Interactive content

A quick guide to getting started

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Introduction

Content marketing is constantly evolving and the application of content interactivity has been on the rise for some time now. Already in 2013, the most-read story on the New York Times website wasn't an article, but an interactive quiz[1]. Streaming services like Netflix, have recently caught up to the trend, by producing shows that allow viewers to make key decisions on what will happen next. Even today before committing to new marketing or sales software, it's likely that you will use an ROI calculator on the providers' website to determine your potential return on investment.

There's no escaping it, interactive content is everywhere and for good reason! Providing this type of content throughout the buyer journey can help both retain and acquire customers. In a Content Marketing Institute (CMI) report[2], 87% of content marketers believed that interactive content is more effective than traditional static content at capturing a prospect's attention. However, as a marketer, the challenge often lies in knowing where to begin.

The same research showed that 70% of marketers[3] not using interactive content are holding back due to a lack of technical expertise and not knowing where to start. That's why we have gathered the "what", the "why" and the "how" of digital interactive content in this guide to help you get started!

[1] https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/upshot/dialect-quiz-map.html

[2] [3] https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/IonInteractive_Symphony_Final.pdf

The Basics

What is interactive content? To put it simply, it is **digital content that requires actions to be taken by an online visitor**. The Content Marketing Institute states that "Interactive content enables users to personalise and participate in the content presented to them".[4] The key component here is that it forms a two-way conversation between your brand and the consumer.

Interactive content differs greatly from static content by calling for more than simply reading or watching. It is essentially another way of integrating storytelling into your marketing strategy. As there are various forms and types, we compiled a list specifically designed for increasing audience participation and engagement on your website:

Polls, questionnaires and surveys

Often used as methods of gathering feedback and collecting data, these can provide valuable insight and data about your customers and potential customers.

Calculators, quizzes and tests

These allow you to gain a better understanding of your online visitors and the amount of knowledge they have about a certain topic, for example. Moreover, it provides the user with valuable information and knowledge in a playful fun manner.

[4] https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2017/09/interactive-content-quizzes/
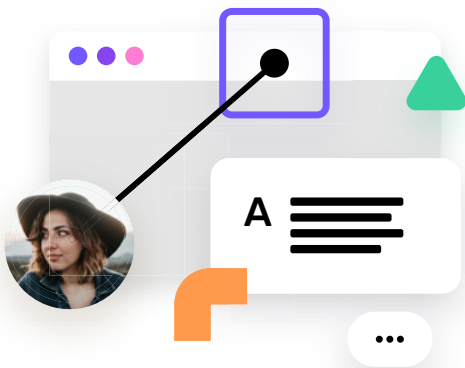
Banners and pop-ups

These provide you with a great way to promote new products and competitions, and offer discounts.

Button Chatbots / Interaction bots

These allow you to direct online visitors to the content they are looking for. They also help provide improved customer experience and an opportunity to qualify your leads better.

Other interactive content

This can be existing static content repurposed into content i.e. interactive videos, infographics, and whitepapers.
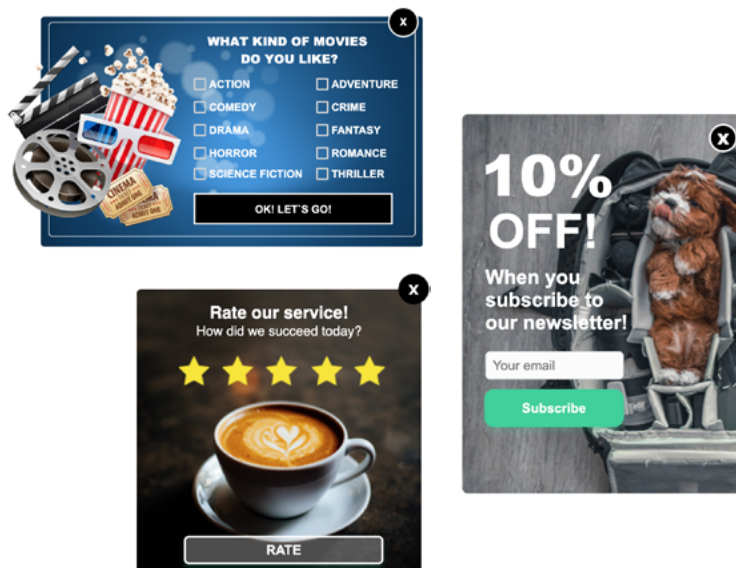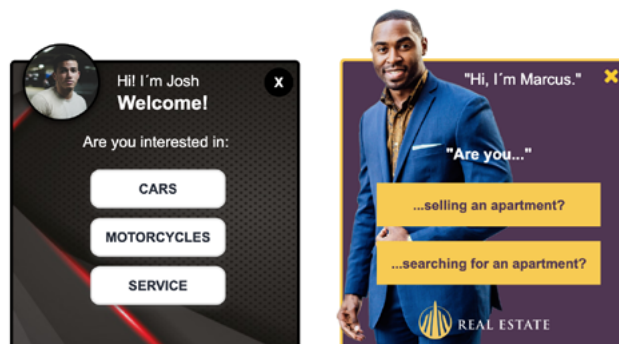

Source: giosg

It may seem daunting to add yet another format into your already abundant list of content marketing tactics. However, an efficient way of implementing interactive content into your strategy is by repurposing existing static content. In essence, this means taking traditional passive content and converting it into an interactive format. For example, taking the data from a whitepaper or report and transforming it into a quiz.

A quick look at interactive chatbots

Whether your business is B2B or B2C, it's likely that you have come across most of the aforementioned formats before. Perhaps the hyped interactive content that can be leveraged on your website currently, are interactive chatbots[5]. Although not new, there is still a lack of understanding revolving around what they are and how they work. So, let's take a quick look into what we mean by interactive chatbots.

Built like a decision tree, an interaction chatbot user follows a conversational path by clicking through options provided by the bot. Instead of typing their own query or question, the user simply clicks on options provided. The user is forced down a pre-decided guided path, meaning there is less room for error or miscommunication between the bot and end-user.

Source: giosg

These bots have different uses depending on your specific business needs. They can help you guide online visitors on your website, generate more leads for you or promote a specific action for example. A great simple tool to consider, when implementing interactive elements on your website!

[5] https://www.giosg.com/en-gb/products/interaction_bot

The value

Leveraging elements of interactivity on your website can help you reach your all-important marketing objectives and also provide a positive experience for your online visitors. We have mapped out these two value dimensions – the value your audience gets by consuming the content and the value it brings to your business. Interactive content can help mediate between these two goals that can, more often than not, conflict with each other.

1. **The value your audience gets**
   - New information
   - Entertainment
   - Education

2. **The value interactive content brings to your business**
   - Engaged online visitors and customers
   - Lead generation, conversion and qualification
   - Improved customer experience and service
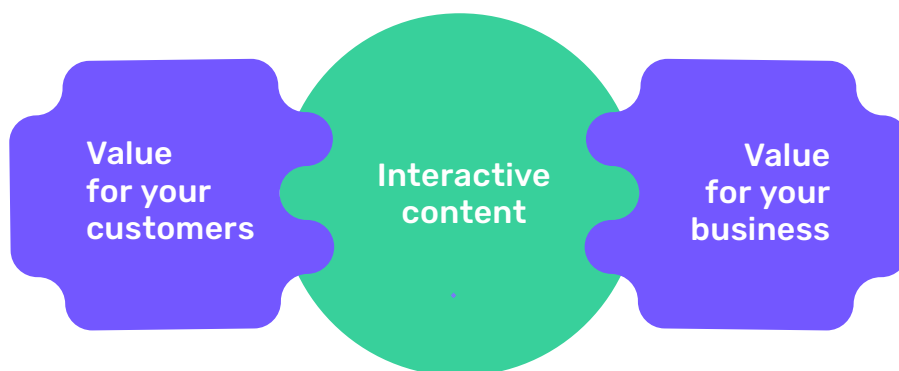
Interactive content is a more effective way to educate, entertain and engage your audience. When it comes to business objectives, it is invaluable for converting and generating more qualified leads by capturing visitors that are already on your website – as opposed to static content, where the opportunity of converting these visitors can often be lost. In a Demand Metric report, interactive content converted buyers better than passive content, with 70% of marketers saying it converts moderately or very well[6], compared to just 36% for passive content.

The underlying reason behind this is that formats like questionnaires, polls, and quizzes, supply you with more than just contact details. Both feedback and further data about prospects can be gathered in an efficient manner. Using this beneficial information and analysing it, makes it possible to customise and target your content. This means the content created actually appeals to your prospects and in turn increases your lead generation. In fact, interactive content can increase the number of your incoming leads by 47%[7] according to Hubspot. It's not surprising that lead generation is the main objective for most marketers – in a recent webinar about interactive content hosted by giosg, **60% of attending marketers voted** lead generation to be the main goal of their content.

This is relevant across verticals, regardless of industry. For example, by using an interactive pop-up online, a leading automotive company was able to acquire 3x more leads from their website. Furthermore, when a Nordic cleaning brand retailer opened their own direct sales channel online, they faced a low amount of online sales during their first year. One way of boosting their online sales was to increase newsletter subscribers online, however, their existing static form wasn't effective enough for this. By implementing a targeted newsletter subscription pop-up onto their eCommerce site, they were able to increase the number of subscriptions per week by 4x.

[6] https://www.demandmetric.com/content/content-buyers-journey-benchmark-report
[7] https://blog.hubspot.com/customers/interactive-content-can-help-you-increase-your-leads

Using interactive content also makes it possible to qualify incoming leads. A great example of this is using an interactive chatbot to direct visitors on your site to specific pages. This ensures that leads are not only relevant but supplied with the information they are looking for. Furthermore, it will help you deliver leads to sales along with invaluable insights about the potential buyer, like their specific challenges or objectives which enables sales to contact prospects with relevant messages. Armed with this data, prioritising the most relevant leads is made simpler.

Finally, interactive content can also help improve customer service efficiency and online customer experience. By bringing a chatbot onto their website, a large scale event organiser and venue provider was able to prolong customer service hours and increase the number of incoming chats. Moreover, they were able to increase the efficiency of their internal customer service team – seeing a 26,3% decrease in the number of phone calls processed by their customer service.
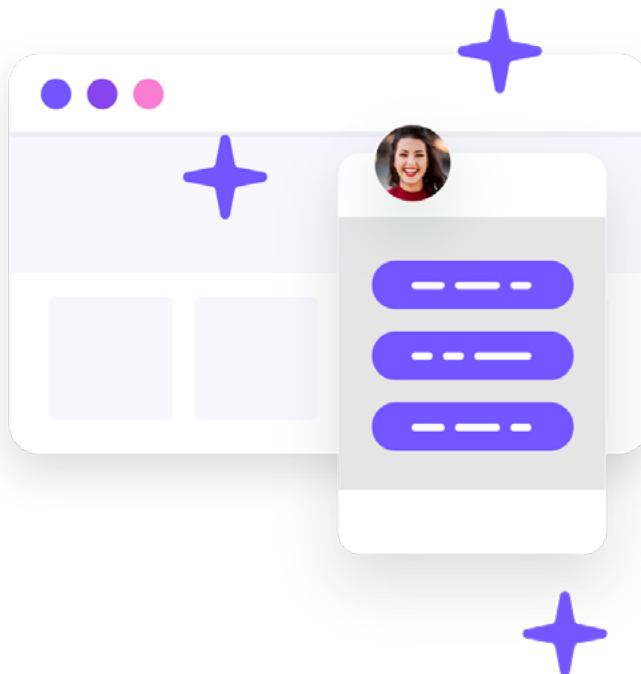
Best Practices

It is imperative to keep both your audience and your objectives in mind while developing your interactive content. Using the following best practices will help you get started and ensure your content performs well!

Source: *giosg*

1. Before creating your content always start with **analysing your current traffic** and visitor behaviour on the website. You should understand where your conversions are taking place and identify whether there any "drop off" points on your site. The absence of data can make it difficult to create effective content, which will make lead capturing pretty lousy. So, always start by gather existing information and data on your website visitors.

2. Once armed with this valuable information about your visitors, you can **customise and personalise** the interactive content as much as possible. By using triggers,

such as visitor behaviour and other data available, you can tailor the content and provide the right interaction for every purpose. Look at what page the visitor is on, what are they looking for? Use this information to create a purposeful interaction.

3. All this is great, but your content means nothing if it doesn't reach the right person. You need to deliver the right piece of content at the right stage of the buyer's journey by **targeting**. Knowing and tracking your online visitor behaviour, you can implement interactive content in the right place at the right time and ensure that the content is relevant for that person. Targeted content supplies sales with the messaging, information and tools needed for closing the deal.

4. Lastly, always make sure to **measure** the success of your content. However, it's important that results are not only measured and reported but used to improve your content. This invaluable insight will help you further target and personalise your interactive content!

Staying ahead of the game

Getting started with interactive content doesn't have to be difficult. The key is not to be afraid of getting help when implementing it in your marketing strategy. There are plenty of providers that can help you implement different types of content onto your website. It should be simple and it definitely doesn't need to get technical – no coding skills should be required to create and publish your content.

So if you're looking for more qualified leads and better conversions, interactive content is the way to go. What are you waiting for? It's time to start creating meaningful interactions on your website and better educating and entertaining your prospects – and trust us, they will love you for it!