

FROM STRATEGY TO EXECUTION

# **6 SALES CONTENT BENCHMARKS EVERY BUSINESS NEEDS**

BY

Frank V. Cespedes, Harvard Business School, and Sonja Jacob, DocSend

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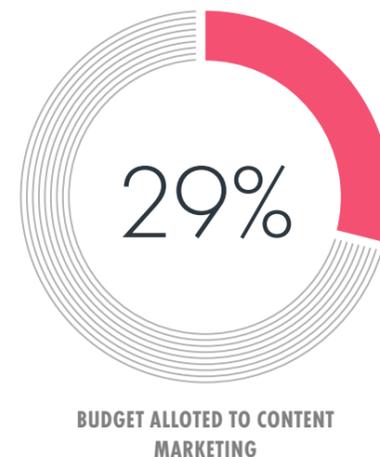
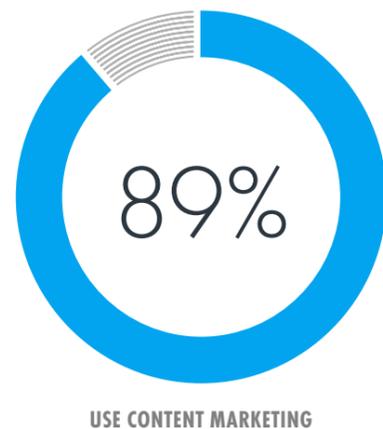
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### Why Sales and Marketing Should Align On Content Benchmarks

# THE RISE OF SALES CONTENT

In the last decade, content marketing has become an established practice used by organizations large and small to generate leads, drive conversions, nurture prospects, and grow business. In fact:

- **89% of B2B marketers say they use content**<sup>1</sup> to fuel their marketing efforts
- B2B marketers on average allot **29% of their budget**<sup>1</sup> to content marketing activities (that's *excluding* the cost of the professionals who create it)

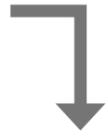


Now, even sales organizations are leveraging content to fuel outreach and optimize an increasingly complex sales process. However, while content marketing and sales content are related, there's an important difference between the two:

Content marketing is used at the top of the funnel to drive awareness and demand for your product, **while sales content goes to work at the middle**, once a lead has already become a sales opportunity.

As sales teams adapt to an increasingly non-linear buying process, whereby prospects engage via multiple digital touchpoints, it's clear that content plays a pivotal role in generating interest and engagement with prospects where other tactics fall short.

The only problem? →

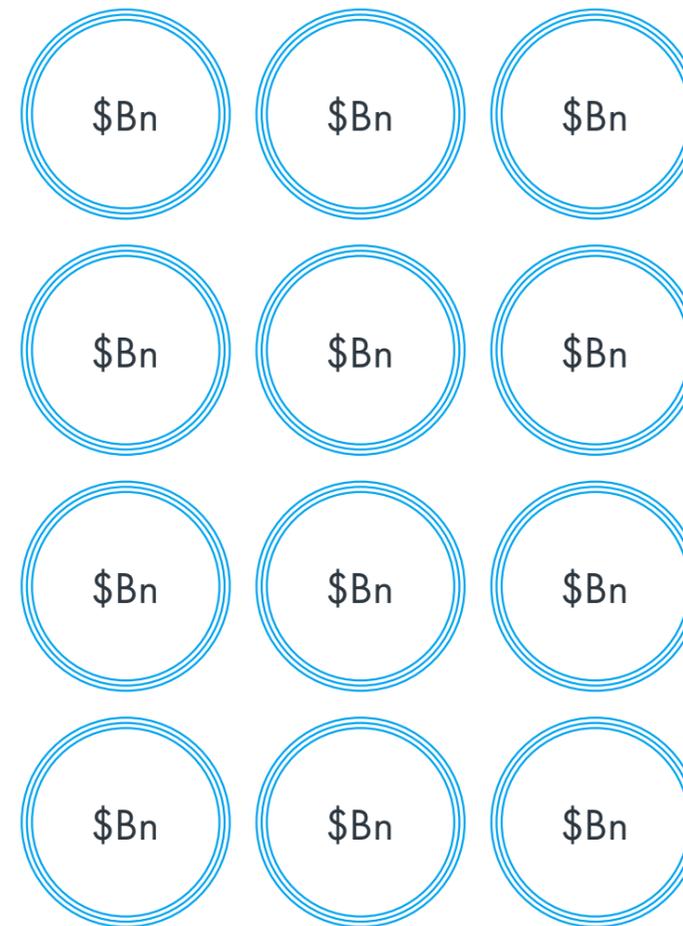


**A vast majority of teams don't track their sales content or prospect engagement with it, and if they do, it's unclear which benchmarks actually indicate success.**

For marketing and sales teams, this is a costly blind spot that can cause a host of problems throughout the sales process. In fact:

- **According to a 2016 report<sup>2</sup>**, organizations spent an average of \$954,010 on sales training each year, and \$12 billion in aggregate on sales enablement tools.

Yet, there's no evidence that our sales enablement and training activities are **generating a significant return<sup>3</sup>** on investment.



**\$12B**

The amount business spend on Sales Enablement Tools

\$M 

**\$1M**

Spent on training expenses

## What action is needed?

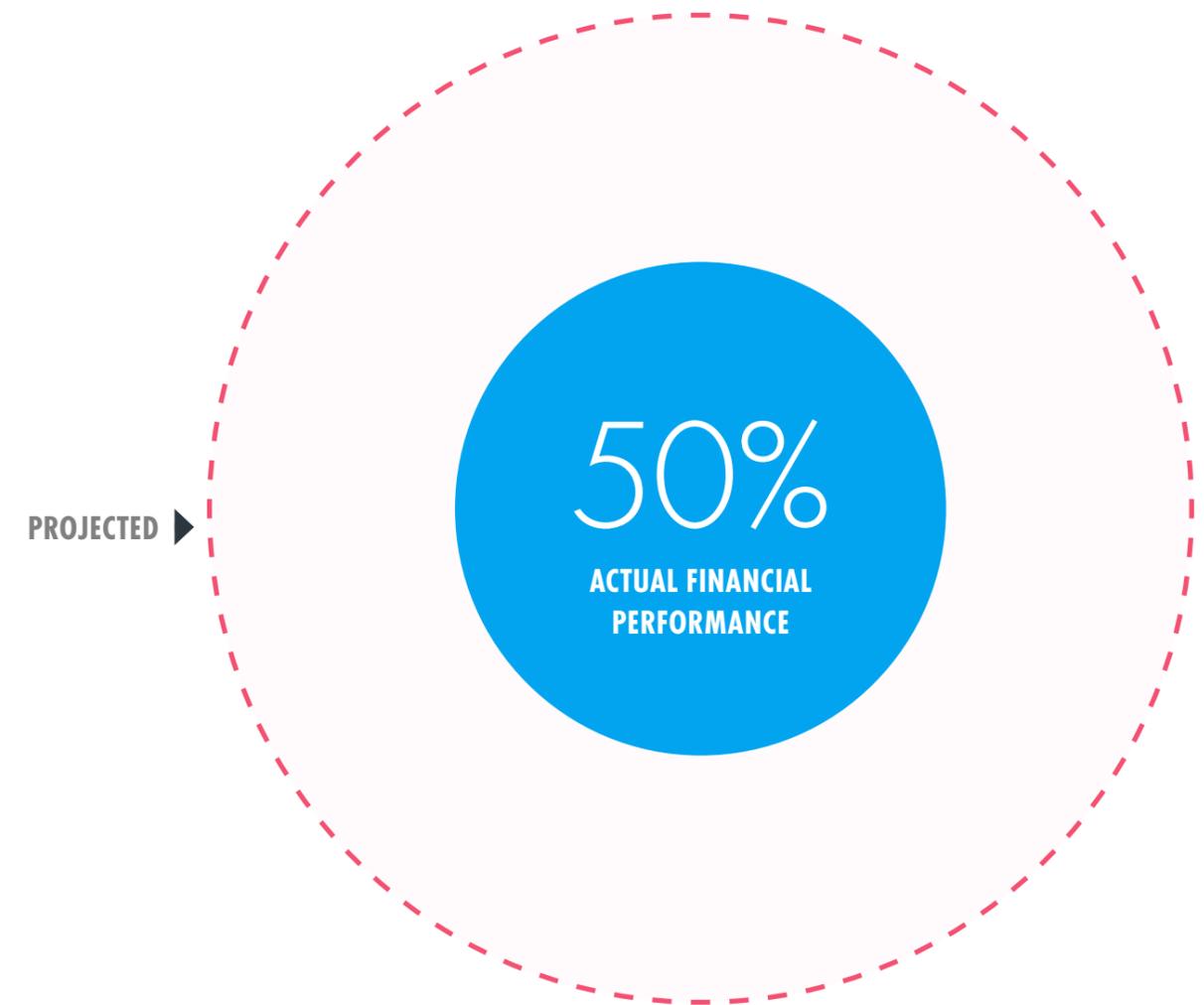
As Frank Cespedes, author and professor at Harvard Business School, points out, most companies deliver **only a little more than half the financial performance**<sup>4</sup> that their strategies and sales forecasts have promised. This should raise a red flag for any business concerned with driving efficiency and enabling the sales process.

**Sales and marketing should align for better outcomes and:**

- **Get a clear picture of how content can optimize the sales process**
- **Formulate sales enablement KPI**

If both sides of the organization understand what success looks like for sales enablement, companies have the potential to implement smarter solutions and focus on tracking the right success metrics.

And that's exactly where sales content benchmarks come into the picture.



MOST COMPANIES DELIVER ONLY A LITTLE MORE THAN HALF THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE THAT THEIR STRATEGIES AND SALES FORECASTS HAVE PROMISED

# INSIGHTS FROM 34 MILLION INTERACTIONS WITH SALES CONTENT

Our link-based sales enablement platform has generated millions of interactions with content, resulting in a deep reservoir of data about when, where, and how people engage with content shared during the sales process. DocSend is a sales enablement solution that helps teams find and share the content that closes deals.

**With over 34 million interactions with content of various types, formats, and lengths**, we set out to identify trends that serve as helpful benchmarks for both marketers and sellers when thinking about how to leverage content for a more efficient sales process.

In this context, an 'interaction' refers to the ways in which a prospect engages with a piece of content via a DocSend link. When a prospect clicks on that link, that interaction is captured and when analyzed in aggregate, reveals patterns of engagement that helps us optimize the sales process, and better understand our prospects.

**So, what did we discover when analyzing over 34 million interactions with sales content?**

Empirical data and actionable insights about:

- How much time prospects actually spend on sales content,
- On which devices,
- When,
- And the type of sales content they prefer.

Want to build an efficient sales process? Align your sales and marketing teams with these insights.

Read on for an in-depth analysis of our findings.

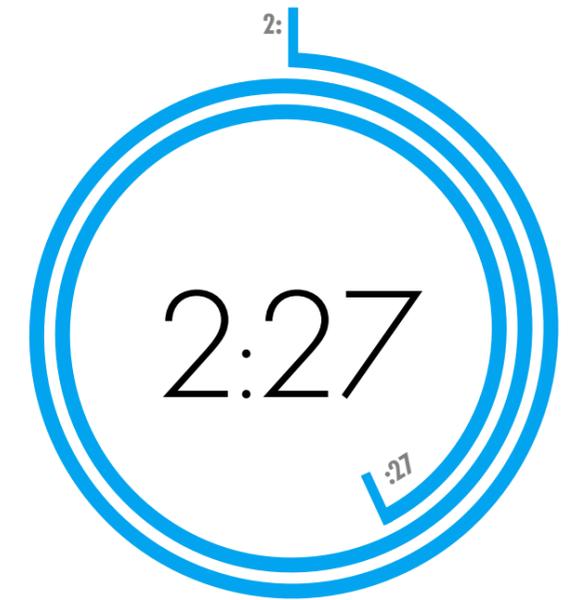


## You've got just under 3 minutes to make an impression on a prospect.

It's no secret that prospects have a lot on their plate, and a flood of messages in their inbox. That likely explains why the average viewing time for sales content was just under 3 minutes. Nonetheless, during that brief period, prospects are making a ton of rapid-fire judgements about your product's capabilities, including whether or not they find your value proposition compelling enough to move forward in the sales process.

### SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Track **average time spent** on your middle of the funnel content to see where people are engaging the most. This could indicate the topics that matter the most to a specific type of deal or account type.
- Do more than just measure **average time spent** to identify your most engaged target accounts, and identify whether or not your prospects view your sales content and then **share it with others in their organization**. Some sales enablement tools even allow you to see who at your target account opened your content which can provide key visibility into accounts.



AVERAGE TIME SPENT ACROSS ALL SALES  
CONTENT WAS 2 MINUTES, 27 SECONDS.

## #2

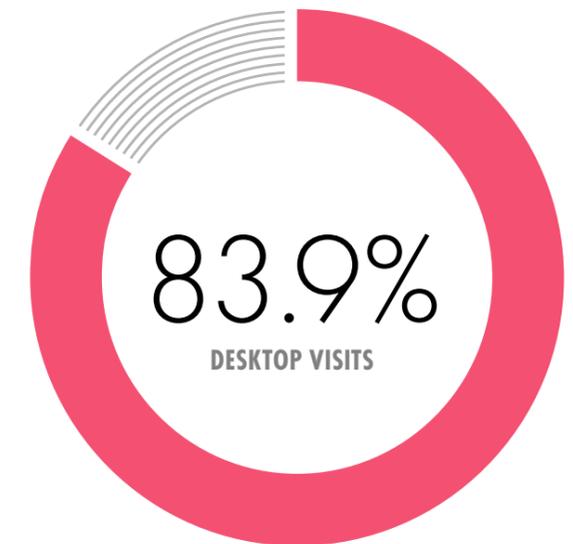
# Stop obsessing over optimizing sales content for mobile.

At the top of the funnel, it might make sense to worry about optimizing content for multiple formats and devices. But once your lead is handed off to sales and becomes an opportunity, new patterns emerge for middle of the funnel content consumption. In our analysis, we discovered that an overwhelming majority of prospects view sales content at the middle of the funnel on desktop devices, not mobile.

This discovery reveals a bit about the behavior of prospects when it comes to sales content consumption. Since they're more likely to view sales collateral on desktop, we can reasonably assume a few takeaways for sales and marketing teams.

### SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Treat middle of the funnel content differently.** Marketing teams shouldn't apply top of the funnel best practices for content creation and distribution when a prospect is in the thick of the consideration and evaluation stage.
- With the overwhelming majority of visits happening on desktop, content creators should focus on creating sales enablement content that utilizes visuals to convey key messages quickly. Think succinct copy and messages that punctuate each slide, and avoid text-heavy information-drops on every page.
- **Avoid needless optimizations for devices and formats,** and focus on developing more of the content that performs well on desktop.



A MASSIVE 83.90% OF VISITS TO SALES CONTENT HAPPENED ON DESKTOP, NOT MOBILE.



## Don't discount mobile views *entirely*.

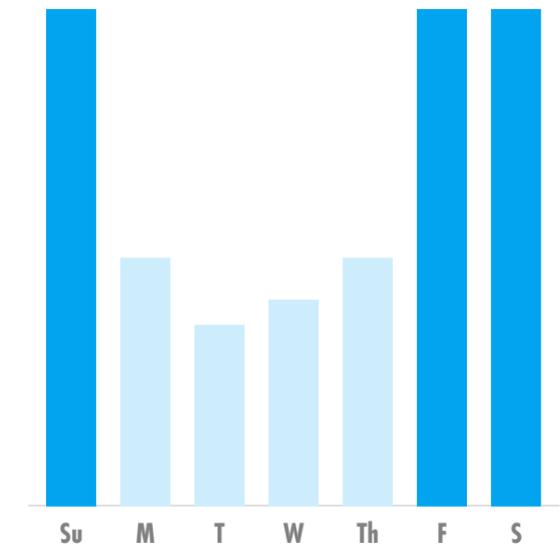
Even though the majority of sales content viewed on desktop was during the work week, you can't discount mobile views entirely.

Why?

Because interactions that happen with your content *outside* of the normal work week could signal a highly engaged buyer in need of your attention and outreach. If a prospect takes a look at something you shared on Thursday, it may be combined with a longer return visit on the weekend. The initial engagement with your sales content may provide proof that a prospect is warm, but an additional view on a mobile device after work hours could help you prioritize how you follow up with a target account on Monday.

### SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Identify meaningful metrics and be aware of outlier engagement with content, which could indicate a prospect is very interested and in need of your outreach.
- Consider creating a recipe for coupling an initial view with additional engagement to help your sellers prioritize which prospects to follow-up with first. Define what an engaged prospect looks like so sellers identify it as a hot prospect.
- Create personalized outreach based on what prospects are most interested in.



VISITS TO SALES CONTENT FROM A MOBILE DEVICE DOUBLED ON THE WEEKENDS



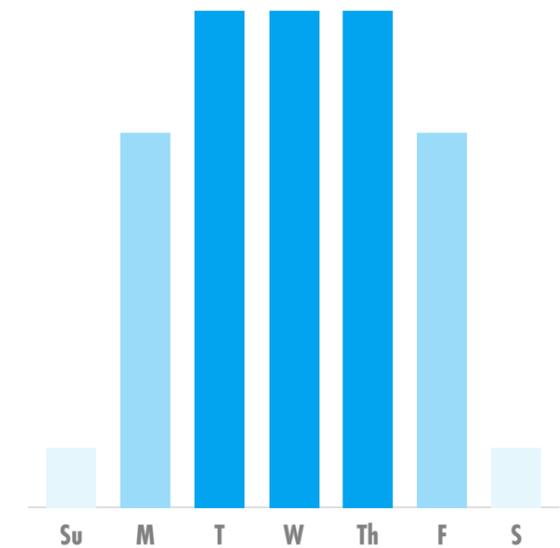
## There's no single "best day" of the week to send sales content.

There's a lot of lip service paid to the notion that it's better to send content on one specific day of the week, but this theory didn't hold up when we evaluated our data on sales content engagement.

While everyone agrees you probably don't want to send something to a prospect on the weekend (on average, only 5% of visits to sales collateral happened on Saturday and Sunday), analysis of our data indicated that total visits were almost evenly distributed across each day of the week.

### SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Don't focus on specific days for sending sales content. It's better to prioritize based on prospect engagement with content and follow up as soon as they interact with it.



60% OF ALL VISITS HAPPEN EVENLY ACROSS TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND THURSDAY. MONDAY AND FRIDAY SEE SLIGHTLY LESS ACTIVITY THAN THE REST OF THE WEEK, AND WEEKENDS ARE THE LOWEST.



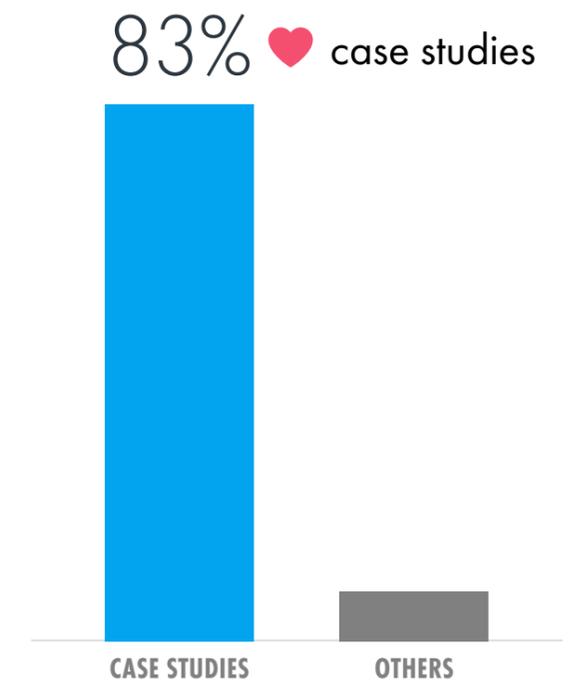
## Prospects still love one type of sales content way more than others.

Marketers and sales enablement professionals put a lot of work into crafting the right content for the sales process. But which type of content routinely outperforms others in terms of completion rate? Case studies.

Yes, folks. The tried and true case study is the single type of content that prospects complete more than any others during the sales process.

### SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Prioritize sales content creation based on where your prospects are more likely to spend their time.** In this case, over millions of interactions in our dataset, the clear winner is the case study.
- Use sales content insights to identify which content is working for your sales team and **double-down on that.**
- Provide much-needed focus to your sales enablement efforts by using content analytics to guide your sales content strategy. Remember, you don't have to do it all--just what's actually moving the needle.



CASE STUDIES BOAST AN 83% COMPLETION RATE COMPARED WITH OTHER SALES CONTENT.



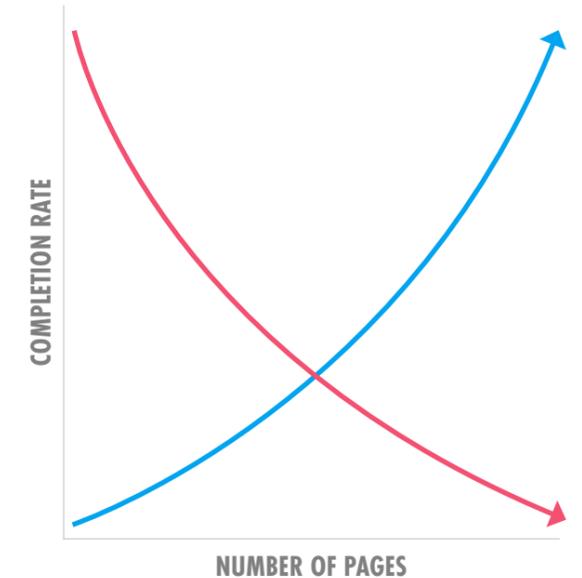
## There *\*is\** a magic length for your next piece of sales content.

Have a lot of information to share with a prospect? Try to get it into a piece of sales content just 2-5 pages in length, total. Based on our analysis, completion rate for that length was highest across content types (case study or success story, proposal, e-book, overview or guide). We threw out one-pagers in our analysis, since it's pretty obvious that if a document is one page in length, the completion rate is going to be 100%.

Are you practicing account-based marketing or sales? Here's where you can really utilize personalization to drive higher returns on your content. Combine your sales content creation efforts with what you know about the vertical your target is in, and create highly specific and reusable guides for each target account type. The content will feel custom to the target, but will be very scalable for your sales enablement team.

### SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Observe the recommended length. Especially when it comes to sales content. The data indicated that the ideal length for sales content was between 2-5 pages in total.
- Approach your sales content strategy around the principle that everything you need to say has to happen within this range (or slightly below it).
- Obviously, prospects deeper down the funnel may require more info, so tailor appropriately.



COMPLETION RATE WAS HIGHER WHEN CONTENT WAS NO MORE THAN 2-5 PAGES IN LENGTH.

## WHY SALES AND MARKETING SHOULD ALIGN ON CONTENT BENCHMARKS

Content marketing, like all good ideas in business, is evolving, fast. And that's exactly what we're seeing with the rise of sales content: **As the sales cycle becomes increasingly non-linear and more complex, content has the potential to optimize for everything from conversions to relationship-building, and beyond.** But if we're not tracking or measuring it, we're creating a massive blind spot in the middle of the sales process. And that drastically reduces business efficiency.

Sales enablement and product marketing teams are on the front lines of the sales process. They're responding to the changing needs of marketing and sales teams, and are valuable allies in the fight for business optimization. But without clear benchmarks for evaluating success, or a method for effectively tracking sales content, organizations will be unable to demonstrate real business ROI in any of these business functions.

High-growth organizations are obsessed with efficiency, and they're not waiting for this day to come. Instead, they're developing practical, measurable strategies for sales enablement that start with the right sales content benchmarks. By establishing clear metrics for success, they're helping both their marketing and sales teams stay focused on business outcome, while using data to drive their decision-making.

This is the future of sales enablement. Don't let your business get left behind.

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