The Specificity Strategy: How To Turn Generic Posts Into Stand Out Content - Growandconvert.com

I've been hearing many people complain lately, saying things like:

"Content marketing has become too hard. It's impossible to compete with all of the other blogs writing about the exact same thing."

But the hard truth is:

Content marketing hasn't become harder. Readers have just become smarter.

Our audiences don't want to read *the same, boring, regurgitated content.*

They've been tricked into reading clickbait headlines for the last 5 years and they're tired of it.
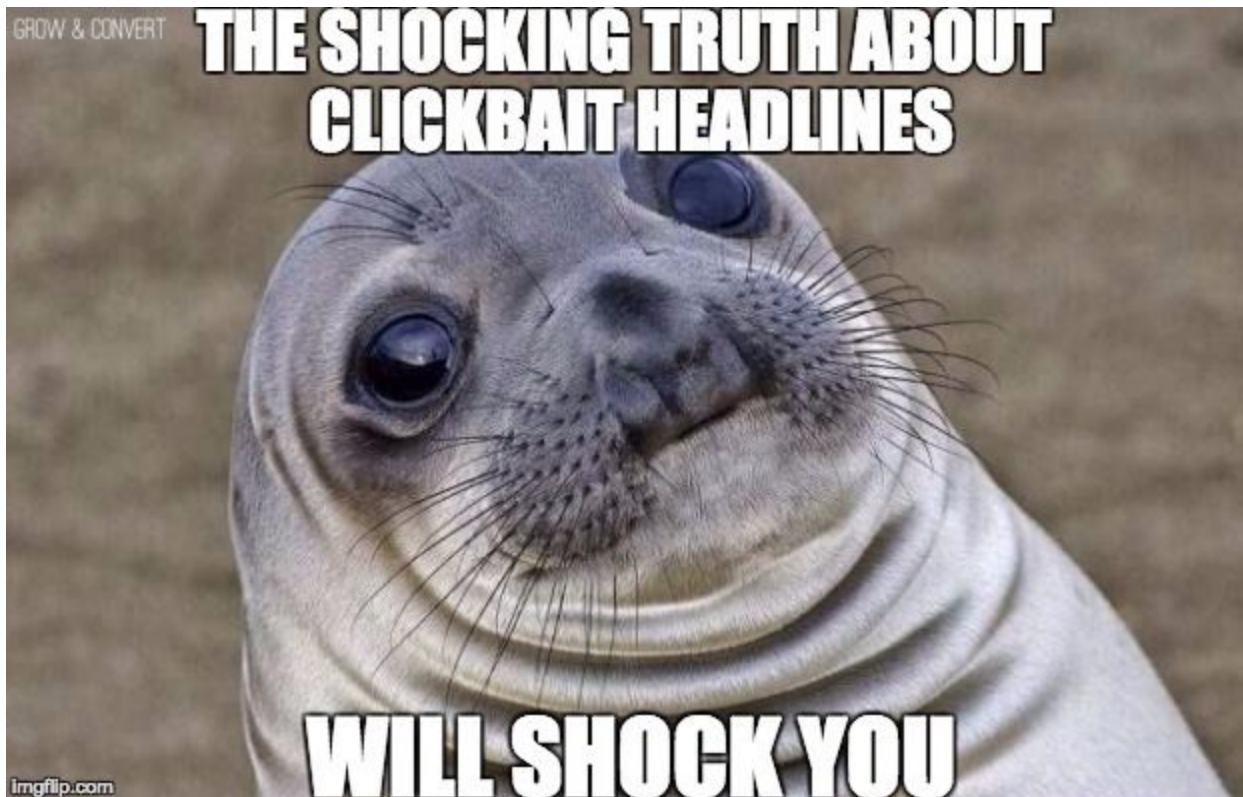
The challenge that we content marketers face these days is not what content to create, but how to make it stand out from the rest of the blogs out there covering the same topic.

Rand says the answer to this problem is that companies should focus on [10x content](#).

Neil says to write [long-form content](#).

We say the key is **the specificity strategy**.

The Specificity Strategy: How To Turn Generic Posts Into Stand Out Content - Growandconvert.com

Most Blogs Try To Create Content Around Topics That Are Too Broad. This Leads to High-Level, Boring, and Generic Posts.

Last week we did an exercise with the nine companies that are going through our Customers From Content Program.

We had them come up with post ideas for the different types of content we think do well for businesses - case studies, narratives, how-tos, opinion pieces, mega guides, and data posts.

After seeing their worksheets come back, we noticed a big trend amongst their ideas.

Most were way too generic.

We were getting post ideas like:

"How To Get More Customers For Your Startup" - for an app referral SaaS product.

And...

"So you just realized your business needs an app. Where to start from?" - for an app development company.

Even I fell victim to the generic content ideas when I drafted a post about "How To Create Valuable Content" for this blog, only to get shut down by Devesh saying the post was too broad.

The Specificity Strategy: How To Turn Generic Posts Into Stand Out Content - Growandconvert.com

[Image Credit](#)

Why Are These Ideas Bad?

On the surface, these posts seem like "good" content ideas....

They are generally solving a pain point.

They also relate to the audience that would be interested in the product.

But if we wrote posts like these, our traffic and engagement would almost surely drop.

Because where these ideas fall short is specificity.

The problem with these ideas are: **they are not blog posts.**

These ideas are entire blogs.

Here's what I mean...

The idea "How To Get Customers For Your Startup"

There are *entire sites* that talk about [how to get customers for SaaS startups](#). How could someone possibly distill all of their advice into one compelling post?

If someone attempted to do that, they'd likely end up with a [book about finding customers for your startup](#), not a blog post.

By trying to create a post about a subject as broad as this, your post will be average at best.

The idea "So you just realised your business needs an app. Where to start from?"

Where do you even start writing this post? Do you talk about what decisions need to be made internally? Do you talk about user stories? Do you talk about design? Do you talk about budgetary requirements? There are too many ways you can take this post.

Again, you could write an entire book on this subject or sit on the phone with someone for a few hours explaining this.
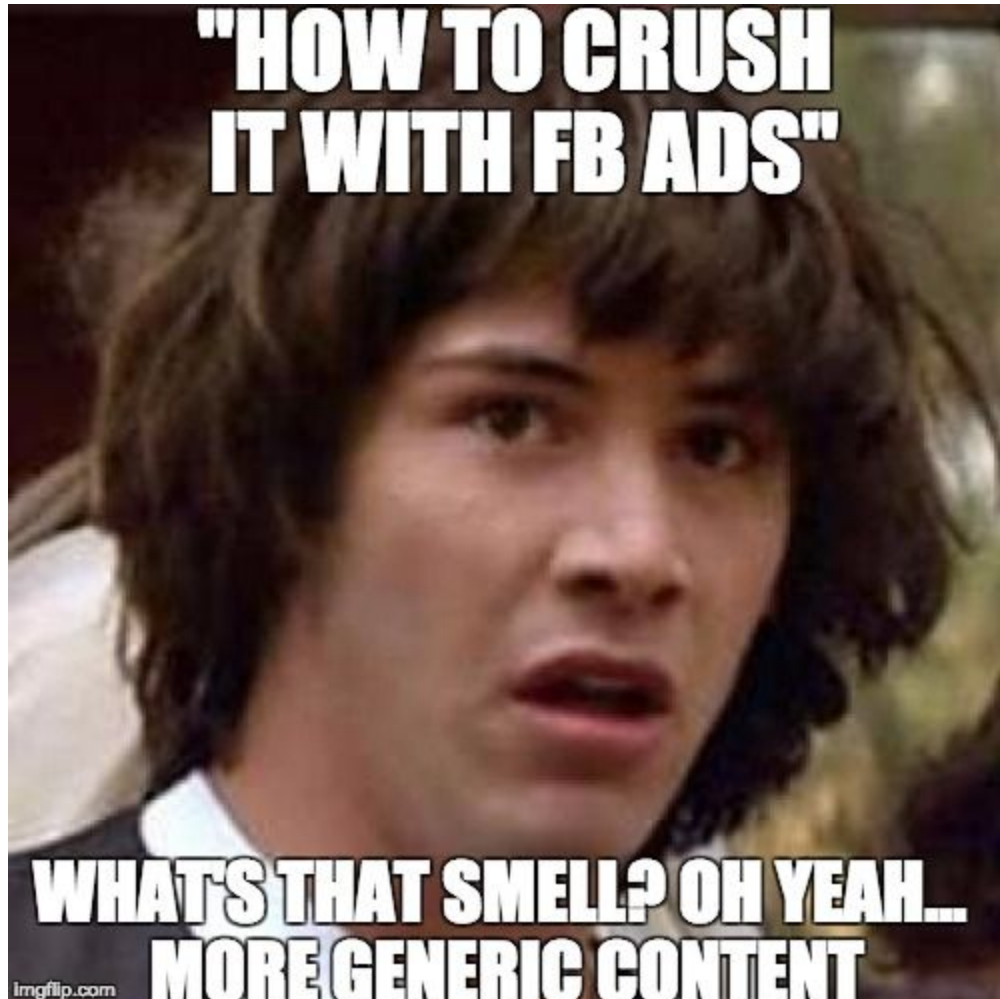
The idea "How to Write Valuable Content"

Again, this isn't a blog post, this is an entire blog.

Problogger has an [entire section on their site](#) dedicated to this subject. If I tried to write a post on this subject, I'd probably fail miserably because there are too many elements to cover about what makes content valuable.

Where do you go with this type of post? Do you cover the format? The story? The readability? The research? Etc.

The Specificity Strategy: How To Turn Generic Posts Into Stand Out Content - Growandconvert.com

Your Audience Can Smell the Stench of These Generic Ideas From Just the Title

Think about it…

The title is usually a dead giveaway if it's going to be a boring read.

Would you be compelled to read an article on "How to write valuable content"?

You can almost predict the lame advice it would give:
- It'll have some generic intro about how content marketing is the key to all kinds of success
- It'll then tee up the problem by saying it's hard and you need valuable content
- Then it will do the thing we all dread: list 6 or 7 high level ideas on what makes content valuable and cover each in 1 - 3 paragraphs.

The Specificity Strategy: How To Turn Generic Posts Into Stand Out Content - Growandconvert.com

We've all seen 400 of those articles come through our social feeds in the past year.

That's why we are convinced...

The #1 reason why companies are failing to write compelling blog posts is because their topics aren't specific enough.

Now let's explore how to turn your generic content ideas into specific ideas that resonate directly with your audience.

Use "The Specificity Strategy" to Turn Your Generic Post Ideas Into Premier Pieces That Stand Out

Let's start off with an example.

When we decided to [write a guide about finding and hiring writers](), it never started as one post idea.

It started by looking at the broad topic (Finding and Hiring Writers) and then figuring out all of the pain points along the way that someone would need to think through to solve the broad problem.

In other words, we first covered our basics: we [had the user research in place to know who our target customers were and understand their pain points in depth.]()

The first post we released on this subject was about the [Hiring In-House Writers vs. Hiring A Content Marketing Agency vs. Building A Team of Freelance Writers](). We knew that if someone was building a content marketing operation, this would typically be the first question that comes to mind: "Is it better to hire in-house, hire a content marketing agency or build a team of freelancers?"

In the post, I made the case that building a team of freelancers is more cost efficient and a lot more scalable than the other options based on my experience.

Then the next post was about [how to find, evaluate and hire writers for your blog](). This post covered the issue of: if you decided to build a team of freelance writers, how do you find them and what's the best way to evaluate them?

Then the next challenge that people have after finding great writers is knowing how much to pay them and how to keep them motivated. That was the [topic of my next post]().

Once all of those three posts were written, it covered *most* of the process around finding and hiring writers… so we compiled all three posts, added some more content that filled in the gaps, and decided to turn this topic into a mega guide. The whole guide covered 5000+ words on the topic.

Imagine if we had tried to cram all of that information into one post…

It would've been too high level and probably wouldn't have been helpful to our audience.

Here's Our Process For Turning Generic Posts Into Highly Valuable Pieces of Content

1. First, know the high level pain point. Don't guess. If you don't know, [figure it out.](#)
2. Now think of all of the reasons why someone would be searching for advice on that subject. You could use the [suggested search hack](#) to figure out what people are searching for or use Q&A forums like [Quora](#).
3. Make a list of all of the reasons and write really detailed posts about those subjects. If these specific reasons are corroborated by your user research surveys or conversations, even better.

Luke Ryan of [Mokriya](#), a company that develops enterprise software, is in the process of conducting interviews with some of their marquee clients with the goal of helping other companies learn from what some of the best did.

We were going back and forth on ideas for interview topics and he shot over the idea "How SanDisk Created The Best File Management Software In The World".

It's a good idea, I'd be interested in reading about it, but conducting that interview would be difficult. There's so many pieces to it. Where do you start? What elements of the product creation process do you talk about?

We took the high-level concept and broke it out into 10-15 different ideas for blog posts around how they achieved this. Here are some of them:

- How SanDisk conducted user research and what insights it led to
- Each of the core 7 principles of UX and how they approached them
- How the designer designed their wireframes with the user in mind
- How to design an app to meet brand guidelines of a large company
- How SanDisk conducted user testing and what they learned, what they tweaked, etc.

By going down to this level of specificity, it :

The Specificity Strategy: How To Turn Generic Posts Into Stand Out Content - Growandconvert.com

1. Makes it really easy to form interview questions because the topics are much more defined
2. Walks through how to solve a specific pain point that other companies might be having internally
3. Makes each piece easier to promote - some posts would be better for UX groups, UI groups, product development groups, etc.

I'm also working with Sara Binde on her site [Carob Cherub](#), a company that helps empower women to boost their self confidence.

Sara has a [transformational story](#) about how she went from being obese to losing 70 pounds. Her goal is to share her learnings about weight loss and being more self confident with others.
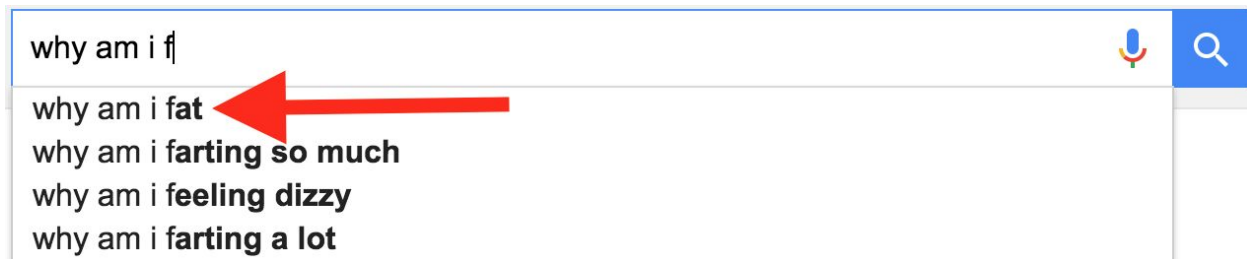

Over the last few weeks, we've been using the [suggested search hack](#) to come up with a list of topics that would be good for her audience.

Upon doing some research, we found that question "Why Am I Fat" was a highly searched question in Google.

The Specificity Strategy: How To Turn Generic Posts Into Stand Out Content - Growandconvert.com

This was a topic that also resonated with Sara as it was a feeling that she once used to have and would search for advice on.

So we decided that this would be a good subject for a post.

She wrote it, the post is really good and will likely rank for that long-tail search term because it's better than most of the other posts out there.

But while reading over her draft of "[Why Am I So Fat?](#)", I realized that each of her subsections could've been entire posts of their own.

There were numerous great post topics in this one long post that most people in her audience would be interested in reading, such as:

- How to deal with bullies when you're overweight
- Diets don't fix unhealthy eating habits
- The problem with "stop eating" (aka starving yourself)
- The concept of skinny kid, fat adult - children can eat whatever they want
- How the media is to blame for self confidence issues
- Why you shouldn't go to your doctor for advice about nutrition
- Why you shouldn't listen to your mother about nutrition advice
- Why food labels lie
- Why science is best for nutrition advice

These subsections are the pain points or questions that her audience might have if they were wondering what the answer was to the question "Why Am I Fat?"

Now, instead of having one post idea that's talked about broadly, she has 9 specific post ideas that I'm sure she could go into an extreme level of detail on (and make better than any of the other content out there on the same subject).

The benefits of using this strategy are threefold:

1. **The post becomes easier to write.** Instead of writing an entire post on a broad topic with tons of different angles you could take, she now has really defined topics that she can go into extreme detail on.
2. **The post will resonate more with your audience.** The topics now speak directly to a problem, challenge or question the audience might be having. You're able to form a deeper relationship with the reader when you relate on more specific things.
3. **The post becomes easier to promote.** She can now join groups around nutrition, food science, self confidence, etc. and share the posts in those groups. Without going down to this level of specificity, these groups probably wouldn't have been good to promote her content in.

Before you write that next post, make sure it's not generic.

Now, think long and hard before writing that next post...

Is it specific enough? Or could you break that broad post idea into multiple posts?

If we made you rethink the next post you're going to write, post the original idea in the comments below and post what you ended up narrowing in on as a topic.