your opportunity to do the same.
48. Event Round-up - List of interesting, relevant or important upcoming events and a sentence or two about how to register/get involved.

49. Crown Somebody - Crown somebody in your community, industry or organization as the king/queen of something. You don't have to know them. They could even be a celebrity. Explain why they deserve the honor. For example, if you're a party planning company, you could crown Bill Clinton the King of Balloons (after the joy he showed at the balloon drop at the DNC). One benefit to this approach is that this "honor" can sometimes be enough to gain interest from third parties that will share your content, which ultimately leads people to your brand.
50. Say Thank You - Pretty simple, right? Say thank you to somebody in the community, to your customers, to your employees even. It always feels good, and provides you with genuine content. Relate whatever you're thanking somebody for back to your brand.
51. Wax Philosophic - Talk about your philosophy when it comes to customer service, product development, etc.
52. Greatest Hits - If you're drawing a blank and short on time, you can provide a list of links to your most popular content (in the past month, 6 months, year, all-time). Use your analytics or the number of responses to judge which are the most popular.