

Looking for Action: Engage Prospects with Interactive Content

By Megan Miller

How many applications are open on your device right now? And your second device – likely a mobile phone – how many alerts have you received this morning? Which message or alert has captured your attention?

In the digital age, where posts are limited to 140 characters and conversations may contain more emojis than text, the average human attention span has shortened. According to a study by Microsoft, the average human being now has an attention span of eight seconds. This is a sharp decrease from the average of 12 seconds in the year 2000. This means it's more important than ever to quickly capture and keep the attention of prospects and leads.

As storytellers, authors and educators, marketing professionals can overcome the attention deficit with interactive content that engages the reader.

Static black on white text is boring. Visually interesting, interactive multimedia content is captivating and will inform and engage readers on any device. Whether in a news article, white paper or e-book, readers love a challenge, enjoy quizzes, factoids and drilling down for detail on the information that matters to them. When they are engaged and actively participating, readers offer more information about themselves, helping marketers build out the lead or customer profile and better understand them.

To increase reader engagement, meet the reader with content that is compelling, engaging, easy to access and easy to experience. Here are four ways to render content in a more engaging, interactive way:

1. Provide value with a calculator.

Calculators do a lot more than solve math problems – they also provide self-qualified leads. Prospects appreciate a calculator they can use on their own to determine the cost of a product or service or to compare their needs against your solution. Calculators in the legal and accounting services industries may offer, for example:

- Billable utilization calculations
- SaaS vs. on-premises software cost comparison

- Managed services pricing calculator
- ROI calculator to determine return on investment for practice management software

With a self-service calculator, an interested prospect can determine if your product is a fit for them and whether it is affordable within their budget before they speak to a salesperson. Calculators can shrink the sales funnel and deliver better qualified leads, so make an effort to capture user contact information when they try the calculator. Effective calculators can deliver conversion rates of 40-50%, according to one platform provider.

2. Include video or interactive email images.

Have you ever found a video thumbnail so compelling that you just had to click on it? Video is extremely attractive. According to Wistia, emails that contain a video thumbnail see 40% more engagement. But creating videos can be expensive and time-consuming, and crafting good-quality content requires talent and experience.

B2B brands have been somewhat slow to adopt TikTok – the new darling in short-form mobile video. It achieved over 1.5 billion downloads from the App Store and Google Play in 2019. It is already more popular than LinkedIn, Twitter and Snapchat and showing no signs of slowing down.

If your brand isn't quite ready for TikTok, an image rollover can be a great alternative. Rollover or mouse-over images are ubiquitous on the web. E-commerce websites often feature images of products where an alternative view is displayed when the visitor hovers a cursor over an image. A rollover image is a great way to highlight key features on a technical product image.

3. Build revenue with surveys and quizzes.

People love quizzes and surveys. It's part of human nature that we love to share our thoughts, and we like that quizzes help us compare ourselves to others. Create a quiz or survey to attract new and high-converting leads, to understand and qualify different audiences and to gain insights into their preferences.

Surveys tapping readers' perspectives on the economy, industry trends, firm management practices or technology adoption can be a source of valuable information that can be communicated across a variety of channels and content formats:

- Pre- and post-survey emails and social media posts
- A downloadable survey report with thought leader perspectives on the results
- A live webinar presentation on survey highlights, offered jointly with an industry luminary or high-profile client
- Infographic highlighting key takeaways from the survey
- A video interview with an in-house thought leader or an industry partner

4. Develop dynamic white papers.

White papers are a great way to establish your business as an authority on a particular industry topic or issue. The challenge is that the often complex nature of white papers can make them dry and unengaging. Consider improving the reader experience with interactive content.

Incorporating a quiz, assessment, timeline or infographic into a white paper can add interest to the paper and keep readers engaged. The interactive content can be hosted online rather than sent as a static PDF, so analytics can also be gathered to see what parts people interact with most.

Interactive content is one of the fastest-growing areas in content marketing. To succeed with interactive, think from a mobile and software mindset, rather than a printed content mindset. As a result you will build a more interesting, engaging experience for leads, educating, challenging and delighting them as they move through the customer journey.



About the Author

Megan Miller is a senior consultant with Edge Marketing, assisting clients in development and execution of strategic marketing plans and implementation of marketing technologies. A global technology hound, Miller has built brands, trained teams and introduced successful products for global companies and startups. A certified e-discovery expert, Miller has written on trends and topics in electronic discovery, consumer electronics and the internet of things – before the IoT was even a thing. Her work has appeared in Attorney at Law, US Tech, TechnoLawyer, ACEDS and other industry publications.

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