Interactive Content
BASICS
Why and how to replace boring content with engaging experiences.
From boring to exciting

Content marketing creates engagement and provides buyer education. Because of this, content marketing budgets and resources continue to increase.

But with the rising tide of more and more content, it can be challenging to differentiate and demonstrate compelling results.

There is a sizable, proven opportunity to increase engagement, consumption, and conversion by transforming static, boring, ordinary content into extraordinary experiences built for two-way interaction.

Everyone creates and distributes content the same ways—everything about that experience is undifferentiated. Interactive content is proven to differentiate and educate far better than its static predecessors. It engages people in a useful and informative dialogue that attracts and holds their interest. It’s the future of content and it’s here now.

"There are only two ways for companies to break through in an environment that is unprecedented in its cacophony. They can be ‘amazing’ or they can be useful. Instead of betting all your money on ‘amazing,’ what if... you just focused on being useful?"

-Jay Baer
What’s Interactive Content?

Interactive content is browser-based and designed for visitor participation. It isn’t content created solely to be read or watched; rather it’s designed to be something that your audience actively engages in—getting and giving useful information.

Consider some of the most common content marketing tactics—articles, blogs, whitepapers, webinars, research papers, case studies, videos. Consumption of this content is entirely pass/fail. It is either read (or watched), or it isn’t. And often, as marketers, we don’t even know if it was consumed.

In stark contrast, an interactive content experience is participatory, often including a feedback loop in which the outcome of the experience is directly impacted by the interaction of the visitor.

Content marketing is defined as “a marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a target audience—with the objective of driving profitable customer action.”

-Content Marketing Institute (CMI)
There are many types of interactive content, like:

- Assessments
- Calculators
- eBooks
- Quizzes
- Resource Library
- Interactive Infographics
- Lookbooks & Tours
- Interactive White Papers
- Solution Finders

From Content to Experience

Great content, presented in a useful way, can be an effective way to educate, influence and persuade your audience while building affinity for your brand. But it’s not enough to create great content. The content itself is only the beginning. Interactivity bridges the gap between content and experience. And, these types of active experiences are inherently measurable, providing rich audience and individual insights into content consumption, engagement, and conversion.

Find out what type of content is right for you: https://apps.ioninteractive.com/site/solution-finder/interactive-content
The cacophony of content has become deafening — it’s asymptotically impossible to break through the noise with one more white paper, infographic, webinar or eBook. The burden on prospects to absorb all that passive content has become too heavy. Fill-out-a-form-to-get-an-asset lead generation tactics have become stale — and due to way too much shock on the other side of submit buttons, prospects are increasingly skeptical of taking the bait.

Chief MarTec on Interactive Content:
There are five reasons why I believe a massive wave of interactive content is coming:

1. The cacophony of content has become deafening — it’s asymptotically impossible to break through the noise with one more white paper, infographic, webinar or eBook.

2. The burden on prospects to absorb all that passive content has become too heavy.

3. Fill-out-a-form-to-get-an-asset lead generation tactics have become stale — and due to way too much shock on the other side of submit buttons, prospects are increasingly skeptical of taking the bait.

4. The value of data from expressed behavioral characteristics of prospects — to feed internal analytics and external personalization — strongly incentivizes marketers to pursue genuine engagement over artificial conversion.

5. The shift in the buyer’s journey, away from dialogues with salespeople to more self-service research and evaluation in digital channels, now puts the onus on marketing to provide more consultative and useful interactions. There’s a widening gap here today.

*2017 Content Marketing Institute’s Report: The Symphony of Connected Interactive Content Marketing
Ideas and Inspiration

Beyond content that merely is something, these content experiences actually do something. Explore the major types of functional, interactive content.

Interactive Infographics
The most popular type of interactive content according to Content Marketing Institute’s 2017 research study is interactive infographics. These powerfully visual experiences engage visitors in educational quizlets and micro-assessments wrapped in attention grabbing animations.

Assessments
Self-assessments were the most popular type of interactive content in Content Marketing Institute’s 2016 research study. That’s because they are incredibly useful to both the visitor and the marketer. In the process of assessment questions and answers, both parties learn a lot of useful and valuable information. They’re highly personal and educational, resulting in unprecedented profiling insight.
Lookbooks
Lookbooks visualize and simplify into powerfully bold experiences where pictures are worth far more than a thousand words. Online, modern design creates intrigue and interest in navigable, animated and highly functional experiences.

Interactive White Papers
Everybody has a white paper—or 20—lying around. If you have chapter-based content, create a more engaging, useful and measurable online version that incorporates quizzes and self-assessments wrapped in persuasive design and animation. Interactive white papers are great at generating leads to contact sales or downloadable version.

Interactive eBooks
Interactive eBooks engage the user in a “choose their own adventure” experience. As they interact, the content becomes more and more specific and relevant to their needs and preferences. Both the user and marketer learn what’s important.
Calculators
Calculators often transform the most mundane content into the most exciting. Turn your internal pricing spreadsheet into an online calculator. Even complex pricing can be converted into a pricing range estimator. Most organizations have something that can be calculated into potential return on investment, a total cost of ownership, quantity price breaks or even body mass index.

Solution Finders
Help your buyers zero in on the solution that’s right for them. Solution finders allow buyers to navigate their way through existing solutions exactly as they see fit, answering the question, “What’s right for me?” This establishes a clear and immediate fit for the buyer—making it an invaluable content piece for the middle of the buyer’s journey.

Quizzes
Quizzes are magnetic content. They attract attention and result in social sharing much like interactive infographics. Visitors love short quizzes that put their knowledge to the test and keep them guessing. Show them the answers they got right and wrong, with tips or insights, and let them share their results.
Why Interactive Content?

What makes interactive content not simply a nice consideration, but a pressing marketing imperative? Far more certainty about every aspect of content—from leads and sales, to measurement and insights.

Better engagement—Static content provides limited opportunity for audience engagement. Visitors can read, watch, convert, and share. But not much more. An interactive experience is inherently participatory—solutions configured, calculations made, quizzes taken, chapters navigated. Visitors naturally interact with the content, becoming immersed in the experience instead of passively reading.

Meaningful sales alignment—Individual content interactions can be surfaced to the sales team in a meaningful context, allowing them to meet their buyers at the point of interest. Unlike static content, which offers very little information about how a lead actually engaged with your content, interactive content can tell you what a lead is most interested in, how much of your content they consumed, what inputs they provided, and much more.

From their CRM, salespeople can gain instant, contextual understanding of every piece of interactive content their lead has experienced.

73% agree that combining traditional content marketing tactics with interactive content enhances retention of my organization’s message.*
Richer measurement—Virtually everything within an online content experience can be tracked, measured, and reported on. Beyond page views, bounce rates and conversion, interactive content provides an opportunity to see the outcomes and patterns of content interactions.

Strong differentiation—Interactive content is a proven way to differentiate your brand and offer something more interesting and compelling to your audience. It’s a more conversational way of interacting as opposed to just pushing resources and hoping people respond.

Demonstrable consumption—When content is interacted with, consumption can be tracked and analyzed. While static content is pass/fail (a visitor lands and then what? They can only leave, share or convert), interactive content provides deep insights into actual content consumption.

Higher conversion rates—An exceptional, relevant content experience drives more leads and sales than static content.

66% of content marketers use interactive content as the #1 reason for engagement.*

"Digital touch points can drive revenue, lower costs, build brands, and engender customer loyalty. But to achieve these potential benefits, companies must deliver digital interactions that meet their customers' needs in easy and enjoyable ways."

-Forrester Research, Top 10 Ways To Improve Digital Experiences

75% agree that nongated interactive content can provide a “sample” of the brand, resulting in a higher degree of lead nurturing.*
Typically, interactive content is custom built by software developers. There are inherent inefficiencies with custom-developed solutions. In addition to long lead times and high costs for development, a hard-coded interactive experience is inflexible and can’t be modified or updated without additional costs & time.

Modern organizations use agile, flexible, marketer-managed platforms to deploy interactive content experiences at scale.

How to Start

Start by repurposing one asset, then another and another. You’ll have an interactive journey in no time.

How does your content marketing stack up? Take this quick assessment for tips & recommendations: https://apps.ioninteractive.com/site/interactive-content-marketing-assessment
Benefits of an Interactive Content Platform

**Speed to Market**—With built-in pre-fabricated interactive content templates based on best practices, the platform provides the fastest, most dependable way to go from concept to launch.

**Flexible Creation**—Simple rules-based logic and drag & drop design provide innumerable customization options without dependency on developers.

**Simplified integration**—Single integration point connects all your interactive content into your marketing technology ecosystem; seamlessly share data with CRM, analytics, marketing automation, and customer data platforms.

**Reusable**—Reuse content and functionality across a wide array of interactive content experiences.

**Personalize & Target**—Every user interaction can contribute behavioral and profile data that can be leveraged for personalization & targeting across your entire journey of interactive experiences.

**Centralized & Decentralized Control**—Centralize brand control and consistent measurement; decentralize interactive content creation and deployment to brands, teams, regions, etc.

**Testing & Optimization**—Rather than being restricted to just one version of an interactive content experience, use built-in testing capabilities to learn which experiences & content are most effective at increasing engagement and conversion rates.

It’s Time to Engage
Repurpose your static, passive content into engaging, effective, and measurable interactive experiences. You’ll find higher engagement and consumption, lower bounce rates, a better user experience, and far richer audience insights.
About Ion Interactive

Ion’s enterprise interactive content SaaS platform and services empower modern marketers to engage, convert and profile higher quality leads using code-free, data-driven interactivity. Ion’s interactive experiences exceed high user expectations by delivering engaging and personal content responsively designed across all devices — mobile, tablet and desktop.

www.ioninteractive.com