

## The Content Marketing Handbook Summary Notes

For questions please email: [info@priceconomics.com](mailto:info@priceconomics.com)

### Chapter I: Getting Started

1. Don't "play-act" and emulate what you think content marketers are supposed to do.
2. Your content needs to be great, because it's competing with the best media on the Internet.
3. Your focus should be to create a process that produces a favorable outcome when people at your company expend effort at making content.
4. Find the overlapping area between great content and content that helps your company.
5. Information is the single best thing to write about.
6. Information = data, industry, people.
7. This Handbook is about the process of creating and spreading great content.

### Chapter II: Information Marketing

1. Public relations (PR) is a negotiation between you and a journalist. You are asking for his or her time; what are you offering?
2. Help journalists do their job, which is to create interesting articles that reach many people.
3. Providing information that is unique, authentic, and interesting is currency.
4. Information promotes your company and helps journalists write great things.
5. OKCupid made company data interesting in the modern era and proved that it can really spread.
6. Time and time again, data-driven reports by companies have spread like wildfire.
7. To do this job, you have to believe that every company has interesting information.
8. Beyond data, strive to understand your industry and market. This information is valuable and interesting to some people.
9. Everyone has an interesting story to tell.
10. Everything can be interesting -- even office supplies.

### Chapter III: The World Is Flat (The Level Playing Field)

1. Increasingly, it does not matter where good content is published. Content can be successful anywhere, whether it's on *The New York Times'* website, Medium, or your company's blog.
2. Every outlet, even *The New York Times*, gets its traffic from third party platforms like Reddit, Twitter, and Facebook that control most of the audience.
3. Because of these platforms, any site can make an article go viral, break news, or be an instant authority if it knows what it is doing.

4. Not only do you have to create excellent content, but you need to think about *where* your content will spread.
5. Content channels (journalists, social news sites, etc.) are “supernodes” for reaching larger audiences.
6. Find the “supernode” site where your content fits in best and genuinely participate in the community to find out what’s popular.
7. As you write content, think about which channels it will be popular on. If you can’t think of one, it probably won’t be popular.
8. These supernode sites give your content “The Bump” -- a burst of traffic that allows your content to reach its intended audience.
9. Eventually, if you keep at it, this outbound process of spreading content will become easier and people will share it on their own. Then it becomes an inbound process.
10. Even if you write something great, there is a fine line between success and failure. You have to wage a campaign and exert effort to make something spread.

#### **Chapter IV: Social Networks**

1. Facebook sends a lot of traffic, but typically only after your content has gotten “The Bump” from a supernode.
2. After “The Bump,” most of your traffic will come from Facebook. When you hit a homerun, Facebook really piles on the traffic.
3. Facebook will broadcast anything if a sufficient number of people share it, which is great for small blogs that traditional broadcasters ignore. Ask yourself, “Why do people share?”
4. People share as a form of self-expression. Ask yourself, “What does the act of sharing this content say about me?”
5. Think about how someone will feel when they share your content. Is it a feeling they want? Is it a feeling you want your brand associated with?
6. Is your content digestible? Is it easily condensed into a Tweet or a Facebook status?
7. People don’t share something just because it’s good. They need something specific to say about it.
8. You should organize your data in a way that gives people something to say about it.
9. Facebook = Traffic. Twitter = Where journalists hang out.
10. Clear writing is good writing and the most shareable writing. So write clearly.

#### **Chapter V: The Writer’s Playbook**

1. Your audience is distracted. They are supposed to be working; instead, they are reading content on the internet.
2. Your introduction is a pitch to convince the reader to spend his or her time on your article. It has to be great.
3. Your conclusion is where you tell the reader what the takeaway is. What should he or she share?

4. The article should hold together based solely off its topic sentences.
5. Being right is important. If you write a popular essay, thousands of people will try to prove you wrong. In a similar vein, phrasing that can be interpreted to make you look bad will be interpreted to make you look bad.
6. Focus on a narrowly-scoped argument and just try to prove one thing. That's how you make sure you're right.
7. All first drafts are terrible. Have someone edit your work aggressively and scrutinize every fact and argument in it.
8. Titles matter. They are what show up on social news sites and social networks.
9. People who share your article are also sharing your title. Will the title make them look good?
10. Find a common voice and perspective for your company's written content. What's your equivalent of "Priceonomics is my nerdy friend who tells me what's up?"

## **Chapter VI: Writing Hacks**

1. Commit to writing one great piece of content based on your company's data, then do everything possible to make it successful.
2. If you taste success at writing content, you'll want more success.
3. Target 40 hours per blog post in the beginning.
4. Once you get the hang of making great content, you'll need to publish more frequently and will often struggle to come up with good ideas.
5. The three kinds of information we suggest writing about are data, industries, and people.
6. Present data in the way that tells a story and makes it spread.
7. Write about industry knowledge your company has (or can research) that is valuable to other people.
8. Everyone is the hero of his or her own world. When you write about people (entrepreneurs, inventors, CEOs, customers, etc.), follow the Hero Cycle.

## **Chapter VII: Hiring**

1. How hard do the people who run your company's blog work to make great content?
2. You need to create a system in which talented people can work hard and be rewarded by having their work matter and reach the intended audience.
3. When screening applications, ask for a resume, writing sample, and list of ideas. The person with the best list of ideas will be the best candidate.
4. If you like a candidate, pay them to do a freelance piece for you. If you are impressed by what she writes and you enjoy working with her, hire her.
5. It takes two months of effort for a writer to hit his stride. Nothing works perfectly the first time, so be patient.

## **Chapter VIII: Why Content Matters**

1. Great content pays off financially.
2. Content that advertises your business has to be better than content made by professional media companies.
3. If your content has a mix of information that is great but not promotional for your business, that will help build your audience over time.
4. Start by making sure you can produce great information that both spreads *and* promotes your business in some way. If you can pull that off, then slowly add non-promotional content to the mix. This is an advanced maneuver.
5. Don't write about topics you are obviously biased about; the internet will crucify you.
6. You should take pride in your content and consider it to be in competition with that of professional media companies.
7. Content is free stuff that is bundled with something that costs money. Media companies bundle it with icky ads; you should bundle it with a product you believe in.
8. Write about information. Make it great. Have a plan for making it spread.

Next page: The One Page Checklist

## One Page Checklist

### Checklist before writing:

1. Am I writing about data that is proprietary to my company? If not, am I discussing an industry or a person that I have information about because of my company's knowledge?
2. Who are 50 journalists I can contact about this piece?
3. What will my pitch to journalists say?
4. What channel ("supernode") will this piece spread on? A subreddit? Hacker News? Digg? A particular forum?
5. What would someone say about it in Tweet form? Why would someone share it, and what specifically would they say?

### Checklist during writing:

1. Does the introduction/hook compel the reader to read the rest of the article?
2. Does the conclusion tell the reader the one takeaway they should get from the article and prime him or her to share it?
3. Can you read just the topic sentences of the body of the article and still understand it?
4. Could any phrases or wording possibly be misinterpreted to make you look bad, rude, arrogant, idiotic, and/or offensive? If there is a remote possibility of this, change it.
5. Do you make any statements without proving them, or are there any gaps in your logic? Fix them.
6. Is everything 100% correct and verifiable? Would you stake your job on it?
7. Is the information you produced something that journalists will find valuable and people will find shareable? Then you have a good piece of content.

### Checklist after writing:

1. Email the 50 journalists you think would be interested in your post.
2. Submit it to the forum where you think it might be popular (if appropriate, and if you are member of that community).
3. Keep trying until the article starts spreading. All it takes is one "Yes" from a journalist, or one social news site to feature your work.
4. You have to wage a *campaign* in the military sense of the word -- a series of operations intended to achieve a particular outcome. If you do not put in this effort after publishing, nothing will happen.

Next Page: How Priceonomics can help you

## Want Priceonomics to Help you with Content Marketing?

We are obsessed with making great content and spreading information. Your blog and content should be generating tons of traffic, press, and leads for you. There is no reason not to.

### **Option 1: We'll help you come up with good ideas and then edit them for you so they're good**

We help you come up with 4 good ideas per month and provide editorial assistance on making them great and spreadable. We'll make sure you start with good ideas, your content is well made, and designed to spread. This is sort of like having an editor at Priceonomics as a part-time member of your team. Three month minimum commitment and pricing starts at \$2K per month.

### **Option 2: We'll hit a homerun content marketing campaign for you**

We create incredible content for you based on your company's data and information, at a less expensive price than if you produced it yourself. The content lives on your company's site and you pay for performance.

\$2K per campaign. This is basically at cost.

Additional \$3K "success fee" if certain metrics are hit (5 PR mentions of piece or 5000 views or 100 Facebook likes). We only turn a profit on helping you create great content if you succeed.

Interested? email [info@priceonomics.com](mailto:info@priceonomics.com)

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**Note:** To participate in either of these programs you must use our [Priceonomics Content Tracker](#) software to ensure this is a rigorous process. The software includes:

- Track Inbound link, visits, social sharing for your content
- Track the performance of your past content to set a baseline and goals
- Option to integration with Slack to notify you when content hits milestones