

HOW MERGING FREELANCERS & IN-HOUSE WRITERS CAN IMPROVE YOUR CONTENT STRATEGY

Freelance Writers Unite:



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Content marketing is no longer a buzzword for businesses and marketers. It's become a necessity to any marketing strategy. Since consumers are now sourcing answers to their questions from search engines and social media, brands must show original content in these locations. This content must be valuable, engaging — and most importantly — written by writers who have their fingers on the pulse of a company's respective industry.

As more marketers continue to turn to content marketing, the transition begs the question: Should I hire in-house writers or build a team of freelance writers? While both call for different strategies, it doesn't have to be one or the other. External freelance writers are a great addition to any content marketing strategy, even to the businesses that have an in-house writing team.

In fact, recent studies show that more companies are mixing the two together. Nearly half of the companies questioned in Content Marketing Institute's 2014 benchmark surveys are keeping their in-house content creation efforts while simultaneously outsourcing various initiatives. Fifty-one percent of marketers hire only in-house writers, while 47 percent are including both in-house and external freelance writers, according to the CMI 2014 [B2C Benchmark Report](#). For B2B companies, 43 percent of marketers hire only in-house writers, while 56 percent leverage both internal and external freelance help, according to [a separate report by CMI](#).

In this eBook, we'll discuss specific ways in which external freelance writers can improve a content marketing strategy that already functions with an in-house writing team. Additionally, we'll explain which content is best to outsource and which content is best to keep in-house when the two teams are merged together. Finally, we'll provide solutions to common fears marketers may have about a potential integration, in addition to real life examples from influential marketers.

WHY WOULD I NEED FREELANCE WRITERS IF I HAVE AN IN-HOUSE WRITING TEAM?

A content strategy should have one person designated to oversee each part of the content process. There should be a manager, writers, editors and someone in charge of promoting the content. Of course, this depends on your company's budget, content needs, publishing frequency and the overall demands of your marketing strategy. No matter the size of your content team though, freelance writers can make your strategy even stronger.



SCALE CONTENT VOLUME & INITIATIVES

Outsourcing content allows marketers to reach a wider and more diverse group of writers to contribute to content projects that are demanding and have high-volume needs. For example, when a content strategy calls for hundreds or even thousands of product descriptions, external freelance writers are the best fit for the job — not your in-house writing team. This is because your in-house team's time is best spent focusing on creating content to answer you customers' questions, writing thought leadership pieces, creating sales collateral and focusing on strategy and growth.



GENERATE ORIGINAL & FRESH IDEAS

If your content strategy requires large volumes of content, it's smart to look for story ideas from the outside to gain a new and fresh perspective. Chances are your content team is living and breathing your product and industry each day, making them more involved than others. While this is a great place for in-house writers to be, let them follow their curiosity and go after more intricate ideas rather than writing about information that might seem repetitive and dull. In-house writers will deliver better results when they're challenged.



ELIMINATE TIME SPENT MANAGING

If your content strategy requires a lot of content and writers, the managing aspect might consume most of a content manager's time when he or she should be focusing on strategy. In-house writers are a lot to manage, but by including external ones to write straightforward and evergreen articles, your in-house writing team can spend more time focusing on high-level goals with their designated content manager. This is especially helpful when your in-house writing team is small.



FOCUS ON WHAT WORKS, REFINE WHAT DOESN'T

If you're not reaching your content goals, it's time to reevaluate whether a strategy is working or not. This evaluation should be done by your in-house writing team. It's easier for them to brainstorm new ideas when they're relieved of having to focus on creating large volumes of content.

WHAT CONTENT SHOULD BE OUTSOURCED TO FREELANCE WRITERS?

A successful content strategy requires a balance between various types of content. Now that you have an understanding of how external freelance writers can improve your content marketing strategy when integrated with an in-house writing team, let's discuss the best content to outsource. Looking at the Pyramid of Written Content below, you can see that evergreen and long-form content are easiest to assign to freelance writers.

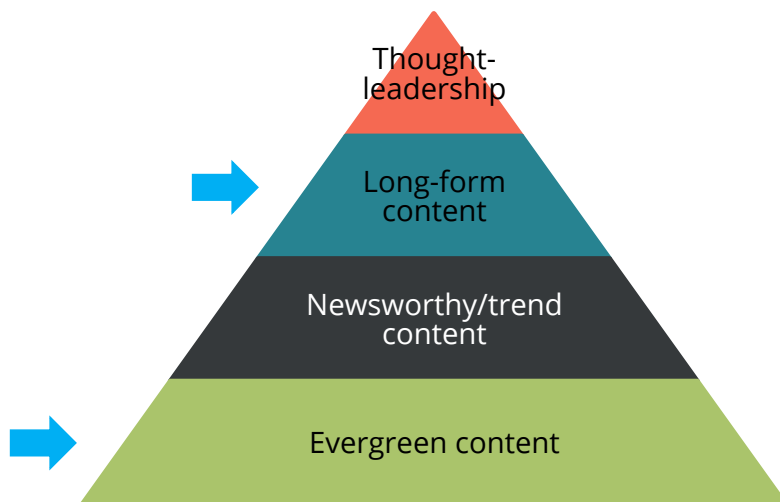
WHY EVERGREEN CONTENT?

Evergreen articles are the glue that hold your strategy together. This is the information that readers are engaging with on a regular basis because it's easy to consume and it's answering the necessary questions. Evergreen content can be presented through how-to articles, listicles, blog posts, question-and-answer formats, and more. This content should be planned weeks in advance because it's typically unrelated to current events. For this very reason, evergreen content is the easiest to outsource to external freelance writers.

WHY LONG-FORM CONTENT?

Long-form articles — such as expert interviews, case studies and white papers — take more time to create, but typically have a higher return on your investment. While in-house writers should conduct the research if it requires them to do so (for example, gathering internal data or statistics), the writing part can easily be outsourced to external writers along with a majority of the research.

What Type of Content Is Easiest To Scale?



4 MYTHS ABOUT HIRING FREELANCE WRITERS

Marketers tend to have the same fears about including freelance writers in their content strategy. Fortunately, there are a few ways to put them at ease. Below we have listed the four most common fears about including external freelance writers, along with practical solutions.

1

FREELANCE WRITERS DON'T KNOW MY COMPANY'S VOICE.

You might think it's difficult for your brand's tone and voice to be emulated by a freelance writer. It's an understandable concern since maintaining a consistent style of communication is essential to good marketing; brands also spend a lot of time developing a unique and recognizable voice. However, many writing services and professionals are well-equipped for the task of writing in distinct voices.

Solution: Be specific when outsourcing to external freelance writers. If you have a brand voice and/or style guide, make sure to give it to the writers before they start a project. It's also best to provide examples of previous work that display your brand's voice.

2

OUR COMPETITORS ARE PROBABLY USING THE SAME SERVICE.

Marketers tend to fear that they're employing writers who are also working for their competitors. While there's no way to know if this is true or not, there are a few ways you can make sure freelance writers keep your business relationship anonymous.

Solution: When outsourcing work to freelance writers, add a non-compete clause in the contract. When using a service, like Scripted, make sure that nondisclosure agreements are part of their writer agreements. If that's not an option, ask the writer to sign one.

3

FREELANCE WRITERS ARE UNRELIABLE.

External freelance writers are often working on other assignments which can make them more susceptible to miss deadlines. However, if you set expectations in advance this can be easily avoided.

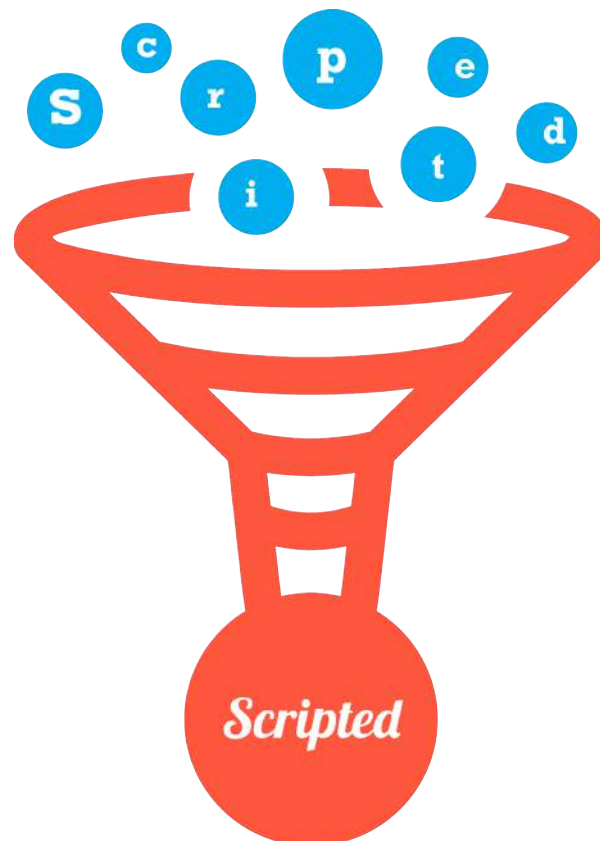
Solution: When outsourcing your content to external freelance writers, be up front about your own deadlines. Additionally, communicate specific instances in which missing a deadline is acceptable and unacceptable. At Scripted, we guarantee our writers will adhere by your deadlines.

4

BUT I NEED A SPECIALIST IN MY INDUSTRY.

Finding a true expert in your industry — who is also a superb writer — can be maddeningly difficult. It's important for the writer to have knowledge in your field so he or she can speak intelligently to your audience through content. Fortunately, there are services like Scripted that have specialist freelance writers.

Solution: Reach out to professional writing services that have special designations for those with knowledge in specific fields. Ask for writing clips and samples that reflect the writer's knowledge in your industry.



BEST PRACTICES FOR MANAGING EXTERNAL FREELANCE WRITERS

Managing external freelance writers can be challenging when you're already overseeing an in-house team. Keep the following best practices in mind when taking on the task of managing both:

1

DIVIDE TOP PRIORITIES

When a marketer has two teams (one in-house and one external) to manage, it's important for each group to focus on the right priorities. The in-house writing team should focus on strategy and thought leadership pieces, while the external writing team focuses on creating evergreen and long-form content.

2

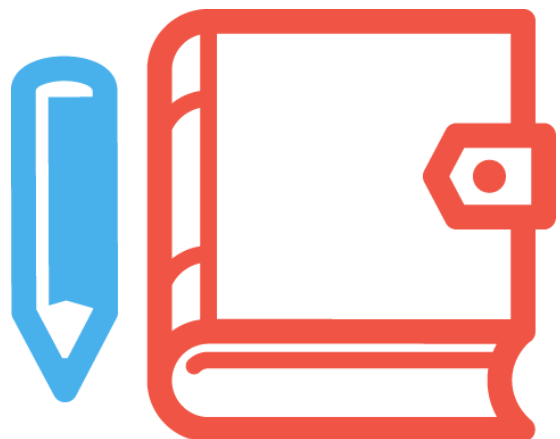
PLAN AHEAD

Planning in advance is key to executing a successful content strategy which includes both teams. At Scripted, we plan our editorial calendar one month in advance. Advanced planning eases stress about being without content to publish each day. It's also a good idea to set deadlines before your own deadline. This way you have flexibility in case a writer needs a deadline to be extended.

3

COMMUNICATE

Finally, there can never be too much communication. Always be in touch with your in-house and external writing teams — additionally, make sure the lines of communication between both teams are open.



MARKETERS WHO OUTSOURCE

Many successful content marketers have turned to outsourcing their content, even when they have an in-house writing team. See what three of them have to say about mixing the two together:



"The content marketing team sits on our Growth team (user acquisition and monetization). There's one full-time person who manages our team of freelance writers. At Udemey, we have a team called the content team but those guys are responsible for getting more online courses — different from the content marketing team — which is responsible for lead gen for students to take online courses."

- Archie Abrams, Udemey



"We have an incredible marketing team. Guy Kawasaki recently joined Canva as our chief evangelist. His social media architect Peg Fitzpatrick also joined us as Canva's head of social strategy. We also have a number of regular writers who contribute to the blog."

- Zach Kitschke, Canva



"We [the content team] have me, an Executive Editor, two Senior Editors, an Associate Editor, and two Editorial Assistants. But then, outside of that, we have the 50-100 freelance writers. When I say 100, that might be somebody who comes up and says, 'You know what? I have one personal essay to write about personal finance,' and then they'll go away. At the same time, we have our core contributors, who are contributing maybe five stories a month, and we know we're going to strengthen and build the relationship with them."

- Carrie Sloan, LearnVest

CONCLUSION

A great content marketing strategy starts with great writers. While many content marketers are drawn to the idea of leading a strategy with only an in-house writing team, external freelance writers can strengthen that strategy in many ways. When considering merging the two together, be sure to distinguish core responsibilities and stay true to your goals. Also, don't forget to communicate those responsibilities and goals with both teams.

Ready to add freelance writers to your content marketing strategy?
Contact [Scripted.com](https://scripted.com) here today.