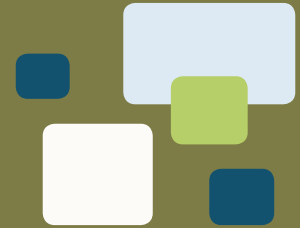# WEBSITE CONTENT SEGMENTATION:
Five Best Practices to Set You Apart from Your Competition

WITH THE INCREASED ADOPTION OF CONTENT marketing and the proliferation of high-quality content and great design principles, today's B2B websites are better positioned to convert visitors than ever before. As a result, competitors often go head-to-head in website design and innovation.

An important way for companies to differentiate themselves online is through website content segmentation. Many websites fail to speak to each of their specific audiences in an effective way. Some fail to satisfy their visitors' need for information because their content is not tailored to the desires of any specific groups of customers. In trying to market to everyone, it's easy for companies to fail to successfully address the interests of anyone.

By presenting the most relevant content to its website visitors, a company can increase its engagement, better differentiate itself from competitors, and improve inbound marketing effectiveness.

Regardless of your segmentation approach, the five best practices in this report will ensure that your segmentation strategy fulfills its goal of delivering clear, concise, and relevant messaging to your website's target visitors. Each best practice also includes real-life examples that demonstrate the principles in use.

BEST PRACTICES AT A GLANCE:

1. Encourage Visitors to Self-select
2. Speak Directly to your Target Audience
3. Keep Segment-specific Pages Clean
4. Tailor Your Content
5. Utilize Interactive Content

"Segmentation is an underutilized tool in website design. It's easy to implement and, if used properly, it can significantly improve visitors' experiences and help them determine whether or not your products and services fit their needs. That in turn will improve the quality and conversion rate of inbound leads from your website."

Brandon Hickie
Market Research Associate
Openview Venture Partners

openview

1 BEST PRACTICE NO. 1:
Encourage Visitors to Self-select into One of Your Target Segments

The first step to segmenting your website's content is encouraging your visitors to self-select based on their industry, problem, or role. Your home page should be designed around this concept. With a clean layout, uncluttered messaging, and clear menus, the home page should beckon a visitor to identify with and select a segment. Self-selection allows you to control the visitor's experience and provide the information that will be most useful and engaging for them.

Providing an immediate option to self-select also solves the issue of cluttered messaging on your home page. Instead of attempting to create a message that is all things to all people, clear segmentation options allow you to communicate that your company understands and serves a visitor's industry or pain points. They can also enable you to provide the appropriate, targeted messaging on the segmented pages.

Self-selection by Role

Randa Solutions, a company that provides a data product for educators and administrators, understands that its visitors' perspectives matter. That's why its website is tailored to its different stakeholders, such as teachers and administrators, who will each find different value in Randa's products and will use them to resolve different pain points. Randa's home page is focused around that concept, and remains clean and uncluttered while providing options for all audiences.

Multiple Levels of Segmentation

RedPrairie provides workforce management solutions that have a variety of applications across numerous industries. As a result, the content on each industry page allows users to drill down into more specific segments. For example, the retail segment allows a visitor to choose from apparel, big box, and a variety of other areas, providing the details that truly matter for the visitor and increasing the relevancy of the information being shared. Once you've managed to establish which audience your visitor belongs to, it's essential to provide relevant content and messaging that resonates with the needs of each segment. When building out your segmented content, be sure to remain consistent within segments. Provide information that addresses relevant concerns; highlight applicable product features; and utilize case studies, testimonials, and other data from clients within the segment to give visitors a sense of your company's deep understanding of their industry.
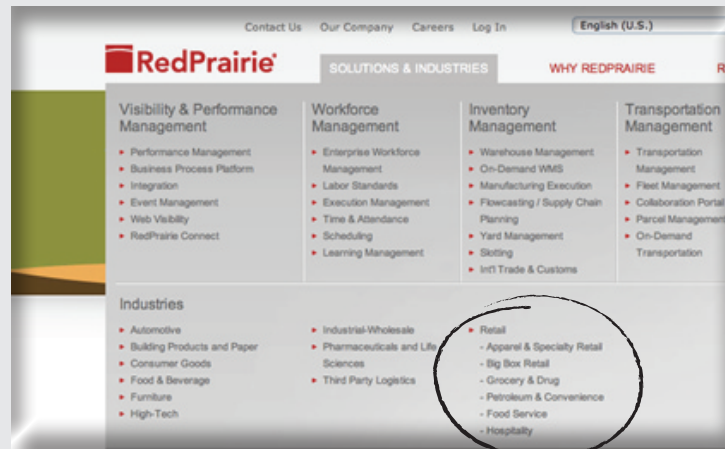
Segmentation by Use Case

Even when a website is aimed at a single target audience, visitors may have a variety of use cases, served by different products at the company. Instead of forcing visitors to guess which product best suits them, companies like location-as-a-service provider Location Labs segment by customer problem or pain point. Prominently displayed headers allow visitors to select the most relevant use case and receive targeted information about the appropriate product.

2 BEST PRACTICE NO. 2:
Speak Directly to Your Target Audience with Relevant Content

Persona-based Use Cases

AppSense, a provider of user virtualization solutions, does an excellent job following through on its segmentation promise. On its home page, users are asked to select their business role. Each landing page features quotes and case studies for persona-specific pain points, testimonials from clients in similar situations, and visual illustrations of the solutions that are filtered for the self-selected persona.
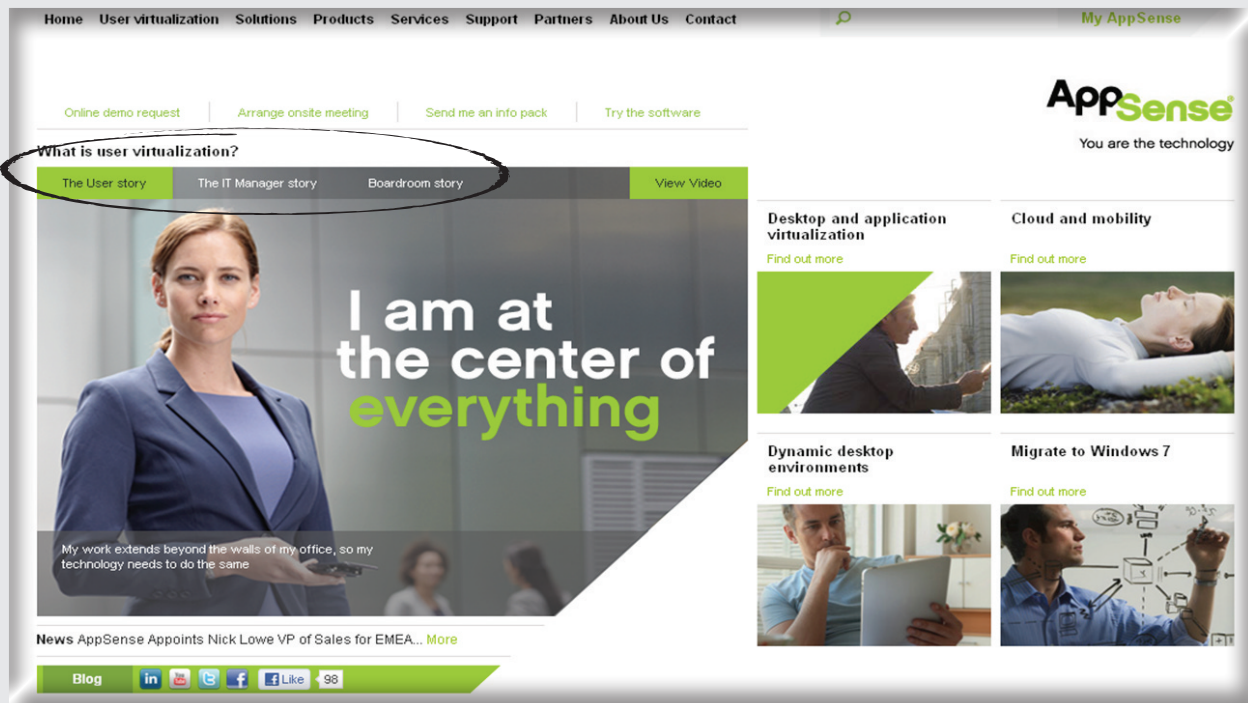
Personalized Touches

While intelligent automation software company Automation Anywhere does not segment its content, it does provide persona-specific videos on its home page that allow visitors to have a personalized experience while keeping the home page clean and simple.
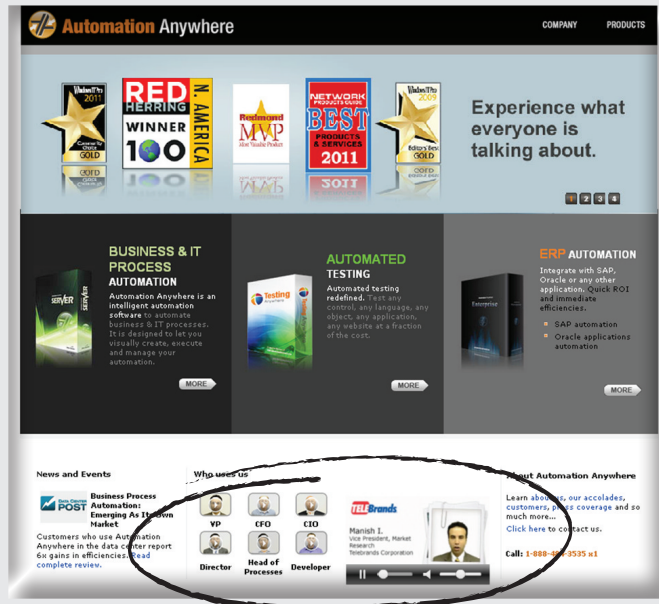
Separate Site and Brand

Some cases call for a more extreme separation: a completely separate website with its own look, feel, and brand. Central Desktop* takes this route with Social Bridge, a website that speaks exclusively to prospects in the marketing agency sector. By separating this content from the main webpage, Central Desktop has greater freedom and flexibility with its design and content, without cluttering its main site.
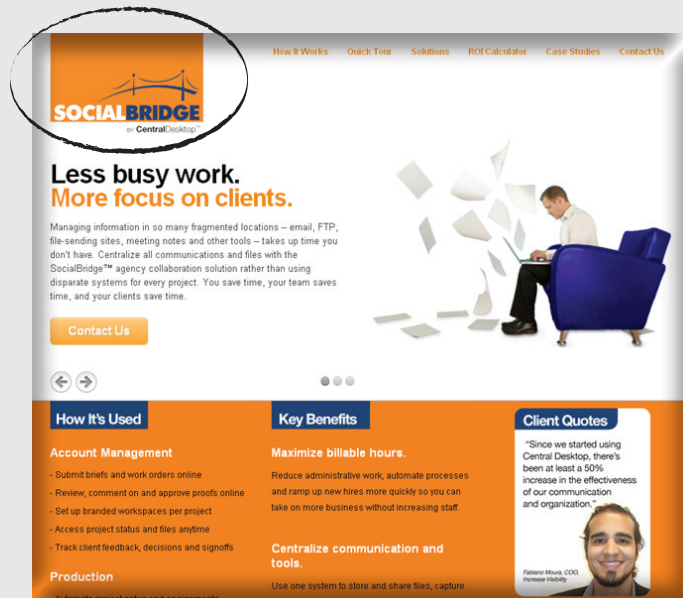
Central Desktop is an OpenView portfolio company.

3 BEST PRACTICE NO. 3:
Keep Segment-specific Pages Clean, Simple, and Easy to Navigate

Once a company has gotten visitors to click on a segment-specific page, its instinct is often to bombard them with information. Providing too much information, cluttering your page design, and making navigation difficult are all pitfalls that will overwhelm potential customers and cost you visitor engagement.

Take care to ensure that your website is neither too bare nor too heavily laden with unnecessary technical details. The key is providing simple value propositions that speak clearly to the needs of that segment.

Easy Navigation and Customizable Content

The decision-making process software company Decision Lens provides a prominent and easily navigable drop-down menu that keeps users oriented and allows them to easily move around the site to find what they need. Within the segmented pages, the site provides a two-column format with expandable bars on the right, giving the user the control over how much information he or she is reviewing at one time. The copy layout includes highlighted customer names and bolded value propositions, which help direct the reader to relevant content and establish industry expertise.
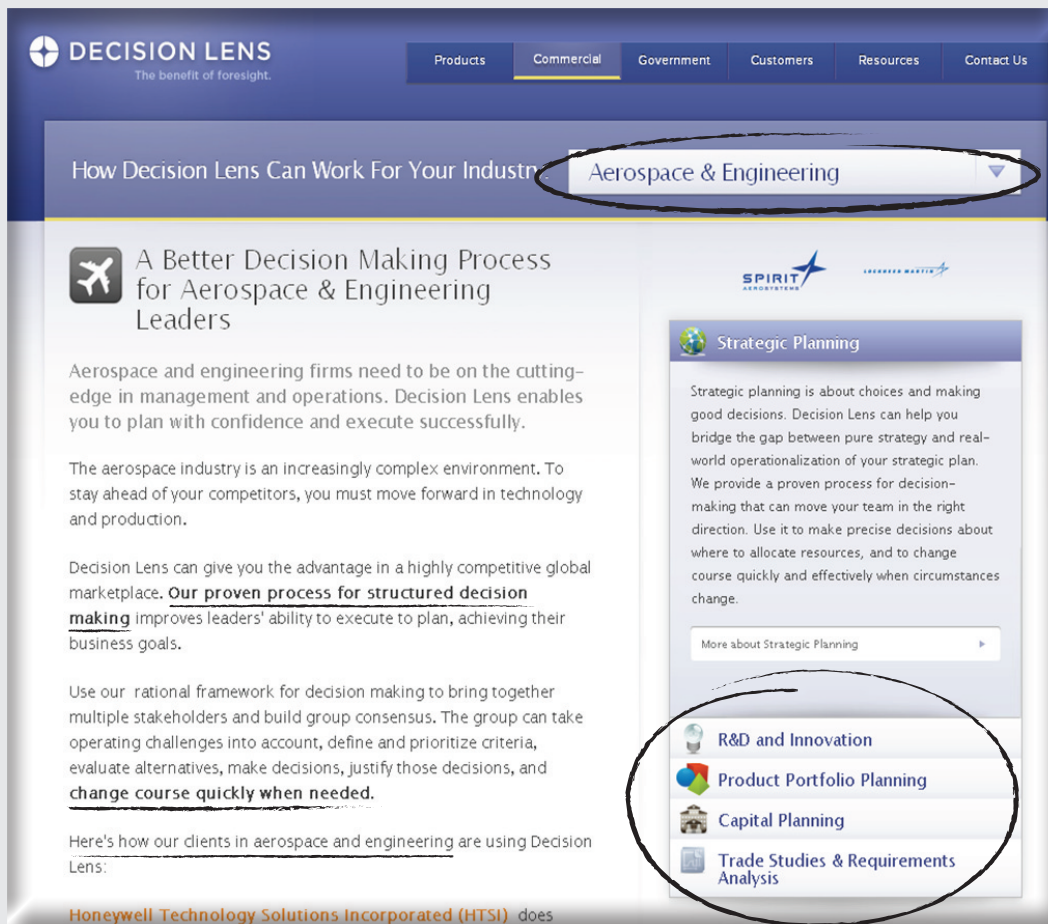
Diverse Mediums

Taleo's talent management software provides a rich set of segment-specific content. Its retail solutions page alone contains case studies, reports, and white papers, as well as product data sheets and customer videos. The key to this strategy is making the pages easy to navigate, which Taleo achieves through its layout. Navigational tools on both the top menu and sidebar help visitors quickly find the content they're most interested in, and provide a smooth, effortless browsing experience that keeps the visitor focused.

4 BEST PRACTICE NO. 4:
Tailor Your Content to Your Audience and Provide Diversity

Just as different industries and personas have different pain points or are looking for different product features, not all potential customers evaluate solutions with the same criteria. By providing a variety of content, from relevant customer testimonials to press mentions, white papers, webinars, and more, your website can assure visitors that your company is deeply engaged with its sector.

Evidence of Industry Penetration

User management platform Janrain shows deep penetration into specific segments by providing case studies with marquee customers within each industry, such as LadyGaga.com. By providing this valuable information to its visitors, Janrain speaks directly to the value it offers to the specific industry. Janrain narrows its focus on product features to what's important to particular users, keeping messaging clean to avoiding overwhelming the visitor.

5 BEST PRACTICE NO. 5:
Utilize Interactive Content to Drive Visitors and Demonstrate Your Specialization in the Segment

Providing a valuable tool, blog, or other expert content within a specific industry has the dual purpose of demonstrating your expertise and penetration into that segment while also giving visitors another reason to visit your website.
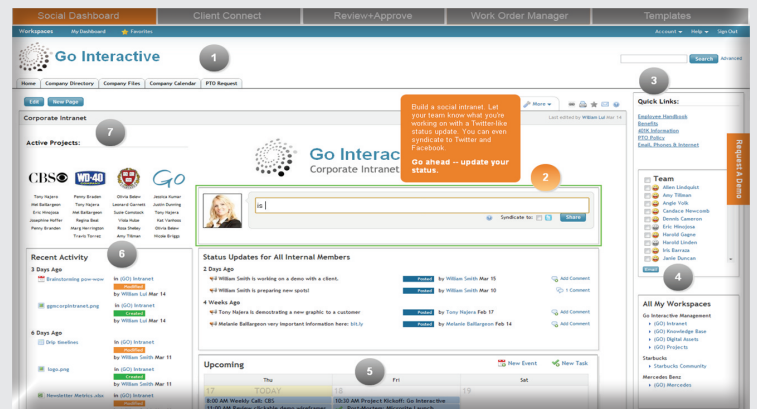
Providing a Valuable Tool

Supply chain management software provider JDA offers a free retail operations self-assessment to visitors. This useful tool gives immediate value and shows JDA's deep knowledge of the retail segment. It adds to the user's engagement within the page and the website's stickiness, and gives the user a reason to continue returning to JDA's website.
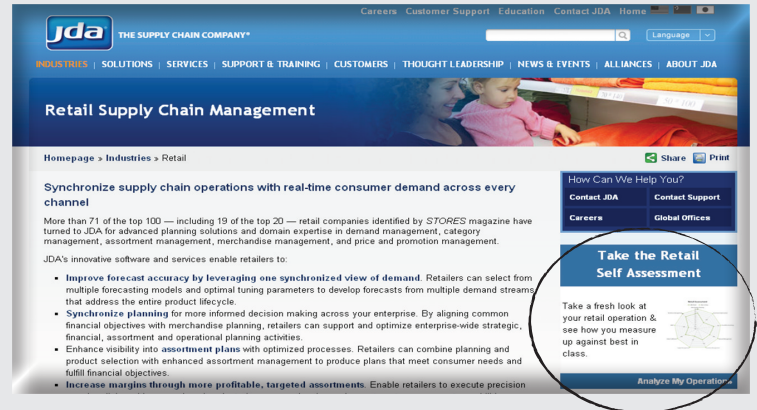
Customized Product Demos

While a typical product demo might simply highlight its top features, a product demo on a segment-specific page should be customized based on the features that visitors find most relevant, and address common use cases. Central Desktop has created a segment-specific walkthrough for its Social Bridge product that draws attention to the most common use cases and features that a marketing agency would use.

Key Takeaways

Website content segmentation can be a valuable tool for collecting data and increasing conversions. However, the process is about more than simply providing users with titles or landing pages they can relate to. Effective segmentation requires an overarching strategy that helps demonstrate why your company has the product, knowledge, or industry penetration that aligns with your website visitors' needs.

A strategy that customizes each segment section while also keeping the website easy to navigate and informative but not overwhelming is key to successful content strategy.

For more information and examples, check out OpenView Labs' video of the five best practices for website content segmentation.

To learn more about how OpenView Venture Partners can help accelerate your success, contact us at (617) 478-7500 or e-mail info@openviewpartners.com.

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