

BRIGHTEDGE
RESEARCH

SMART Content: With Scale Comes Leverage

Brands who invest in SEO see 5X incremental gains compared to those who don't

BRIGHTEDGE

The Global Leader in Enterprise
SEO and Content Performance

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Introduction

A previous BrightEdge research report found that engagement is the single biggest driver of content performance (1). When content is engaging, the intended audience is likely to absorb the content's message and progress further in the customer journey. The measurable progression towards a desired milestone is the indication of content which has performed.

Armed with this knowledge, brands are creating more and more engaging content but the competition to reach audiences is fierce. There is no content performance, even for the most engaging content, if the content has not reached its audience. Therefore, content authors are striving to have their content reach target audiences. And ideally, before content from the competition does.

On search engines, the way brands reach a target audience faster is by having their content rank higher in search results. The highest-ranking content benefits from orders of magnitude more distribution than lower ranking content (2). If content is not on the first page of search engine results, it creates very little value. Savvy brands know this.

BrightEdge investigated what differentiates content ranking on page one versus content ranking on page two or worse. The answer is that page one content is engaging to audiences *and optimized* for search engines.

Optimized content outranks the competition 5-to-1 for the largest brands

BrightEdge research shows that on average, for brands with over one million pieces of content, brands with optimized content ranked on the first page of Google results 390% more than comparably sized brands which didn't optimize content. In other words, for every piece of content from the non-optimizing brand which ranked on page one of Google for a given topic, the brand with optimized content had 4.9 pieces of content that would rank on page one of Google for as many topics.

Brands which invested in content optimization would outperform their competition almost five to one

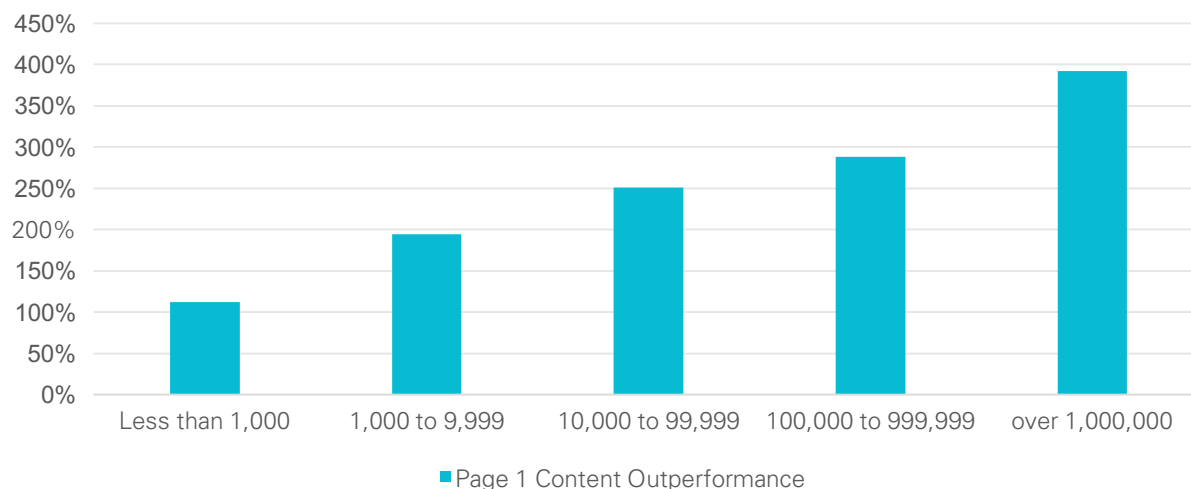
On the smaller end of the spectrum, brands with fewer than one thousand pieces of content would outperform their competition by 110% on average. Even for the smallest brands, optimizing content results in very meaningful lift.

With Scale Comes Leverage

The chart below graphs how optimized content outperforms non-optimized content when it comes to ranking on the first page of search engine results. As highlighted in the previous section, smaller brands outperform peers by 110% while the largest brands outperform by almost 400%.

- ❑ Brands with one thousand to ten thousand pieces of optimized content outperform their non-optimized peers by almost 200%
- ❑ Brands with ten thousand to one hundred thousand pieces of optimized content outperform similarly sized non-optimized peers by 250%
- ❑ And brands with one hundred thousand to one million pieces of optimized content outperformed peers by almost 300%

Page 1 Content Outperformance



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An important and interesting finding in this research is that the magnitude of content outperformance, as measured by page one rankings, of optimized versus non-optimized content, is a function of brand size. Content optimizing brands are not uniformly outranking their peers:

The performance difference between optimized and non-optimized content grows larger as brands get larger.

To understand this research finding consider that as brands invest in their business operations, the larger the operation is, the more leverage any optimization has. Larger brands have the resources to optimize more thoroughly than smaller brands. When all the optimizations are added up, the brand which optimizes content has a more competitive content offering, and far outranks complacent competition.

Conclusions

The key takeaways from this research are as follows.

- Brands, regardless of size, stand to meaningfully gain visibility, and, commensurately, engagement from their target audiences if brands optimize content for search engines.
- The performance gulf between optimized content and non-optimized content grows larger as brands grow larger. The complexities of scale demand a consistent approach to content optimization. The risk of underinvestment in content optimization is a significant loss of market share to peers.

Recommendations to Optimize Content

1. Research demand – Use BrightEdge Data Cube to find strong interest and query volume
2. Benchmark competition – Use BrightEdge Data Cube and Share of Voice to measure

3. Make pages fast-loading – Use BrightEdge ContentIQ to check page speed and file sizes
4. Serve to smart phones – Use Google Mobile Friendly Test
5. Get technically ready: Images, Video, AMP, schema – Use BrightEdge Content
6. Link to multiple other internal content – Use BrightEdge Recommendations
7. Optimize to convert – Use Google Experiments or A/B testing system
8. Share socially – Add social share buttons for FB, TW, LI
9. Integrate with other channels – Repurpose content into at least 3 other channels
10. Amplify in other channels – Distribute in at least 5 other channels
11. Prioritize the Profitable – Use analytics, API, and BrightEdge

About BrightEdge

BrightEdge, the global leader in enterprise organic search and content performance, empowers marketers to transform online content into business results such as traffic, conversions, and revenue. The BrightEdge S3 platform is powered by a sophisticated deep learning engine and is the only company capable of web wide, real-time measurement of content engagement across all digital channels, including search, social, and mobile. BrightEdge's 1,500+ customers include global brands such as 3M, Microsoft, and Nike, as well as 57 of the Fortune 100. The company has eight offices worldwide and is headquartered in Foster City, California.