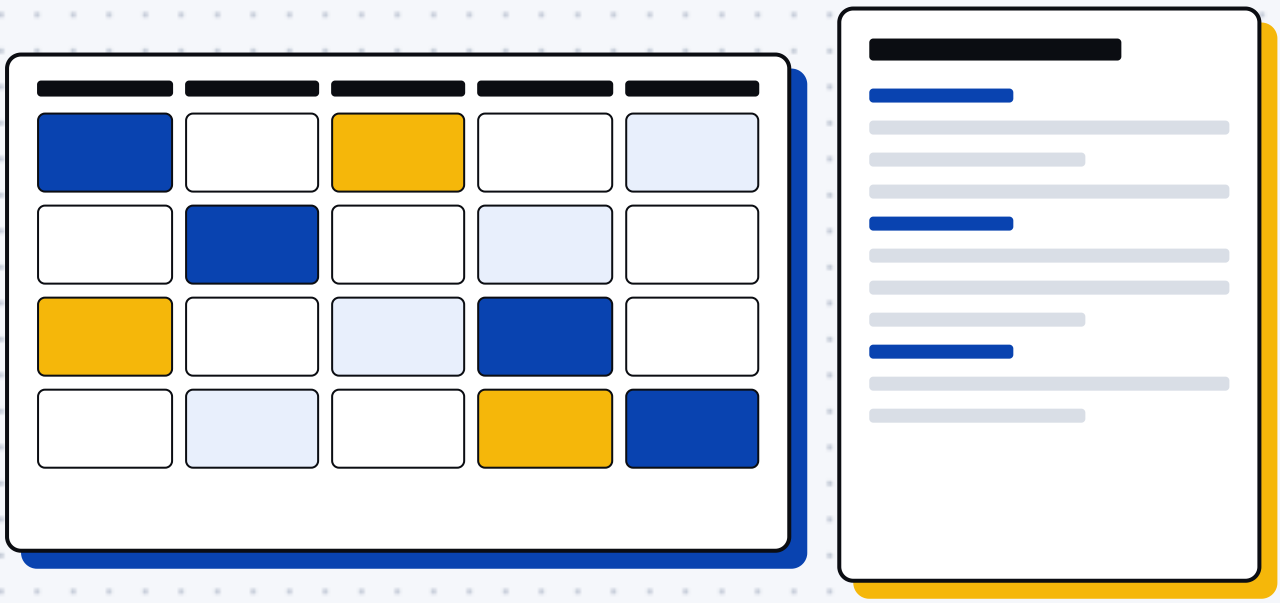
Perceptric

Template

# Content Brief and Content Calendar Template

A brief your writers can draft from and a calendar that plans a full quarter, with a filled example of each.



perceptric.com

2026 edition

# Contents


01 Write a brief writers can follow

02 A filled example brief

03 Plan a quarter with the calendar

04 The review checklist


## What you get in the workbook

Calendar | Quarter summary | Brief | Brief example | How to use

> The example rows describe Tallyhaus, a fictional accounts payable software company. Every example row is marked Example, so you can delete them in one step.

# 01

CHAPTER ONE

# Write a brief writers can follow

A one-page plan that lets a writer start without a kickoff call.


What writing time costs your team

The fourteen fields in the Brief sheet

Four habits of briefs that work

Why AI search questions belong in every brief

A content brief is a one-page plan for a single piece. It tells the writer who the reader is, what the page must cover and how the editor will judge it.

A good brief lets a writer start without a kickoff call. It also gives the editor a fixed standard to review against, so feedback stays about the plan and stays out of taste.

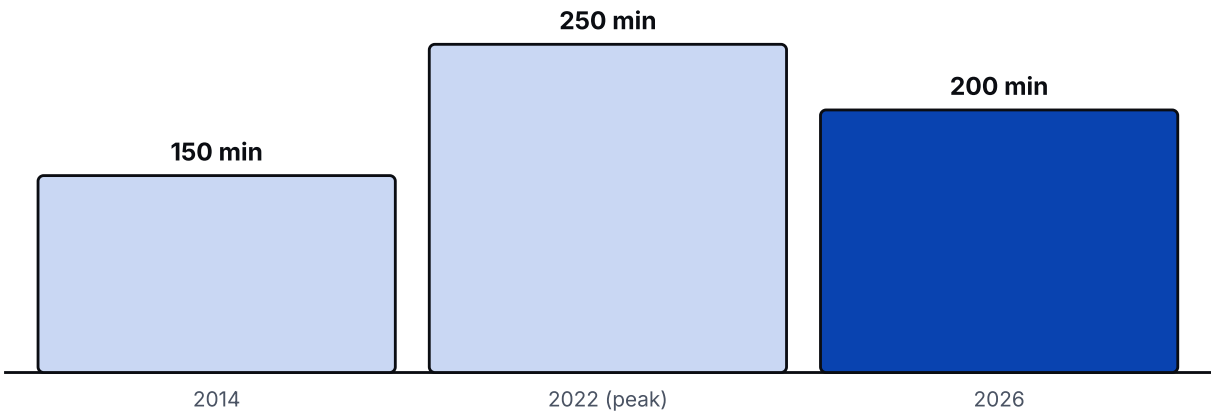
**3h 20m**
average time to write one blog post

**1,312**
words in the average blog post

**28%**
of B2B marketers struggle to create enough quality content

Sources: Orbit Media, Annual Blogger Survey, 2026; Content Marketing Institute, B2B Content and Marketing Trends: Insights for 2026

**Average time to write one blog post, in minutes**




Source: Orbit Media, Annual Blogger Survey, 2026

Writing time is the largest cost in most content programs. A clear brief protects that time because the writer drafts the right piece on the first try.

## The fields in the template

The Brief sheet has fourteen fields, and each one answers a question your writer would otherwise send you in a message.

| Part | Field | What the writer needs from it |
|---|---|---|
| SEARCH | Working title | The title you would publish today. It sets the promise the draft has to keep. |
| SEARCH | Primary keyword | One phrase the page should rank for, picked from search data. |

| Part | Field | What the writer needs from it |
|---|---|---|
| SEARCH | Secondary keywords | Close variants and related phrases to use where they read naturally. |
| SEARCH | Search intent | What the searcher wants: to learn, to compare, to buy or to reach a known page. |
| READER | Reader and their problem | Role, company size and the problem that sends them to search. |
| READER | Angle | The one idea that sets this page apart from the pages that rank now. |
| CONTENT | Outline (H2 / H3) | Headings in order, with notes. The writer should be able to draft from this alone. |
| CONTENT | Sources to use | Named interviews, internal data and outside research, each with a link or owner. |
| CONTENT | Examples to feature | Screenshots, sample data or stories that make the page specific to you. |
| CONTENT | Word range | A range set from the length of the pages that rank now. |
| CONTENT | AI search questions | Questions buyers ask AI assistants, each answered directly in the draft. |
| LINKS | Internal links | Pages to link to with anchor text, plus pages that should link back. |
| LINKS | CTA | One next step that fits the funnel stage. |
| REVIEW | Review checklist | The checks the editor runs before approval, agreed before writing starts. |

> **If a new freelancer could draft from the brief alone, it is complete.**
>
> The Perceptric test for every brief

## Four habits of briefs that work

**01**

**Write for someone who missed the meeting**

Spell out the reader, the problem and the angle in plain sentences.

**02**

**Decide the angle before the outline**

The angle is the reason your page deserves to rank. Once it is clear, each heading in the outline should support it.

## 03

**Name every source the writer should use**

List the expert to interview, the internal data to pull and the outside research to cite. Writers fill gaps with guesses when the brief only asks for research.

## 04

**Set the word range from the results page**

Open the pages that rank for the primary keyword and note how long they are. Then set a range that covers the topic fully.

## Put the AI search questions in the brief

Buyers now ask assistants the same questions they used to type into Google. A page that answers them in one or two clear sentences is easier for those tools to quote.

Fewer searchers click through when an AI summary appears, so the answer on your page has to be quotable on its own.

**Where to find the questions**

Sales call notes and support tickets hold the exact words buyers use. Add each question that comes up more than once to the brief.

Click data: Pew Research Center, 2025

**Google visits that ended with a click on a result**




Source: Pew Research Center, 2025

**Do this now**

Fill the Brief sheet for your next piece and send it to the writer. Ask them to explain the reader, the angle and the outline back to you in five minutes.

# 94%

**of business buyers use AI in their buying process. Your brief should plan for the questions they ask it.**

Source: Forrester, 2026

# 02

CHAPTER TWO

# A filled example brief

The Tallyhaus brief from the workbook, field by field.


The full example brief

Six reasons it works

Where to spend your brief time

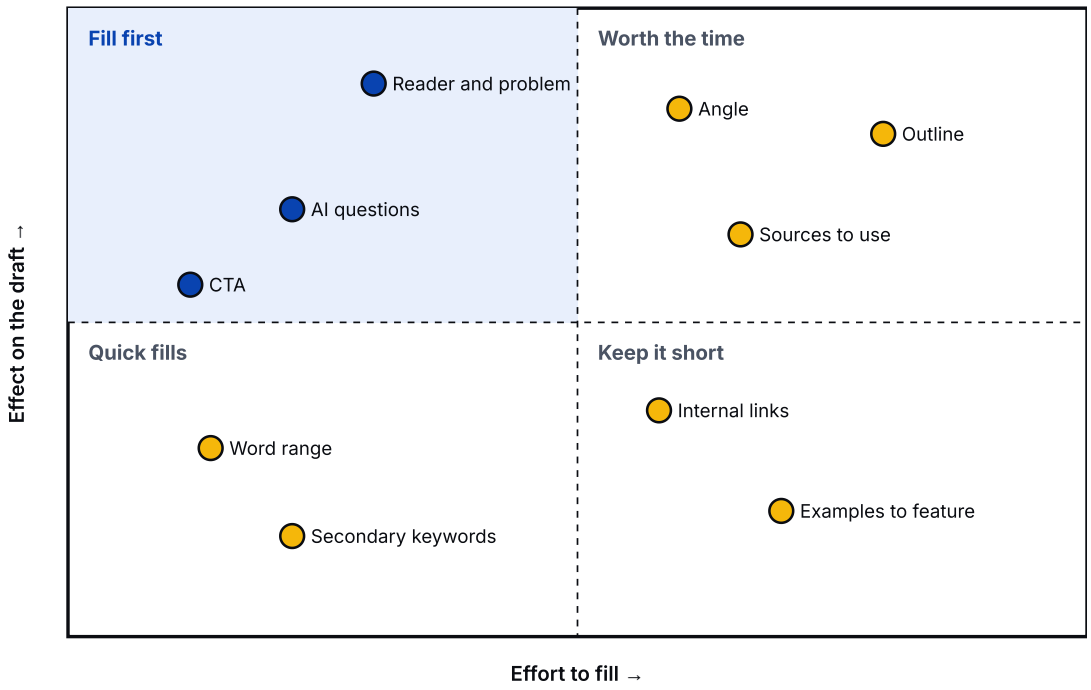
A worksheet to compare it with your own

This is the brief from the Brief example sheet in the workbook. It plans a top of funnel guide for Tallyhaus, a fictional accounts payable software company.

| Field | Example |
|---|---|
| **Working title** | What is three-way matching? A guide for AP teams |
| **Primary keyword** | three-way matching |
| **Secondary keywords** | three way match, 3-way match, three-way matching process, two-way vs three-way matching |
| **Intent, stage, length** | Informational, TOFU, 1,400 to 1,800 words |
| **Writer, editor, dates** | Writer Dana K., editor Ana R. Draft due 2026-12-22, publish 2027-01-05. |
| **Reader and their problem** | AP manager at a company with 100 to 1,000 staff. Invoices wait while someone checks the PO, receipt and invoice by hand. Mismatches go back and forth by email, and vendors call to ask when they will be paid. |
| **Angle** | Three-way matching is easy to explain and hard to run at volume. Show the rule with one sample invoice, then the mismatches that slow teams down, then the point where manual checks stop scaling. |
| **Outline (H2 / H3)** | H2 What is three-way matching?<br>  H3 The three documents: purchase order, goods receipt, invoice<br>H2 How the three-way matching process works<br>  H3 One sample invoice, step by step<br>H2 Two-way vs three-way vs four-way matching<br>H2 Common mismatches and how to fix them<br>  H3 Price differences / Quantity differences / Missing receipts<br>H2 Tolerance rules: when a small difference is fine<br>H2 When to automate three-way matching<br>H2 FAQ |
| **AI search questions** | What is three-way matching in accounts payable?<br>What is the difference between two-way and three-way matching?<br>What happens when an invoice fails three-way matching?<br>Can three-way matching be automated? |
| **Examples to feature** | A sample PO, receipt and invoice for 40 units, shown as a table. A screenshot of the tolerance settings screen. |
| **Sources to use** | A 30-minute interview with the AP product lead. Support tickets tagged match exception from the last 90 days. The internal controls guide from the finance team. |
| **Internal links** | /blog/invoice-approval-workflow/ (anchor: invoice approval workflow)<br>/blog/what-is-a-purchase-order/ (anchor: purchase order)<br>/product/matching/ (anchor: automated matching) |
| **CTA** | Download the AP exception log template. |

## Where to spend your brief time

Some fields take a minute and some take an hour. Spend the most care on the fields that change the draft the most, and fill the rest quickly.




Source: Perceptric editorial framework

## Why the example works

**01**

### The reader has a bad week

The writer knows the role, the company size and the daily pain. That detail shapes every example and every heading.

**02**

### The angle gives the page a job

Many pages already define three-way matching. This one also shows where manual matching breaks, which leads to the product without a sales pitch.

**03**

### The company owns the sources

Support tickets show the mismatches customers hit. The product lead interview adds detail a competitor page cannot copy.

**04**

### AI questions match headings

Each question maps to a heading, so the writer answers it in the first sentence under that heading.

**05**

### The CTA fits the stage

A reader learning a term is rarely ready for a demo. A useful template earns the next visit and an email address.

**06**

### The dates leave room

The draft is due two weeks before publishing. That leaves time for edits and the expert review.

| A thin brief | The Tallyhaus brief |
| --- | --- |
| Keyword: three-way matching. Stage: TOFU. Length: 1,500 words. Due in two weeks. | A named reader with a daily problem, one angle, a full outline, four AI questions, owned sources and a CTA for the stage. |

### Do this now: compare your last brief

Put your last brief next to this one and compare them field by field. Add the missing fields to your next brief before the writer starts.

**Fields my last brief missed** _____

**The angle in one sentence** _____

**The reader and their problem** _____

**Sources the writer needs** _____

**AI search questions to answer** _____

**The CTA for this stage** _____

# 03

CHAPTER THREE

# Plan a quarter with the calendar

Twelve rows, one piece a week, and a summary sheet that counts the mix for you.

- Six steps to fill the Calendar sheet
- What each status means
- A working schedule for each piece
- How to balance the funnel stages
- A fifteen minute weekly review

The Calendar sheet holds one row per piece. Twelve rows make a quarter at one piece a week, and the Quarter summary sheet counts the mix for you.

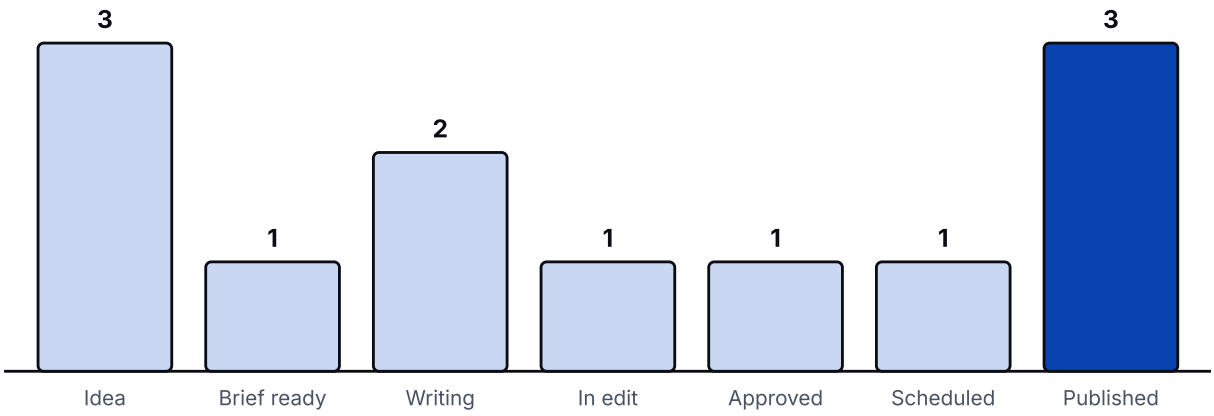
1. **Set the start date.** Type the first Monday of the quarter in cell E1. The Week column then numbers each row from its publish date.
2. **Choose a pace you can keep.** Pick how many pieces your team can brief, write and edit well. A steady pace beats a burst followed by a gap.
3. **Fill the rows from your keyword list.** Add a title, primary keyword, format and persona for each slot. Leave the status at Idea.
4. **Balance the funnel stages.** Open the Quarter summary sheet and check the split between TOFU, MOFU and BOFU against your goal for the quarter.
5. **Assign a writer and an editor.** Every row needs both names. A writer should never be the only reviewer of their own draft.
6. **Brief three weeks ahead.** Link the finished brief in the Brief link column and move the status to Brief ready.

## What each status means

The status column uses a dropdown and changes color as a piece moves. Agree on the exit rule for each status so everyone reads the calendar the same way.

| Status | Owner | Moves on when |
|---|---|---|
| Idea | Content lead | Topic, keyword and persona are set and the slot is confirmed. |
| Brief ready | Editor | Every brief field is filled and the writer has confirmed the plan. |
| Writing | Writer | The full draft follows the outline and sits inside the word range. |
| In edit | Editor | Edits are done and the review checklist is ticked. |
| Approved | Subject expert | The expert has checked the facts and signed off. |
| Scheduled | Content lead | The piece is in the CMS with its publish date, title tag and meta description. |
| Published | Content lead | The page is live and its URL is in the row. |

**The example quarter by status, as the Quarter summary sheet counts it**




Source: the twelve Tallyhaus example rows in the workbook

## A working schedule for each piece

Count back from the publish date so each step has room. This is the schedule we use as a starting point, and you can tighten it once the team finds its rhythm.

**21 DAYS BEFORE**
Brief ready and sent to the writer

**10 DAYS BEFORE**
Full draft handed to the editor

**5 DAYS BEFORE**
Edits back, subject expert review requested

**2 DAYS BEFORE**
Approved and scheduled in the CMS

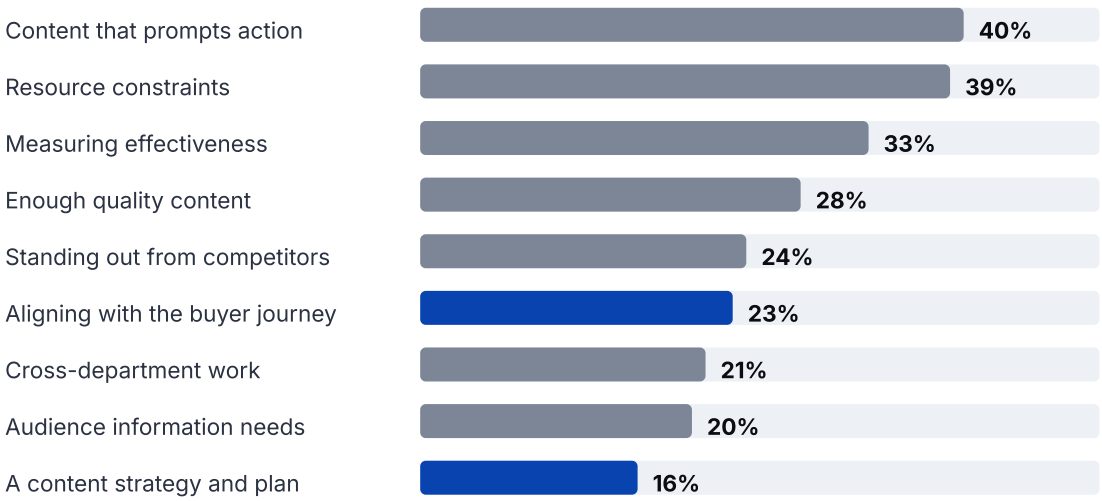
**PUBLISH DAY**
Live URL added to the Calendar row, status set to Published

## Balance the mix

The example quarter splits twelve pieces evenly across TOFU, MOFU and BOFU. Shift the split toward the stage where your pipeline is weakest.

In 2026, 23% of B2B marketers named aligning content with the buyer's journey as a top challenge. A stage count on one sheet makes the gaps easy to spot before the quarter starts.

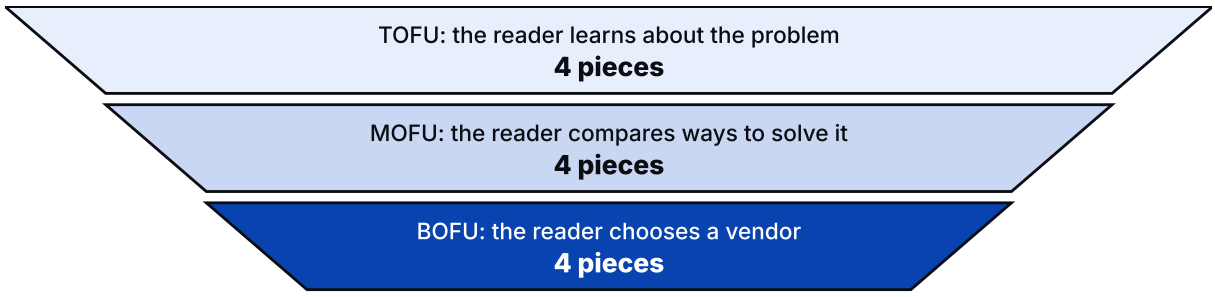
### Top content marketing challenges for B2B marketers




Source: Content Marketing Institute, B2B Content and Marketing Trends: Insights for 2026

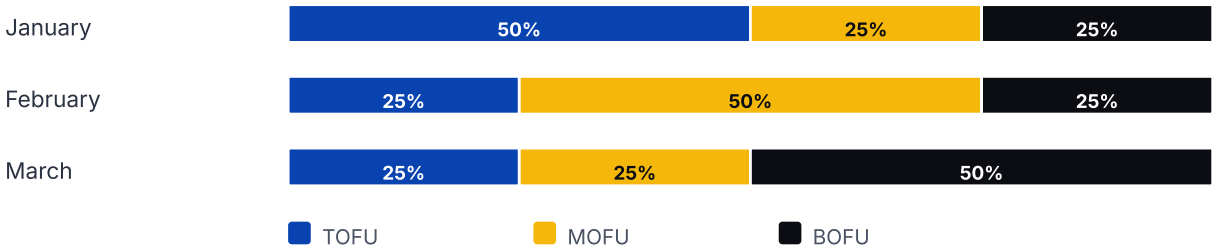
Source: Content Marketing Institute, B2B Content and Marketing Trends: Insights for 2026

### The example quarter by funnel stage




Source: the twelve Tallyhaus example rows in the workbook

### Pieces per month in the example quarter, by stage




Source: the twelve Tallyhaus example rows in the workbook, one piece a week from 2027-01-05

## Run a weekly review

Walk the calendar for fifteen minutes each week with the writers and editors. Move each status forward, flag any row that has slipped and fix its dates on the spot.

**Open the Calendar**
Sort by publish date

→

**Move statuses**
Each owner updates their rows

→

**Flag slips**
Any row behind the schedule

→

**Fix dates**
Agree new dates before the call ends

**Do this now**

Delete the example rows, set next quarter's start date and fill twelve titles. Check the Quarter summary sheet before you book any writers.

# 04

CHAPTER FOUR

# The review checklist

Eighteen checks the editor ticks before a piece moves to Approved.


Why a fixed review step pays off

Brief fit

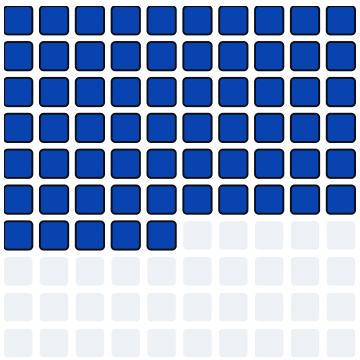
Search and AI answers

Facts and sources

Links, next step and the final checks

The editor runs this checklist before a piece moves to Approved. The short version sits at the bottom of every Brief sheet, with a Yes or No dropdown for each line.

### What drives content results



**65%**

of B2B marketers name content relevance and quality as a driver of results. Review is where you protect both.

Source: Content Marketing Institute, 2026

Only 13.9% of bloggers in Orbit Media's 2026 survey reported strong results, down from 26% in 2022. A fixed review step is one of the cheapest ways to raise the floor on every piece.

### Bloggers with strong results

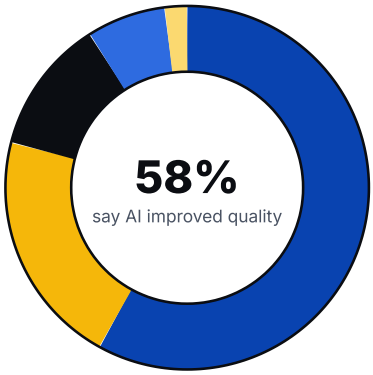


**13.9**

percent report strong results

Source: Orbit Media, 2026

### Effect of AI on content quality




| | |
|---|---|
| Improved | 58% |
| No change | 21% |
| Decreased | 12% |
| Too soon to tell | 7% |
| Unsure | 2% |

Source: Content Marketing Institute, 2026

AI drafts need the same checks as any other draft. In the same study, 12% of marketers said AI lowered the quality of their content.

### Brief fit

- [ ] The draft speaks to the reader and problem named in the brief.
- [ ] The angle from the brief shows up in the introduction and the headings.
- [ ] Every H2 in the outline is in the draft, or the editor agreed to the change.
- [ ] The word count sits inside the word range.

### Search and AI answers

- [ ] The first 100 words answer the question behind the primary keyword.
- [ ] The primary keyword appears in the title, the first paragraph and one H2.
- [ ] Each AI search question has a direct answer of one or two sentences under a matching heading.
- [ ] The title tag is under 60 characters and the meta description is under 155.

### Facts and sources

- [ ] Every number links to its source, with the publisher and the year.
- [ ] Examples are real and named, or clearly marked as illustrations.
- [ ] A subject expert has checked the facts and signed off.
- [ ] Quotes from customers or staff have written approval.

### Links and next step

- [ ] All internal links from the brief are in place with descriptive anchor text.
- [ ] Two or more older pages now link to the new piece.
- [ ] The CTA matches the funnel stage named in the brief.

### Before publishing

- [ ] Images have alt text and load at a sensible file size.
- [ ] Wide tables scroll or stack on a phone without breaking the layout.
- [ ] The live URL is added to the Calendar row and the status is Published.

**Do this now**

Agree on this checklist with your editors and writers before the quarter starts. Then add or remove lines on the Brief sheet so the workbook matches your own standard.

Sources: Orbit Media, Annual Blogger Survey, 2026; Content Marketing Institute, B2B Content and Marketing Trends: Insights for 2026

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# Want help filling the calendar?

Perceptric is an SEO, GEO and content agency for B2B and SaaS companies. We plan, brief and write content that ranks on Google and gets your brand named in AI answers.

We also built Arrowsterr, our platform for tracking how AI search engines talk about your brand.

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