ClearVoice
a fiverr company.

A Step-by-Step Guide to Oursourcing Your
Marketing Content Creation

Introduction

Outsourcing content creation is a flexible and budget-friendly substitute for hiring full-time content professionals.

Certain enterprises choose to delegate to multiple independent contractors. While others partner with marketing agencies that provide a wide range of marketing services beyond content creation. Still, some prefer collaborating with managed content services specializing in content marketing and offering exceptional proficiency.

Outsourcing can help bridge skill deficiencies across the content pipeline.

And can encompass tasks like content strategy, development, and promotion.

Besides reduced costs, content outsourcing saves time and improves your in-house team's efficiency. It enables full-time content specialists to focus on their core responsibilities.

For example, in-house content writers are usually forced to take on extra work. This can include content ideation, keyword research, and editing. Additional workload, in turn, compromises your writers' ability to deliver quality work, on time.

There's no room for such inefficiencies in a space as competitive as content marketing.

Inside This Guide, You'll Find

What is Content Outsourcing?

Simply put, content outsourcing is hiring external service providers to meet content production demands.

Businesses can outsource other content-related tasks other than writing. Some examples are copy editing, content strategy, graphic design, transcription, and voiceovers.

External content service providers have three main types:

Freelancers: A freelancer is someone who performs on-demand professional services. Freelance content specialists offer a fast, flexible, and cost-effective way to meet your content marketing needs.

Managed content services: Managed services are more involved with your content marketing success. On top of content creation, managed content services may offer services like strategy development, competitor research, SEO, and analytics.

Full-service digital marketing agencies: Full-service digital marketing agencies also help with content creation. However, they're often much more expensive. Plus, they focus on many different service types. Such as paid ads, website development, link building, and social media management.

Why Outsource Content Production: *8 Top Benefits*

1. Reduce Costs

Working with content service providers is more cost-effective than building an in-house content team. Freelancing marketplaces let you find and connect with skilled writers easily. Without spending thousands on training, equipment, and talent management. For the most part, you also don't need to worry about payroll taxes, insurance, and professional workstations. Just pay for the actual content deliverables, and you're good to go.

2. Build Your Team Faster

Data from the Society for Human Resource Management shows that businesses take a median time of 30 days to fill openings. But with freelancers, you could be reviewing cover letters one afternoon and generating content the next. The massive Gig Economy is full of experienced professionals in various specializations. Whether you need editors, product copywriters, ghostwriters, or graphic designers, the talent you need is just one email away.

3. Access Top-Tier Talent

Content outsourcing lets you reach and work with seasoned experts without getting locked in on long-term commitments. If the price is right, freelancers will lend you their expertise and skills. Unless, of course, they're under a non-compete agreement with a current or past client. Reputable content service providers also use strict vetting processes. This ensures they acquire only the best talent in their network.

For example, ClearVoice thoroughly vets each freelancer's portfolio, published works, and identity. Prospective freelancers are also interviewed via video call to ensure they fit our customert-first culture.

4. Shorten Campaign Timelines

A full-time writer's average monthly salary is enough to pay several freelancers for short-term projects. Suppose you have a total of 12 articles planned in your content calendar this month. Instead of waiting for one full-time content creator to deliver all articles, hire multiple freelancers to get all projects up to speed at once.

5. Be More Adaptable

Outsourcing content creation lets you be more flexible to changing content needs. Freelancers are far easier and more practical to replace than in-house writers. You can scale up or down as your priorities and goals shift.

6. Tap Into a Global Talent Pool

Hiring freelancers in your target location is an advantage if you aim to penetrate foreign markets. They're already in tune with the local audience's preferences. Their knowledge and expertise boost your content's relatability and—by extension—your brand authority. They can also complete other tasks, like fact-checking and regulatory compliance, faster than in-house writers. Unlike non-native writers, they have access to resources and information that aren't available on the web.

7. Lighten Your Team's Workload

Businesses partner up with agencies and freelancers to reduce the workload of their core content team. Outsourcing jobs like blog writing, editing, and graphic design lets your in-house team focus on higher-impact tasks like strategy development. They can also focus on more worthwhile content projects, like white papers, industry reports, eBooks, and videos.

8. Diversify Your Content Strategy

Content outsourcing lets you leverage a broader range of content types at a reduced cost. Work with content service providers to create engaging podcasts, videos, infographics, eBooks, branded photos, and more. Typically, diversifying your content comes with an overhead for additional equipment and software. Managed services already cover these costs and have the talent you need to explore new content opportunities.

Despite the many benefits of content outsourcing, it's not a one-size-fits-all strategy. Follow the steps below to recruit the right talent and reap the full benefits of content outsourcing.
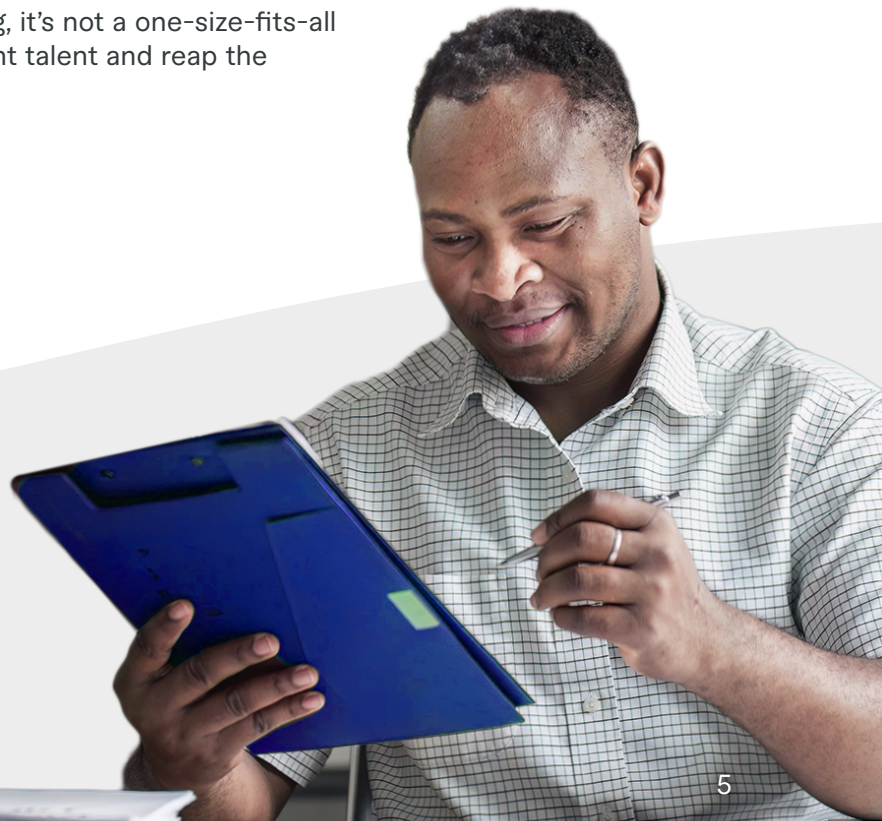
12 Steps to Outsourcing Your Content Creation Effectively

Step 1   **Identify Your Marketing Goals**

What do you hope to accomplish with your content marketing? Without a clear goal, it's difficult to gauge your content's effectiveness and justify outsourcing's cost.

Some common business goals for content marketing include:

→ Positioning yourself as an expert in your field.
→ Generating leads and sales.
→ Increasing website traffic.
→ Boosting engagement with your brand.
→ Improving customer loyalty and retention.
→ Educating your target audience.

Make your goals more actionable by ensuring they're SMART—Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

Set target key performance indicators (KPIs) to plot the trajectory of your content marketing. Rather than setting "increasing web traffic" as your goal, specify a KPI like "increase monthly pageviews by 2,500%." Attaching a target KPI also makes your goal more measurable.

To check if your goal is attainable and relevant, factor in your organization's current assets and available resources. For example, if your business has an active blog, some relevant goals are increasing traffic and attaining higher rankings.

Wrap it up with a timeline to add a sense of urgency. Setting timelines ensures your current strategies are on pace to hit your goals allowing you to fine-tune your approach as the situation demands.
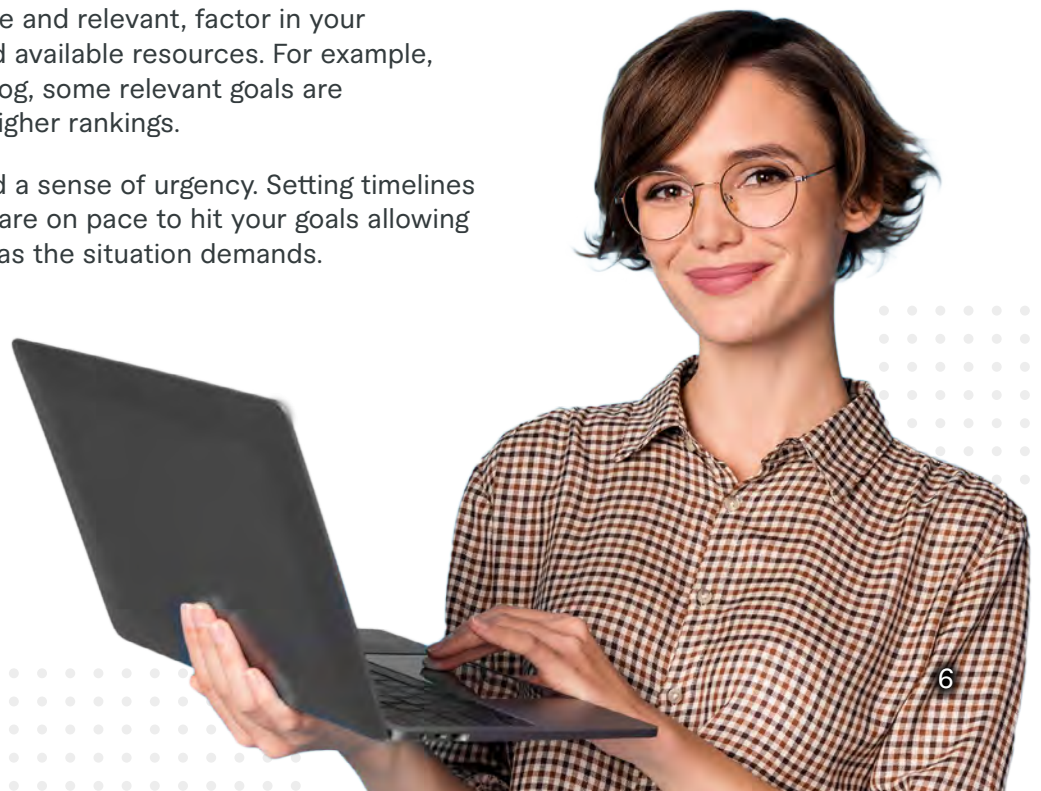
Gather Information About Your Business

The more content specialists know about your business, the better. Here are some of the details you should consider sharing with them:

→ **Brand identity & voice.** Help external content producers stay on-brand by defining your preferred style and tone. Highlight adjectives like "friendly," "positive," and "confident" while providing writing guidelines to content service providers.

→ **Mission statement.** Content creators must understand your mission statement to align each piece with your business values. Describe what you do, the benefits you offer customers, and the values you prioritize in your decision-making.

→ **Unique selling proposition (USP).** Consider unique features and benefits that make you stand out from the competition, including proprietary technology, affordability, top-tier customer support, self-service options, etc. Identifying your USPs helps outsourced talent explore angles that position your business as the obvious choice.

→ **Target market & buyer personas.** Define your target audience, so outsourced content creators know who they're writing for. Build audience personas by describing your customers' goals, challenges, preferred content channels, and background.

→ **Keywords & SEO goals.** Prepare a list of target keywords that optimize your content's searchability to the right audience. Guide content producers by specifying your SEO goals. For example, increasing landing page visits, generating email subscribers, and promoting product discounts.

→ **Primary competitors.** Help outsourced content creators understand your niche further by identifying your top competitors. This step also gives them an idea of the topics and content types that work for your target audience.

→ **Links to existing content.** Specify internal links to include in each piece. Internal links distribute traffic to your website's "inner" pages. This tactic boosts their crawlability and improves SEO. Target internal links may vary per content assignment. Also, compile the URLs of public pages (contact forms, product pages, and service pages) into a spreadsheet to help content producers find relevant internal links for their pieces.

→ **Previous studies, surveys, or research you've conducted.** Share links to data-driven content previously produced by your organization. This action provides freelance writers with relevant data points to mention or build content ideas around. If you're a small or new business that hasn't conducted original research, your content marketing specialist should be able to guide you.

Be sure to gauge an external content service provider's willingness to understand your brand on a deeper level. This indicates their ability to develop content strategies tailored to your marketing objectives.

Create a Documented Content Strategy

In a 2021 survey, <u>97% of marketers said content was an essential part of their overall strategy</u>. And yet, only 57% said they had a documented content marketing strategy in place.

Part of your documented strategy should cover the tasks you need to outsource. If your company has a documented plan, you can jump straight to hiring writers. But if your strategy isn't fully developed, consider bringing in a seasoned content marketer or strategist. One who can help refine and document your content plan.

Here are some content marketing tasks you can outsource:

- → Strategy & planning.
- → Topic ideation & research.
- → SEO keyword research.
- → Writing.
- → Editing & proofreading.
- → Content promotion & distribution.
- → Graphic design & image sourcing.

Identifying your content outsourcing needs also helps you decide between hiring individual freelancers or managed service providers.

Managed services can handle a broader range of tasks as a packaged plan. This type of partner is usually more cost-effective than hiring individual freelancers to fill different positions.

Remember, you must also invest in platforms to help your hybrid content team work together. A content or digital marketing agency should have everything set without additional fees. More importantly, they don't require micromanagement to achieve content marketing objectives.

Step 4 Discuss Your Needs with Content Stakeholders

Consult your in-house content specialists and stakeholders to identify what's holding your content marketing back. A company's content stakeholders include:

- Subject matter experts.
- Editorial team.
- SEO managers.
- PR & media teams.

- Social media management teams.
- Customer service teams.
- In-house writers.
- Your executive team.

For example, the lack of writers may bottleneck campaigns by delaying content projects. In this case, bolstering your team with fresh and reliable writers should be the top priority. Conversely, you may have a surplus of available writers but not enough outlines and assignments. That means your team could use another content strategist or SEO researcher to keep your writers busy.

Your internal content team should know the bottlenecks in your content strategy more than anyone else. Work with them to pinpoint processes that can improve content outsourcing.

Step 5 **Decide Who to Hire**

With your goals and outsourcing needs in check, you're ready to talk to prospective content service providers. Explore the different managed services or scan freelance marketplaces. Most platforms include built-in search tools with filters to help sieve out potential candidates.

To save time, pre-screen your freelance candidates with the following considerations:

→ Do they have relevant experience or expertise?
→ Can they provide examples of their previous work?
→ Are they a good fit for your brand's tone and style?
→ Do they understand SEO optimization?
→ How well do they communicate?
→ What is their process for content creation?
→ Can they meet your deadlines?
→ What are their rates?

Choosing the Right Partner: Questions to Ask Content Service Providers

Some questions you might want to ask your content service partner include:

→ How much input will I have in the content creation process?
→ How do you determine which topics to write about?
→ What is your quality control process?
→ What happens if I'm not happy with a piece of content?
→ How often will I receive reports or updates on the project's progress?
→ What are your rates?
→ Can you give me a discount if I commit to a long-term contract?

Making the final call

Meet with your team and discuss what you learned from the companies and freelancers you engaged with.

Ensure you're on the same page about which tasks to outsource, what kind of talent you need, and your content outsourcing budget.

If you'll work directly with writers, discuss who will manage them, create keyword strategies, and edit their work. Also, examine the metrics you'll use for tracking performance. Specify who in your company should liaise with new associates and provide guidance toward achieving performance targets.

Step 6   Craft Your Agreement

When you're ready to hire, sit down with your contractor or content partner to finalize your work arrangement.

Experienced service providers should already have ready-to-sign contracts. You may need to create a new contract from scratch if hiring individual writers, strategists, editors, or other specialists.

The agreement should be clear about the budget, variables, schedule, and goals. For example, if you're working with a writer, your agreement should answer questions like:

→ How many pieces of content will you receive each month?
→ Who will be responsible for doing keyword research?
→ What will be each piece's average word count or word count range?
→ Will images be included?
→ Will the work be proofread, edited, and checked for plagiarism?
→ How many revisions can you request before there's an extra fee?
→ When is payment due?

With fully-managed teams, the agreement should specify the reports and updates you'll receive and how often. Include a quality control section, so everyone is clear about expectations for the finished content.

Step 7 # Developing a Content Strategy

Get your content strategy down on paper and ensure your outsourced workforce is in the equation. Your content strategy determines the success of every content you produce, so it's essential to get it right.

Agencies and freelance content consultants can create the strategy for you. Outsourced content experts with other specialties can also lend their expertise and experience to enhance your strategy.

Developing a Content Strategy

Pin down the following details when creating your documented content strategy:

→ A list of keywords you intend to target.
→ Your brand voice and identity.
→ The brand stories you plan to tell.
→ Your target market.
→ Your goals.
→ External and internal linking strategies.
→ Obstacles and opportunities.
→ Analysis of your competitor's content.
→ Analysis of your existing content.
→ Resources you prefer to cite as research or external links.
→ The channels you'll use to publish and promote your content (blog, social media, podcasts, and video-sharing channels).

Compile all the information above into a single document (or build a portal to several documents). Use project management tools to make everything accessible to your internal and external content teams.

Step 8 Define Your Content Development Process

Suppose you're hiring a full-service agency to do everything from strategy to execution. The content development process at your end is pretty straightforward. You must discuss your expectations, review the work, analyze reports, and share your feedback.

But if you're only hiring individual freelancers, your in-house team will take on a more active role. You need a content production strategy with a clear workflow, timeline, and division of responsibilities.

This requires clear answers to the following questions:

→ Who is in charge of keyword research, and what is the timeline?
→ Who will convert the keyword research into briefs for the writers?
→ Who will supervise the writers' work?
→ What will the deadlines be?
→ Who will edit the work, test links, verify keyword usage, and check for plagiarism?
→ Who will locate or create images and publish the posts?
→ Who will be in charge of promoting the content?
→ How will you measure and report results?
→ What will be the timelines for these tasks?

Top Tools for Managing Your Hybrid Content Team

Trello: A lightweight, Kanban-style project management tool. It lets you organize everything down to the smallest tasks. With Trello, you can sort content objectives into cards, organize them into boards, assign them to content creators, and set deadlines

Notion: Create shared notes and customizable pages. This tool helps streamline collaboration between content team members. Build to-do lists, share content strategies, build Gantt charts, and more.

Slack: Establish specific communication channels between content team members for specific topics. For example, create channels for brand guidelines, assignments, and the review process. Slack also has a mobile app that lets you reach anyone on your team regardless of where they are.

Google Docs: Enable your content team to work on the same document simultaneously. You can share suggestions, make edits, and brainstorm through comments. Google Docs integrates with Google Workspace, a suite of collaboration and productivity tools for virtual teams.

Zoom: A complete video conferencing software with screen-sharing capabilities. Brainstorm ideas, share feedback, discuss strategy, and collaborate in real time with your virtual meeting space.

Step 9 **Build Your Content Calendar**

Now that you know what kind of content you'll create, it's time to start planning when and where to publish it. Create a detailed content calendar to ensure the timely and purposeful completion of content tasks.

Your content calendar should include:

→ The topics you'll be covering.
→ The format of each piece of content (e.g., blog post, video, infographic).
→ The target keywords for each piece.
→ Any other important information, such as calls to action or links to landing pages.
→ The name of the person responsible for creating each piece of content.
→ The due date for each piece.
→ The publication date for each piece.

Spreadsheets and basic calendar apps can work for planning content projects, especially if you only work with a handful of freelancers. Alternatively, use a productivity app like Trello, Notion, or a full-service agency's platform of choice to build your content calendar.

Create Briefs & Assign Content

Prepare content briefs to ensure each piece aligns with your company's goals and expectations.

Usually, a brief includes:

→ **Topic/suggested headline:** Use content ideation, keyword research, and competitor analysis to find potential content topics.

→ **Keywords:** Mention the target keywords, including primary and secondary keywords, for each assignment.

→ **Word count target:** Get the average word count of the top 10 search engine results and use it as a baseline for your assignments.

→ **Deadline:** Set reasonable deadlines within the capabilities and outputs discussed with your content creators.

→ **Description of the content desired:** Double down on important details about the assignment. Including the piece's objective and essential subtopics to cover.

→ **Resources to consult:** Share helpful resources to help content creators with the research process.

→ **Target audience:** Remind content creators who the content is for.

→ **Calls to action & target links:** Mention internal links and CTAs to include.

→ **Additional deliverables:** Mention additional elements to include in the final output (FAQs, meta descriptions, data tables, and images).

Content briefs can also have a complete outline, defining the piece's structure and subheadings.

A fully-managed content service provider should handle the creation of briefs and outlines. Freelance writers may also chip in their ideas to help prepare these documents.

For example, ClearVoice works by providing you with a dedicated content marketing team. This includes a talent manager and editor. As well as a project manager in charge of the entire content production process—from content ideation to delivery.

Step 11 | Establish QA Measures for Content

Establish clear quality guidelines for your content review process. Check each submission's alignment with your brand voice, objectives, target audience, and other content requirements.

If you're working with individual writers, consider the following steps in your review process:

→ Check for plagiarism (even unintended plagiarism can be flagged for duplicate content—negatively impacting SEO).

→ Proofread.

→ Grammar check.

→ Test links.

→ Confirm that the content is fully optimized for the keywords provided.

→ Verify that the content is accurate.

→ Check that content reflects your brand and voice.

→ Ensure the content meets your standards.

With a fully-managed service, delivered content already went through proofreading, SEO, and editing. Still, you must verify if the content reflects your brand voice and meets your QA standards.

If you're unsatisfied with the content, send your feedback along with a formal revision request.

If you work with freelancers, streamline the review process with tools like Grammarly, Copyscape, and Hemingway App. However, you should still be transparent with freelancers and give feedback where it's due.

Clarify the changes you need to see and why. Clear communication helps freelance writers improve their outputs and nail content expectations.

Writers are usually happy to do one set of revisions without charging extra. But if you're changing the scope or focus from the original brief, they might expect additional payment for rewrites.

Track the performance of your outsourced writers across categories like content quality, timeliness, communication, and overall reliability. Working with freelancers usually isn't a long-term commitment. You can give writers a second chance if their performance is serviceable. If not, they should be easy to replace.

If you partnered with a content agency, don't hesitate to voice your concerns. Their management should handle the necessary adjustments internally. Whether it involves fine-tuning their strategy or delegating tasks to other writers.

In addition to your writers' performance, use analytics to measure the results of your content campaigns.

Unlike advertising, content marketing results aren't immediate. However, you should see traffic slowly build over time as you grow your content library.

Establish KPIs and schedule regular check-ins to identify necessary adjustments to your content strategy.

For example, you might measure:

→ The number of new visitors to your site each month.
→ The number of leads or sales generated from content each month.
→ The average time spent on a page.
→ The number of social media shares per post.
→ Bounce rate (the percentage of people who leave after viewing only one page).
→ Your page rankings for targeted keywords.

Use Google Analytics to track these metrics in real time. Connecting Google Analytics with Google Search Console lets you track which queries bring the most traffic to your website.

Your goal is to improve all of these metrics gradually over time. As you learn which content types and topics perform well, double down on those strategic components to sustain your results.

Managing Relationships with Freelancers

While freelancers are not your employees, your guidance and feedback still considerably impact their performance. This, along with a positive working relationship, benefits their long-term reliability and productivity.

Some ways to ensure a good working relationship with freelancers are:

→ Be clear and concise in your expectations and feedback.
→ Respect their time by being prompt with payments and feedback.
→ Offer regular work to keep them engaged.
→ Give them a warning if you'll increase or decrease their workload.
→ Offer them honest feedback and allow them to correct anything that's not going well.
→ Give praise when they do a good job.

Remember, freelancers don't have annual reviews or supervisors to tell them they're performing well. They rely primarily on your feedback to hone their craft and grow professionally.

When working with a fully managed team, be direct about your needs and concerns. They'll handle how to relay your feedback to their internal content production team. Secure direct lines of communication with your agency to ensure success.

Regular doses of constructive and positive feedback keep your content team on track. Let them know which content thrills you, which performs best, and which pieces missed the mark. This will help them understand your expectations better and give you the content you expect.

It's also essential to update your agency as your company, and its marketing goals evolve. For example, let your content team know if you're targeting a new audience or changing your focus.

Should You Replace Human Writers with AI?

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Invest in Content Outsourcing to *Bolster* Your Content Marketing

Content outsourcing is a great way to ensure your content production process stays on schedule.

It also lets you tap into the global pool of content experts and help in-house content specialists focus on their roles. Working with agencies and freelance content creators may seem daunting, but it doesn't have to be.

ClearVoice is here to help every step of the way, whether you wantt to hire skilled writers or employ a fully-managed solution. Schedule a content strategy session and let our content specialists devise the perfect plan to hit and exceed your campaign goals.