Workshop: Play a Better Writing Game in an AI-Dominated World

Presented by Ann Gynn, G Force Communication

IN-WORKSHOP SURVEYS
Menti.com
5238 6632
or use QR code

About Me

I was ... a former newspaper journalist

I am ... content consultant, trainer, speaker

My Most Familiar Client:
Content Marketing Institute

High School Nickname:
Editor Ann

Writing Must-Have: Shoes

Social: @AnnGynn

17,182,392

total words analyzed by Grammarly since Nov 28, 2016

I live in ...

About Me (according to ChatGPT)

Ann Gynn is a prominent figure in the world of content marketing, recognized for her extensive experience as a writer, editor, consultant, and speaker. She is the founder of G Force Communication, a consultancy that coaches brands on content strategy and creation.

Gynn serves as an editorial consultant for the highly respected Content Marketing Institute, a leading online resource for content marketing education. In this role, she contributes to the institute's editorial direction and provides valuable insights to its audience of marketing professionals.

A sought-after speaker, Gynn frequently presents at major industry events, including Content Marketing World. Her workshops and sessions are designed to equip marketers with the practical skills and strategic knowledge needed to excel in their writing and content development efforts.

Her expertise is further showcased through her work as an author for various publications, including The Tilt, a newsletter focused on content entrepreneurship. Across her various roles, Ann Gynn has established herself as a trusted voice and educator in the content marketing community.

Today's Agenda

- Welcome: What's your biggest writing challenge or pet peeve?

- Writing: The Superpower

- The Pre-Write

- The Write

- The Polished Write

- More Caveats about Humans and AI

- **SLIDE DECK:** https://bit.ly/WritingWorkshopCMW25

Writing is Your Organization's Superpower

Strategic differentiator for brands

77% of top performers attribute producing high-quality content to content marketing success

Advanced positioning:

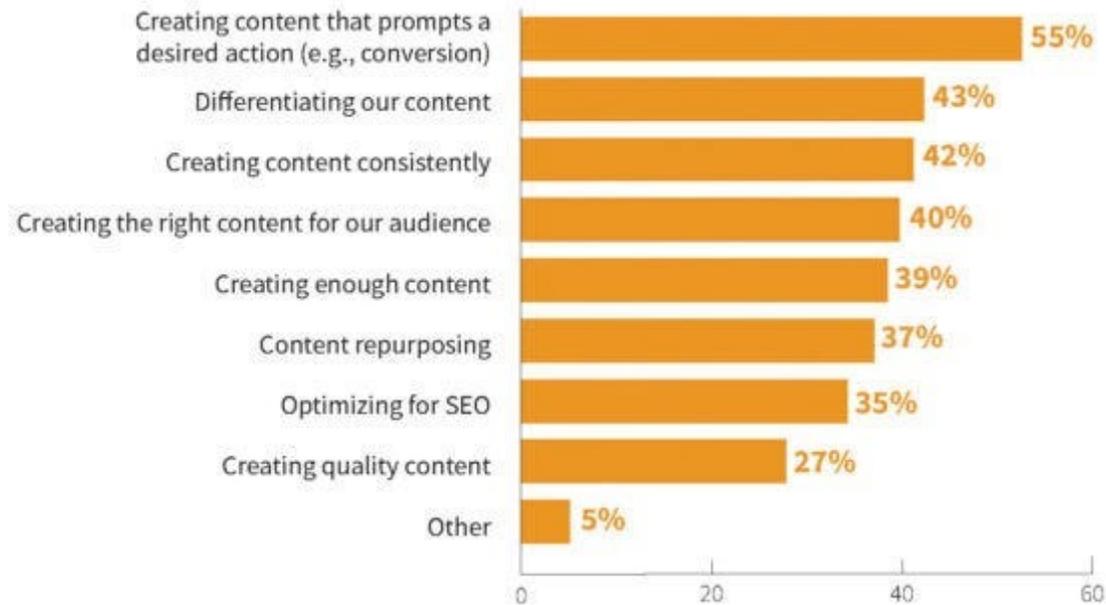Voice, point of view, and positioning cut through sameness in an AI-saturated content landscape.

Same Ingredients ...

Writing as a Superpower: Example

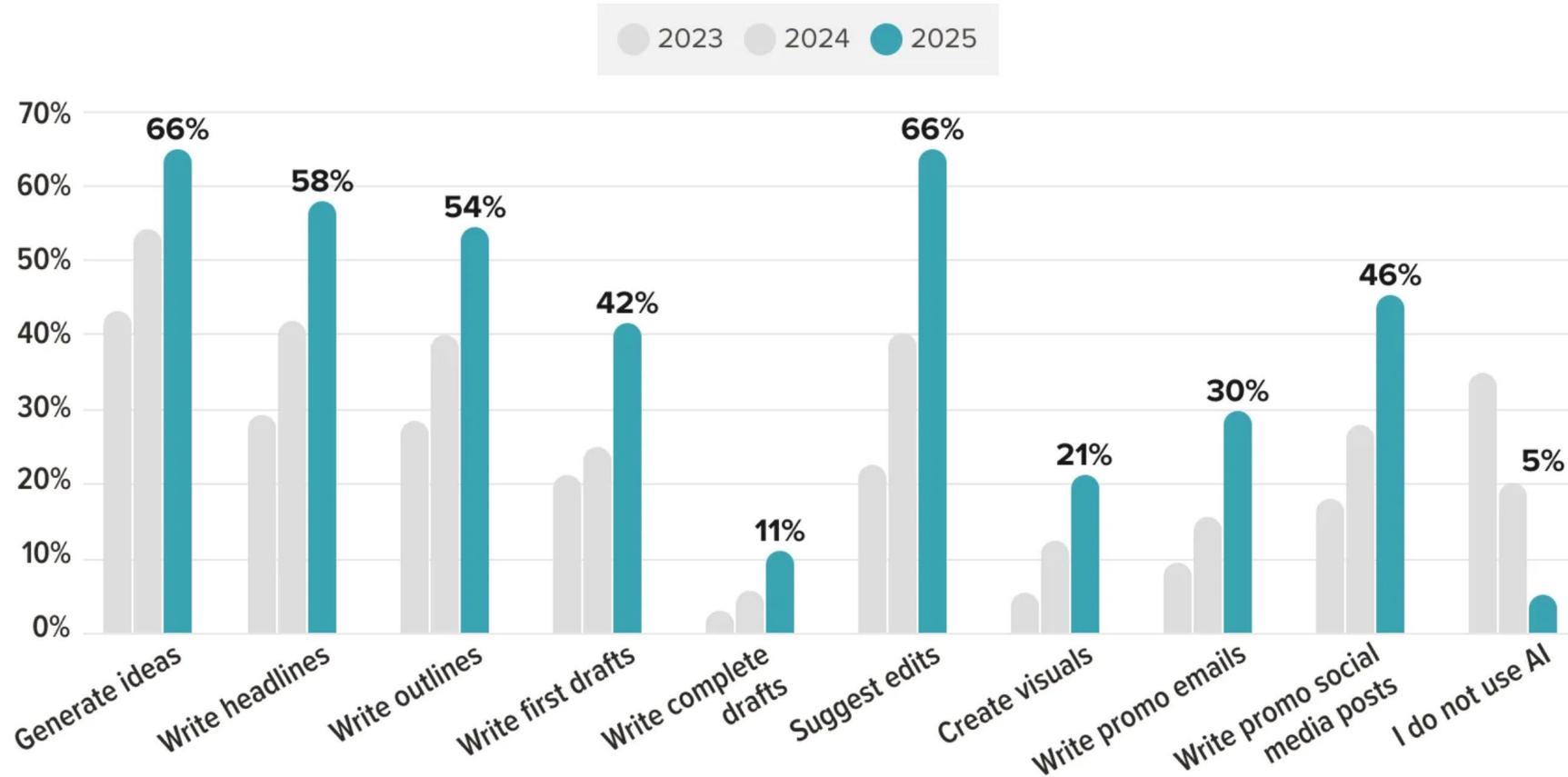| Headline	"How to Scale Your Customer Success Without Burning Your Team Out"	"Improve Retention Quickly with Automation Tools"
Intro	Begins with a short story, or ask a provocative question ("When was the last time your support team stayed after hours to keep up?"),	Starts with a list of product features ("Our platform sends emails, automates workflows..."),
Voice & Tone	Conversational, inclusive; uses metaphors/analogies; acknowledges pain points ("we know this is hard"); occasional light tone in social content.	More formal, impersonal; feature-heavy; less reference to audience internal feelings; more "you will."
Differentiator	Includes insights or tips that don't come from generic research — e.g. draws on HubSpot data, community feedback, real customer advice.	More likely to be restating trends or best practices already widely written about.
Closing	Encouraging, possibly offering more help ("Here are videos + worksheet if you want to try this approach today	More direct, "Try our product," "Learn more,"

B2B marketers' content creation challenges

Challenge	Percentage
Creating content that prompts a desired action (e.g., conversion)	55%
Differentiating our content	43%
Creating content consistently	42%
Creating the right content for our audience	40%
Creating enough content	39%
Content repurposing	37%
Optimizing for SEO	35%
Creating quality content	27%
Other	5%

Q: What content creation challenges does your content team face? (Select all that apply.)

Source: 15th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

This is how content marketers use AI in 2025

2023 2024 2025

Category	2025 %
Generate ideas	66%
Write headlines	58%
Write outlines	54%
Write first drafts	42%
Write complete drafts	11%
Suggest edits	66%
Create visuals	21%
Write promo emails	30%
Write promo social media posts	46%
I do not use AI	5%

n=808

orbitmedia.com

The Pre-Write

Invest the time before you write a sentence.

Create the Foundation

- Start with what you (should) know

- Who will read this piece?

- What will they get from this piece?

- How will they consume this piece (e.g., blog post, e-book, guest article)?

- Where will they consume this piece (i.e., distribution channel)?

- Why is the business creating this piece?

- How will the business know if this piece is successful?

Example: Pre-Write

Who will read this piece of content?

Content marketers working w/ brands

What will they get from it?

See how brands use texting in their content marketing

Where will they consume it?

CMI blog (through e-news or search)

Why are we writing it?

To share relatively untapped tactic, growing CMI brand as a content marketing educator

How will we know if it is successful?

CTR from e-newsletter, number of shares

The Pre-Write: Another Way to the Why

- What is the article about?

  - This article is about brands using text and messaging apps in their marketing.

- What's this article *really* about?

  - This article is really about marketers considering alternative ways to engage with their audiences.

  - **For the audience,** this article is really about being inspired by learning how other brands are implementing a less-used technique to engage their audiences.

  - **For the publisher,** this article is to help position the brand as an online resource for content marketers interested in fresh strategies.

The Pre-Write: No Idea? Get an AI Assist

If you can't write the WHY yet, get an assist.

- Input what you do know
- Share what you've done
- Ask for fresh ideas and push back
- Ask for ideas your competitors aren't doing
- Ask for surprising or unexpected angles on topic

The Pre-Write: Brainstorm Prompt

I write articles for marketers for the ContentMarketingInstitute.com.

These are experienced marketers who would benefit from knowing trends, how-to information to distinguish their brands from their competitors.

Please identify 5 article topics with angles that haven't been done.

The Pre-Write: Brainstorm AI Reply

Got it — you're writing for **experienced marketers** at CMI, so the challenge is to avoid the "101" angles and dig into **what's next / what's different / how to operationalize.** Here are five fresh article topic ideas that push beyond what's been covered heavily:

1. From Prompt to Pipeline: Operationalizing AI Content Beyond Blog Posts

Angle: Most AI conversations stop at "here's how to use ChatGPT for copywriting." This piece would explore **how senior marketers can build AI into repeatable workflows** — content ops, distribution, knowledge management — not just text generation. It could cover how AI is used to tag assets, personalize newsletters, generate variations for ABM, and measure performance at scale.

2. The New Competitive Moat: Building Proprietary Data Into Your Content Strategy

Angle: Marketers are drowning in "AI-generated sameness." This article would explore how **leveraging your company's own proprietary data (usage stats, surveys, industry benchmarks, customer insights)** creates defensible, non-commoditized content that competitors can't copy.

3. The Silent Content Channel: Turning Internal Enablement Into External Differentiation

Angle: Many B2B brands create tons of sales enablement material that never sees the light of day outside the sales team. This piece would show how **repackaging sales enablement (battle cards, ROI calculators, training decks)** into marketing content can create authority, speed trust-building, and set a brand apart.

The Pre-Write: Brainstorm Refined

👉 Would you like me to cross-check CMI's archive to make sure these specific angles truly haven't been covered yet — and tweak them if there's overlap? **Refined or New Article Topic Ideas Based on Gaps:** Here are refined or alternative article topics, tuned to areas CMI seems less saturated in — ones that would offer value to experienced marketers.

Original Suggestion:

From Prompt to Pipeline: Operationalizing AI Content Beyond Blog Posts

Angle: Most AI conversations stop at "here's how to use ChatGPT for copywriting." This piece would explore how senior marketers can build AI into repeatable workflows — content ops, distribution, knowledge management — not just text generation. It could cover how AI is used to tag assets, personalize newsletters, generate variations for ABM, and measure performance at scale.

Revised Suggestion:

AI-Powered Content Pipelines: Building, Governing, and Monetizing Full-Funnel Systems

Dive into case studies of brands that have built systems where AI is embedded at ideation, content creation, personalization, optimization, distribution, and measurement. Include governance, compliance, voice, brand safety, ethics. Show how to tie that pipeline to KPIs like pipeline, revenue, and retention, not just content metrics.

If you like, I can map each of those refined ideas against even more recent CMI content (past 12 months) to ensure novelty in that time span — so you can pick one that's very unlikely to overlap. Do you want me to do that?

The Pre-Write: AI Librarian

- Ask for other content on that topic and identify parameters
  - Formats
  - Dates
  - Specific sites (exclude or include)
  - Your site!

The Pre-Write: AI Researcher

- Ask for research related to your topic
  - Qualitative and/or quantitative?
  - Authoritative sources?
  - Include native sources and links
  - Detail go-to resources and no-go resources
  - Provide date parameters

- Ask for analysis that it (or you) found
  - Request the most helpful, valuable, interesting, or unexpected takeaways for your audience.
  - Ask it to synthesize

The Pre-Write: AI Assistant

- Ask for people who would be valuable to interview about the topic

- Ask who writes about the topic

- Use it to take your research, creative brief, etc., to create an outline

- VERIFY. VERIFY. VERIFY!!!!!!!!!

  - Start by asking the AI tool if it provided accurate information.

  - A human must fact-check everything!!

Exercise part 1

Ask a workshop peer this single question:

What are your thoughts on AI's use in writing?

The Pre-Write: Interviews = Human Advantage

Listen and react. Ask follow-up and clarification questions.

Observe their nonverbal cues and environment.

Go off script.

Build rapport with person so they feel more comfortable

Exercise part 2

Interview the peer on the same premise:

What are your thoughts on AI's use in writing?

The Pre-Write:
Interviews = Human Advantage + AI Assist

Ask it review the transcript to identify themes, key takeaways, surprising answers.

After you draft article:

"Read this draft and compare it to the interview transcript. What's missing that should be included for an audience of [BLANK]?

The Pre-Write: More Human Advantages

- Cross-domain creativity
- Capture emotion
- Cultural connections
- Connect the dots for non-obvious observations

Example: Human-Advantage of Cross-Domain Creativity

PURDUE UNIVERSITY®

it was the best night

Take a look at our downtown Indy pop-up during the big concert weekend! Fans met to chat about cool careers while making binary code friendship bracelets, designing high-tech photo backdrops, and learning about the science behind makeup with a Glow Up at the beauty bar with e.l.f. Cosmetics.

Exercise

Come up with one cross-cultural content idea for your organization.

The Write

Pay attention to the big picture and the details

The Write: Headlines

- What would attract the audience?

- What's the point of the content?

- Why would someone stop to consume this content?

- What's the hook?

EXERCISE: Your Turn

- **Target Audience**
  - Human resource managers in manufacturing

- **Article Topic**
  - Addressing turnover problems at manufacturing facilities

- **Your Task**
  - Write 2 headlines for search
  - Write 2 headlines for newsletter clicks

- **Submit one headline (next screen):**
  - www.Menti.com
  - Code: 52386623

Headlines

All responses to your question will be shown here
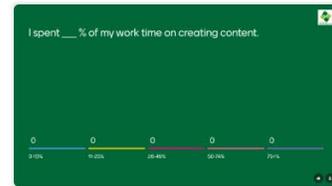
Each response can be up to 200 characters long

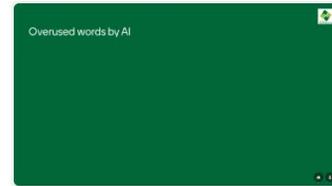Turn on voting to let participants vote for their favorites

0 / 1

Menti
CMW Writing Workshop...

Choose a slide to present

Overused words by AI

I spent ___ % of my work time on creating content.

What AI tool do you use most frequently?

Headlines

EXERCISE: Specifity is better

- How to Reduce Turnover and Improve Productivity [mediocre]

- Tips for Reducing Manufacturing Employee Turnover [good]

- Reducing Employee Turnover in a Multi-Site Manufacturing Company [best]

The Write: Headlines + AI Assist

Free Headline Generator

Generate AI-powered headlines to increase your click-through rates.

Topic   Enter your topic(s) or keyword(s).

| ex. content marketing tools, SEO | 📄 Headline ⌄ |

Audience   Enter your target audience.

ex. small business marketers

Tone   Enter your brand's tone of voice.

ex. informal

⌃ Hide optional fields

Generate Headlines

- **CoSchedule**
  - https://coschedule.com/headline-generator
- **Easy-Peasy AI**
  - https://easy-peasy.ai/templates/headline-generator
- **Grammarly**
  - www.grammarly.com/ai/ai-writing-tools/headline-generator
- **SEO Review Tools**
  - https://www.seoreviewtools.com/free-headline-generator/
- **Monster Insights – Headline Analyzer**
  - https://www.monsterinsights.com/headline-analyzer

The Write: AI Assist BEWARE

How To Create Your Best Videos Without Best Practices
▪ Score 74 out of 100
▪ 0% emotional words

How To Create Your Best Content Without Best Practices
▪ Score 78 out of 100
▪ "Emotional words are proven to drive engagement by stirring an emotional response in readers. Great headlines usually consist of 10-15% emotional words." This headline's emotional words hit 11%.

The Write: Nut Graphs & Structures

- Easier for writing
- Easier for readers
- Easier for search engines

Easier = Success More Likely

The Write: Nut Graphs

Make a promise to the reader

- Essential part of intro

- Tells the reader the what and why (and sometimes why now)

- Shapes the article's focus (or article's focus should shape it)

The Write: Nut Graphs [example]

How To Find Your Way Through the Marketing Analytics Maze

In the 20th century, marketers relied on coupons, customers' anecdotal feedback, and mainstream media subscriber numbers to understand their reach and impact. It was an educated guessing game at best to discover what worked and what didn't.

But in the digital world, numbers abound for marketers to analyze and interpret their audience and customer behavior. Still, marketing analytics remains a challenging discipline.

To help you realize you're not alone in the analytics conundrum, we asked the experts presenting at Content Marketing World what they see as the biggest challenge in marketing analytics. Fortunately, they shared their concerns and came through with advice on how to overcome the hurdles.
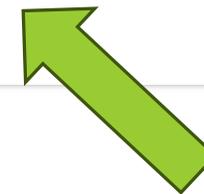
Nut Graph written by human

The Write: Nut Graphs [example]
How To Find Your Way Through the Marketing Analytics Maze

Nut Graph:

Marketing analytics has transformed from the guesswork of the 20th century into a complex but data-rich discipline in the digital age. Despite access to more metrics than ever, marketers still struggle to consolidate, interpret, and act on this information effectively. Experts from Content Marketing World highlight key challenges, including data overload, inconsistent reporting, disjointed tools, and difficulty aligning analytics with business goals. They also emphasize the importance of refining KPIs, integrating platforms, addressing skill gaps, and embracing inclusivity in data practices. By recognizing these hurdles, marketers can take strategic steps to harness meaningful insights and drive better outcomes.

Nut Graph written by ChatGPT

The Write: Structure

- Headlines and subheadlines

- Storytelling

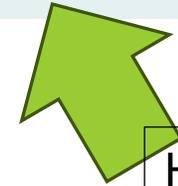# The Write: Structure Matters part 1 [The Hs count]

Every H has a purpose aka subheds matter

- Make it easier to organize writing

- Helps skimming readers

- Should tell the story in context

- May help SEO

Example: Structure

What Every Pet Owner Should Know About Food Allergies in Dogs

Headline (H1)

- [H2] What are Dog Allergens?

- [H2] Common Dog Food Allergies

- [H2] Signs of Food Allergies in Dogs

- [H2] How to Diagnose Food Allergies in Dogs

- [H2] How to Treat Food Allergies in Dogs

- [H2] Can You Prevent Food Allergies for Your Dog?

The Write: Structure Matters part 2 [Storytelling]

- **Tension–Release (aka Problem–Solution with a little drama)**

- **Definition:** Build narrative tension (a struggle, conflict, or urgent challenge), then resolve it with your brand's solution, insight, or perspective.

- **Why it works:** Humans are wired to crave resolution. AI often skips the build-up and goes straight to bland solutions.

- **Example:**

  - *Tension:* "Marketers are drowning in AI-generated noise — generic blog posts, look-alike LinkedIn updates, same old advice."

  - *Release:* "That's why the only way to win in 2025 isn't volume, it's voice. Here's how to sharpen yours."

The Write: Storytelling Structures

- **Contrast Storytelling**

- **Definition:** Set up a clear "then vs. now," "with vs. without," or "this vs. that" comparison to highlight change, urgency, or advantage.

- **Why it works:** Contrast makes abstract value tangible. AI tends to flatten nuance and doesn't naturally lean on contrast.

- **Example:**

  - *Then:* "A decade ago, thought leadership meant a white paper no one read."

  - *Now:* "Today, the brands winning attention create cinematic keynotes, live community events, and snackable research insights."

The Write: Storytelling Structures

- **Pattern Breaking**

- **Definition:** Set up an expected narrative — then break it with an unexpected twist that forces re-engagement.

- **Why it works:** Readers skim until something surprises them. Pattern interruption is a classic persuasion device AI rarely nails without human craft.

- **Example:**

  - "You don't need more leads. You need fewer."

  - "This isn't another AI think piece. In fact, it's about why AI advice is already boring you."

The Write: Storytelling Structures

Manifesto / Rallying Cry

- **Definition:** Instead of just informing, you declare a belief system or stake in the ground.
- **Example:** Patagonia's *"Don't Buy This Jacket"* ad — a bold inversion of marketing convention.

Myth-Busting (Debunk & Replace)

- **Definition:** State a widely held belief → expose why it's wrong → replace with a better truth.
- **Example:** "Marketers think more blog posts = more traffic. But 75% of traffic comes from less than 10% of posts. Here's what to do instead."

The Write: Storytelling Structures

- **Hero's Mini-Journey**

- **Definition:** Classic story arc: struggle → mentor/guide → transformation.

- **Example:** "Acme Corp was losing 30% of customers yearly. They tried X and Y. Nothing worked. Then they adopted Z and grew retention by 50% in six months."

- **Inverted Pyramid → Suspense Flip**

- **Definition:** Start with the "big reveal" or climax, then work backward to explain.

- **Example:** "The best-performing piece of content this year was written in 2 hours. Here's why speed worked."

EXERCISE: Your Turn

ASSIGNMENT:

Craft a two- to three-sentence story.

TOPIC:

The most common challenge of content marketers is creating content that prompts a desired action.

STRUCTURE (pick one):

- Tension Release
- Contrast
- Pattern Break
- Manifesto/Rallying Cry
- Myth Busting
- Hero's Mini Journey
- Suspense Flip (Inverted Pyramid)

The Polish Write

Making your content even better

The Polish Write:
## You + AI Read as a Reader [audience + organization]

- Hands off the keyboard!

- Review the "why" or creative brief from

- Does it grab your attention or interest?

- Does it make sense?

- Does it deliver on the promise made in headline and nut graph?

- How well is the premise shaped?

- Is it paced comfortably?

- Does it deliver on the promise made to the publishing organization?

The Polish Write:
Read as the Human Editor

- Hands on the keyboard!

- Is the content focused on a singular theme?

- Can every sentence and paragraph be understood?

- Does it flow logically?

- Does it fit the brand's voice and style?

- DON'T PROOFREAD!!!

The Polish Write:
Read through an AI Editor

- Input the audience, purpose, and goals of the content, and style guide

- What's missing from this content that should be included?
  - For interview-based content, provide the interview transcripts.
  - For multiple sources, ensure all are included.
- Whose voice should be included that isn't in the content?
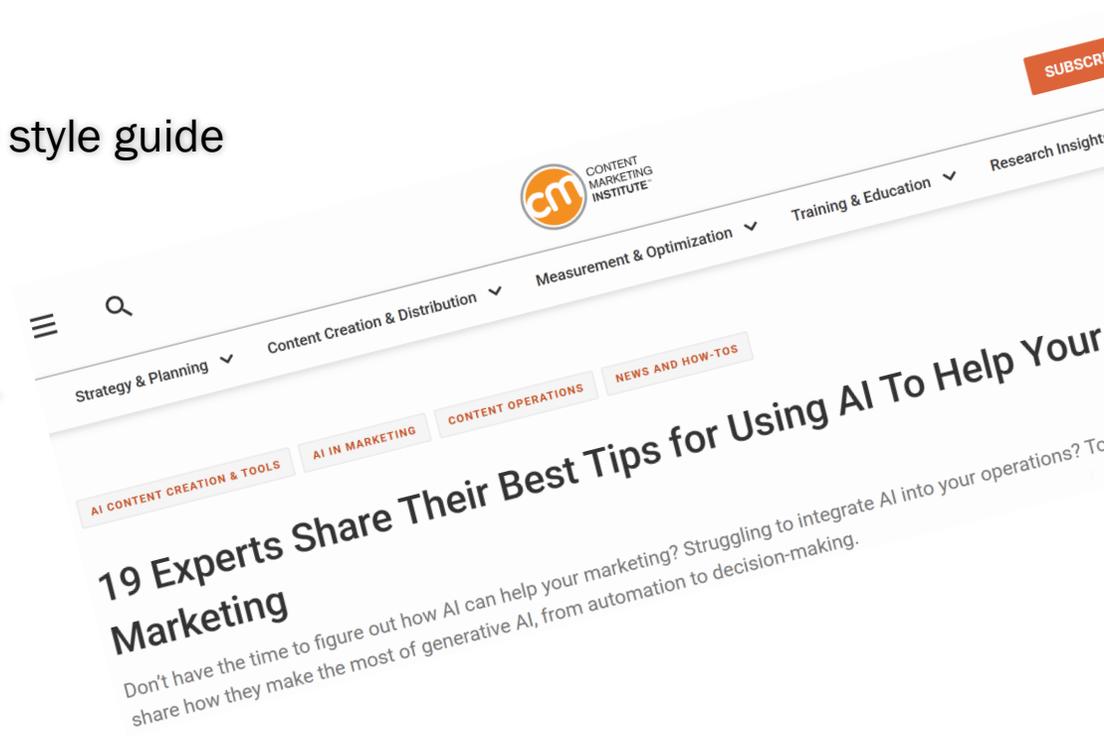
The Polish Write:
Read through an AI Agent Editor

- Does the content flow logically? If not, how can it be improved?

- Will it be easy for someone to consume? Why/why not?

- Could this content be simplified? How? What would be the impact on the content's goals?

- Will this content motivate someone to [CTA]? How could it be improved to do that?

The Polish Write: AI Tool Rotation

Use a different tool for each review to maximize the analysis:

- **Grammarly:** https://www.grammarly.com

- **Hemingway Editor:** https://hemingwayapp.com/

- **LanguageTool:** https://languagetool.org

- **ProWritingAid:** https://prowritingaid.com

- **QuillBot:** https://quillbot.com/

- **Slick Write:** https://www.slickwrite.com/

The Polish Write: AI Tools

Editor Score 85%

Formal writing

Formal ✓

Professional

Casual

Corrections

Spelling

Grammar 2

Refinements

Clarity ✓

Conciseness ✓

Formality 4

Inclusiveness ✓

Punctuation Conventions 1

Resume ✓

Sensitive Geopolitical References ✓

Vocabulary ✓

Spelling and grammar

Word count

Review suggested edits Ctrl+Alt+O Ctrl+Alt+U

Compare documents

Citations

eSignature Premium

Line numbers

Linked objects

Dictionary Ctrl+Shift+Y

Translate document

Voice typing Ctrl+Shift+S

Polish Write: AI-Assisted Proofread

Similarity

Check for similarity to online sources.

- Read to ensure grammar and spelling are correct.
- Run through plagiarism checker:
  - Scribbr: www.scribbr.com/plagiarism-checker
  - Grammarly: www.grammarly.com/plagiarism-checker
  - Copyscape: www.Copyscape.com
- Turn all your proofing steps into a checklist.

The Polish Write: Human Proofreader

Corrections

Spelling	✓
Grammar	1

Refinements

Clarity	✓
Conciseness	✓
Formality	3
Inclusiveness	✓
Punctuation Conventions	1
Resume	✓
Sensitive Geopolitical References	✓
Vocabulary	✓

Similarity

❞ Check for similarity to online sources.

- Give final review for proofreading.

- Check all links

- Verify source names and titles (don't assume)

- Do the math.

  - Example: an article about favorite ice cream flavors includes the sentence: "70% agree chocolate ice cream is better than vanilla," the next sentence should not be "one-third prefer vanilla over chocolate." The math doesn't add up.

- Review with your style guide in view.

- Turn all your proofing steps into a checklist.

The Post-Write

Ready and optimize for business, SEO, and social

The Post-Write: Strategic Repurposing

Where Should the Story Travel?

- Clips and quotes
- Video
- Podcast
- Social Media
- Shorter version in original format
- In-person presentations and speaking engagements

AI Assist:

- Atomize content
- Test variants, such as tone, channel, audience
- Develop post-write workflow chart/content calendar

The Post-Write: AI Analysis of Process

Without AI:

- Research turnover stats (30–40 min)
- Draft outline + intro (30 min)
- Write first draft (60+ min)
- Edit & repurpose (60 min)
- *Total ~3 hours*

With AI-Accelerated Sprint:

- AI compiles turnover stats (with sources) in 5 minutes.
- AI suggests 3 intro structures (Q&A, myth-busting, tension-release) in 5 minutes.
- Writer chooses one, adds exclusive interview quote, builds POV (25 min).
- AI helps repurpose into LinkedIn + email teaser in 15 min.
- Human final polish (10 min).
- *Total ~1 hour*

The Post-Write: Other AI-Assisted Modeling Ideas

- **Dual Sprints:** Writer and AI run parallel. While AI drafts 3 headlines, you sketch ideas; compare at the end.

- **Constraint Sprints:** Force AI to mimic a rival brand's tone, then rewrite in your own — highlights differentiation.

- **Collaborative Sprints:** Teams split tasks — one group prompts AI for data/structure, another adds insight and voice, then swap.

More Ideas & Caveats about Humans and AI: Brand Style Guide

Foundational Documents and Work

- Update and go more in-depth in style guide

- Think pronunciations [add to proofing checklist]

- Train AI agent with style guide, examples, etc.

  - Prompt and revise; prompt and revise

More Ideas & Caveats about Humans and AI: Accessible

- Think about all content consumers.

- Add alt text in body of article.

- Consider cultural nuance, metaphor choices, idioms, etc.

- Allow your audience to see themselves represented in more than images.

- Don't make assumptions [descriptions, pronouns].

Resources
Deck: https://bit.ly/WritingWorkshopCMW25

- @AnnGynn on LinkedIn
  - ann@GForceCommunication.com
  - +1.216.235.4566

- 2025 Blogging Survey by Orbit Media
- 19 Experts Share Their Best Tips for Using AI To Help Your Marketing
- How To Handle Major Rewrites (and Prevent Them from Happening Again)
- 18 Ideas To Overcome Writer's Block
- How To Do Inclusive Content That Helps Your Audience and Your Business
- AI Marketing Institute
- Content Marketing Institute Meet the Editorial Team at CMW: 1-2:30 p.m. TUESDAY in Expo Hall