

# Content Marketing ROI: How to Use Attribution Models to Prove the Value of Your Content

Posted in **Digital Marketing** by Tanya

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If you are like most marketers, you probably don't measure your content marketing properly.

You may even ask yourself:

*"Is my content marketing driving revenue? And if so, how do I know if it does?"*

The thing is ...

Whatever your industry, **your customers are constantly asking Google questions your business can solve:**

*“Best plus size dresses with sleeves below £80”*

*“How can I invest £1,000 risk-free”*

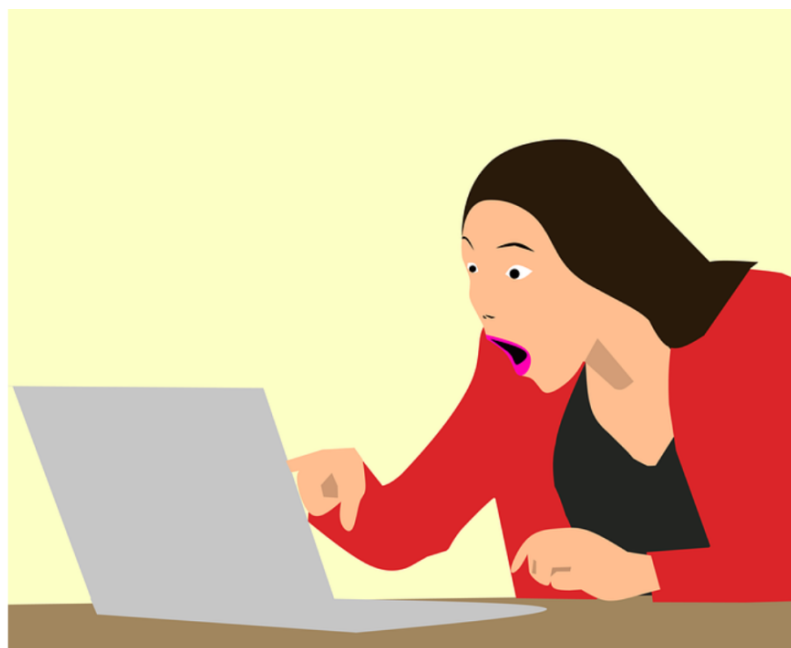
*“How can I do keyword research without paying for a software”*

If you're not visible to your customers when they need you most, you lose out on increasing your revenue.

Answering these questions is your opportunity to grab your potential customers' attention at the time they start thinking about your products.

So, creating a blog strategy to drive all that qualified traffic is an excellent top-funnel vehicle, where you can get in front of as many potential buyers as possible.

## **How to Prove the Value of Your Content [Using Attribution Models]**



## **Content Marketing and the Importance of Sales Funnels**

The 2 biggest problems we see [Digivate](#) clients make when measuring their content marketing success is:

- **Not understanding their sales cycle and how their customers buy**
- **Over-estimating the value of top-funnel (awareness stage) content**

Unfortunately, you can't measure your content marketing success if you don't understand your customer journey and how they buy.

Today, people engage with your business several times before converting.

**Here is just one example of a typical customer journey within a long-buying cycle:**

**1st TOUCHPOINT:** Mike reads your blog post, which he landed on via Google search

**2nd TOUCHPOINT:** A week later Mike clicks on the retargeting ad he sees on Facebook

**3rd TOUCHPOINT:** Mike goes on to discover more content on your site and downloads a PDF (he is now on your email list)

**4th TOUCHPOINT:** Mike finally converts after engaging with 3 personalised emails

As you can see from the example above, Mike wouldn't have converted after reading a blog post the first time, which means that there is little use of measuring your content marketing ROI at the awareness stage.

You also need to create a [content marketing](#) plan for the middle funnel, where customers consider and evaluate your service or product and compare it to your competitors.

As a CMO or marketing manager, **your main objective is not to prove ROI on your top funnel blogging activities, but to show that you are turning the initial customer interest into a lead and a lead into a sale. Content marketing ROI can only be measured in stages.**

HOW CAN WE HELP? Your customer cycle will depend on the nature of your business and the cost of your products or services. We can help you to determine your customer buying cycle, set up marketing plans for different customer touchpoints and create customised content marketing measurement framework with ROI in mind.

**How to Measure Content Marketing ROI at Different Buyer Stages**

Why should the customer journey be considered when measuring the performance of your content strategy?

Because at any moment in your sales funnel, there is always a group of people unaware that your product can solve their problem; there is another group aware of your business but are evaluating their options and finally – there is a group that is ready to buy.

This means that at any time, your business has the potential to attract 3 types of customers:



If you only concentrate on acquiring new customers, you are losing out on other revenue streams.

**You can't measure your content marketing ROI without measuring success at each buyer stage. ROI can only be measured as a cumulative effect of different marketing activities.**

To give you a tangible example of what exactly you can measure at each buyer stage, here are some examples:

### **Awareness Stage (Top Funnel)**

At the awareness stage, you want as many new potential buyers as possible to SEE your content.

At this stage, visitors aren't aware of your brand, and they certainly aren't aware of the solution you have to offer them.

They are just looking for answers, resources, opinions, and insights, with no special goal in mind.

The content created here is designed to be problem-solving to facilitate awareness.

The awareness content takes any form depending on what your audience prefers, for example, articles, podcasts, and videos.

### **Meaningful metrics to track at awareness stage:**

- Traffic
- Dwell time/Time spend engaging with content

Why engagement (dwell time) is crucial at the awareness stage? **Because it's almost impossible to turn an uninterested visitor into a lead. The ultimate purpose of the awareness stage is to drive visitors down to the consideration stage.**

**Side note:** If your goal is to grow your social media accounts, you may also want to measure social engagement – Likes, shares, comments and follower growth.

### **Consideration/Evaluation Stage (Middle Funnel)**

This is a lead generation stage.

As the journey cycle of your prospect changes, your content should change too.

Here you need to determine what does a lead mean to you and then create a lead magnet. A lead magnet is any valuable resource your target audience wants. A lead magnet can be a downloadable, time-sensitive offer, trial or anything else.

**You want people to take some sort of action without spending money – they need to do something specific for us to classify them as a lead.**

**The only meaningful metric to track at the consideration stage:**

- No of qualified leads

### **Action Stage (Bottom Funnel)**

The ultimate goal here is to convert qualified leads into paying customers. As such, the content produced here should facilitate conversions.

Examples of content at the action stage are comparison sheets, reviews, demos, product pages, customer stories, and testimonials.

**The only meaningful metric to track at the action stage:**

- No of conversions

**If you are not creating and promoting content across all 3 buyer stages, then you aren't able to measure the performance of your content marketing strategy.**

Unfortunately, many companies stop their marketing efforts by producing content only for the first stage of the marketing funnel. As a result of this an incomplete strategy, they miss out on the better business conversions and proving their positive ROI.

## **What is a Marketing Attribution Model and How Does It Help With ROI**

A marketing attribution model is a framework for deciding which customer touchpoints receive credit for a conversion.

A marketing attribution model is used for tracking performance across all digital marketing channels: organic and paid search, organic and paid social, referral, direct, email, content reads, downloads, etc.

To put it in a real-life context, let's say you released important industry research last month. You promoted it on social media, search and you sent the report to your blog subscribers.

You can see that your conversions have increased, but you have no idea which channel drove the best results? By knowing which channel drove the most conversions, you know where you should allocate more budget to.

As a marketing manager, your main objective is to justify your content marketing investment to your stakeholders, which means that you have to prove a positive return on investment (ROI).

## But how do you do it?

How do you know which marketing touchpoints actually assisted in sales?

Luckily, there are several marketing attribution models that help to measure how each customer touchpoint assisted in multi-channel selling.

### Google Analytics has 5 commonly used attribution models:

1. First-click attribution
2. Last-click attribution
3. Linear attribution
4. Time-decay attribution
5. Position-based attribution

Let's look at the best use cases for different attribution models in more detail ...

#### 1. First-click attribution



A first-click attribution assigns 100% of revenue to the first channel the lead clicked on and ignores all the rest. The logic with this model is simple: no sale is ever made if a customer doesn't know you exist.

#### The best use case for a first-click attribution model

Use a first-click attribution model if your sole goal is demand generation and brand awareness and if your sales cycles are short.

#### 2. Last-click attribution

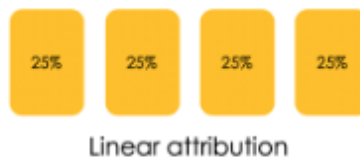


A last-click model assigns 100% of revenue to the last customer touchpoint before purchase and ignores all the steps that were taken up until the point of conversion. For example, previous visits to the site via blog traffic, nurturing emails, retargeting ads could receive no credit, even if they did play a part in the customer journey.

### **The best use case for a last-click attribution model**

Use a last-click attribution if you want to reach someone at the time of purchase and your sales cycles are short.

### **3. Linear attribution**



A linear attribution model divides equal credit between all touchpoints. This model assumes that all customer touchpoints are equally important. This type of model allows you to get a more complete picture without having to build a complex, algorithmic model.

### **The best use case for a linear attribution model**

Use a linear attribution model if your sales cycles are long, your marketing plan requires you to consistently keep in touch with your customers or you want a quick off-the-shelf solution without having to build a custom-model.

### **4. Time-decay attribution**



Time decay attribution assigns more credit to touchpoints closer to the point of conversion. The logic here is simple: the recent interactions are worth more because each touchpoint brings a prospect closer to conversion

### **The best use case for time decay attribution model**

Use time decay attribution for timed promotional campaigns because it rightfully devalues the early parts of the campaign that didn't convert the lead.

## **5. Position-based attribution**



A position-based attribution model (also known as U-shaped attribution) gives more credit to the first and last touch interactions. 40% of value is given to both – the first and last interaction, and the remaining 20% is attributed to the channels in the middle. The logic here is simple: the 2 most important touchpoints are the moment a customer finds you and the moment they buy.

### **The best use case for a position-based attribution model**

Use a position-based attribution if your sales cycle is long and you are in a competitive market.

## **Summary: How to Measure Your Content Marketing ROI**

You can only measure content marketing ROI when you understand the sales cycle of your customers and the wider context of your market.

Content marketing ROI can only be measured as a cumulative effect of different marketing activities where each buyer stage drive prospects further towards the final goal.

This means that you could never just measure the ROI of your blogging strategy if you don't have a plan to convert your visitors into buyers.

With multi-channel attribution techniques, **we can help you show your stakeholders the value of each marketing channel, persuading your budget keepers to allocate more funds if necessary.**