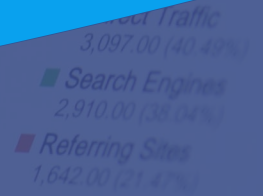**Refactored**

Drive Targeted Website Traffic with Content Pillars

Leverage this highly effective SEO-based technique for building the organic reach of your website.

Competing for Attention

Attention has become one of the biggest challenges for B2B sales and marketing professionals. Modern B2B buyers have shifted their focus online. Prospective customers prefer to self-educate by:

/ Performing deep-dive research into their questions
/ Defining their issues
/ Exploring potential solutions
/ Comparing products and services

—all before they ever interact with a salesperson.

According to research by Miller Heiman Group, 50% of B2B buyers have actually made up their minds before engaging with sales.

This behavior has pros and cons. On the one hand, sales professionals who connect with these self-educated buyers may have a greatly reduced sales cycle.

On the other hand, marketers shoulder the burden of bringing those buyers to their websites—and providing the content they need to make that critical determination: **This is the solution I'm looking for.**

How many opportunities are you missing simply because you don't have the right content on your website to attract these visitors naturally?

Leverage the Power of Content Pillars

According to Search Engine Land, every second of every day, Google processes 63,000 search queries. This year, we can expect more than 2 trillion searches. How can you ensure your company will be found among all that noise?

This guide will help you understand how to use a powerful SEO and user experience tactic, **Content Pillars**, to help your website stand out when people are searching for your key industry terms and phrases.

When you add these carefully constructed, rich, relevant pages to your website, you can expect higher volumes of qualified traffic—while simultaneously lowering the amount of paid digital marketing you need over time.

The Value of Creating Content Pillars

A Center of Gravity to Pull Searchers to Your Site

Content Pillars create a natural, organic draw to users who are searching for your defined keywords and brand terms. Because they are content- and keyword-dense, they amplify the SEO gravity of your site, increasing organic traffic.

Then, the return on that initial effort compounds, manifesting a recurring savings that multiplies year after year as your increased organic traffic reduces and replaces the need for paid traffic.

With continued SEO optimization efforts, organic traffic should grow at 20-40% per year.

Legend: Organic Conversions Total, Organic sessions
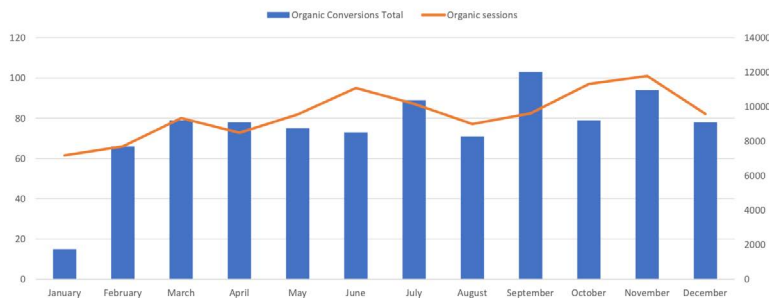
Organic sessions and the corresponding conversions

Total money saved in one year by generating organic traffic with content: $505,604

"**This is a different, more practical kind of SEO. With every site we've applied this technique to, we've seen almost immediate increases in overall site traffic—just by creating great content. And our clients take back ownership of really important keywords.**"

— Rob Bean, Partner & Marketing Strategist, Refactored

Expect Great Results

Content Pillars are a cost-effective tactic with potential for tremendous returns. What impact will they have on your business?

/ Traffic growth (organic and paid)

/ Better click-through and conversion rates

/ Savings on paid search

/ Keyword ranking growth

/ Lifting engagement metrics

/ Building domain authority

/ Increased SERP ranking

/ Continual improvement with fine tuning

What's a Content Pillar?

A Content Pillar is simply a topical set of website pages that are designed to tell a powerful and connected story, focused around a targeted group of conceptual keywords called a "cluster."

Because Google prefers rich content, each Content Pillar is generally about 8-10 pages, with about 1,500 to 3,000 words per page. Each page includes a mix of media, including text, links, images, and videos.

A Content Pillar is typically focused around a cluster of 8-10 primary keywords, supported by 10-15 related secondary keywords across the pages. This arrangement tells Google that you're speaking with authority and have deep knowledge about your topic. And it tells the site visitor that they're in the right place to quickly learn what they want to know.
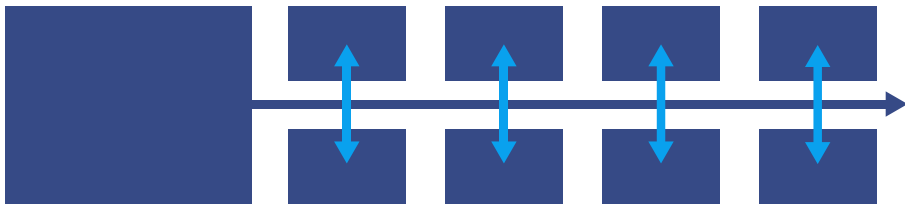
What Makes Content Pillars Work?

In a nutshell, they—

/ Provide **high-quality** information that isn't available elsewhere

/ Include content that is **relevant** to the questions that potential customers most want answered

/ Are strategically planned and highly **structured** to provide customers and search algorithms exactly what they're looking for at every step

When Are Content Pillars the Right Choice?

Building a new website

Supercharging an existing website

Reaching a sales goal

Responding to regulatory changes

Striving for rapid growth

**Responding to keyword loss**

"Creating a Content Pillar is one of the most powerful strategic SEO tactics you can do. You're designing a custom recipe for your ultimate success based on your predetermined goals."

— Heather Schallert, Senior Director of SEO, Pico Digital

How Content Pillars Impact Search Results—in Your Favor

Google's algorithm is designed to identify a searcher's intent and provide the most relevant results. There's a lot that goes into how the algorithm works, but the key concept to understand is that the words searchers enter need to exist in content on your website. That's what allows your company's pages to be found through search.

On the face of it, the concept is simple. However, given the competition for high-value keywords and phrases, it's important to write and construct website pages that aren't just "stuffed" with keywords—Google has become savvy enough to recognize those and weeds them out. Instead, your content needs to be written and organized to be attractive to the way Google crawls and identifies high-quality content and written to be useful for your website visitors. When you meet Google's criteria, it showcases your brand in Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) in a variety of ways.
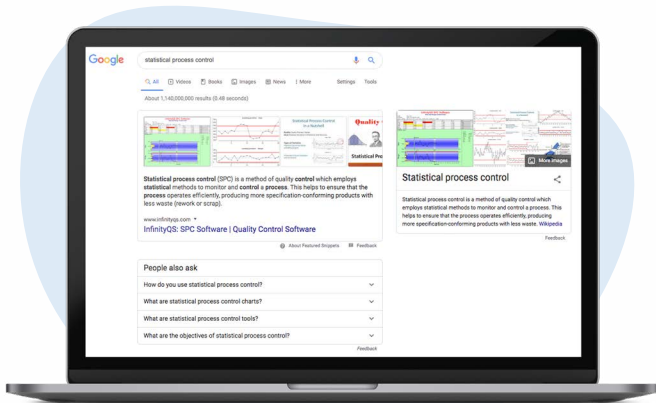
In this example search, "What is SPC," you see a number of high-value results, including the answer box, a paragraph snippet, images, and People also ask answers.

SEO

Search Engine Result Features

/ **Direct answer boxes**

/ **Paragraph snippets**

/ **Lists of content**

/ **Tabular content**

/ **YouTube® videos**

/ **Rich cards (for mobile)**

/ **Knowledge graph**

/ **Knowledge panel**

/ **Local pack**

/ **People also ask**

/ **Image pack**

/ **Site links**

/ **Twitter® results**

/ **News box**

"Great SEO requires content that's not just about your company but also relevant for the searcher. Content Pillars help to provide that relevance. Although they are designed and built using a keyword strategy, they are *written for people*—and focused on getting people the information they're actually searching for."

— **Dawn Cyr, Content Strategist, Refactored**

How to Create Effective Content Pillars

Find potential keyword clusters by reverse-engineering your goal.

The process of adding a Content Pillar to your site starts with a short period of research and strategy followed by content development and SEO optimization.

Step 1: Research

In the **research stage**, we start by talking about your reasons for adding this content to your site. It's important to determine what you want your website to do for you, so we start with some questions about what terms you want searchers to find you with.

/ What keywords in your SEO plan do you still not rank for?

/ Do you provide information about important topics in your industry? Which ones?

/ What common terms relate to your products and services?

/ Have you seen a competitor gaining ground in your market using specific terms?

/ Have you added a new service or product that relates to industry challenges or pain?

Next, we identify your top target keywords—the terms that matter to your business and that you want to build on. Then, we match those target keywords to discover how they are used by potential buyers and by your competitors. From there, we define the primary and secondary keyword clusters that will be used to develop the **Content Pillar**.

Step 2: Strategy

In the **strategy stage**, we define:

/ The overall Content Pillar topic

/ Keyword-based page names

/ Page order and hierarchy

/ Content structure

The creation of a logical hierarchy is important for ensuring that the whole pillar holds together as a cohesive and informative section.

1. Which topics are the core concepts?

2. What supporting content might be required to support the searcher's journey?

3. How much content needs to be developed to make a difference?

Step 3: Production

In the **production stage**, we write and optimize the content, ensuring that primary and secondary keywords are used judiciously, appropriately, and strategically.

An essential part of production is making sure that technical SEO has been applied. We define the proper folder, page, and metadata descriptions for each page, along with image alt tags, captions, and other behind-the-scenes search engine cues.

A Basic Example

Say your goal is to explain how to properly maintain a swimming pool. First, we do keyword research to understand the different ways people might search for answers to that question. Next, we strategically define the group of pages that make up the **Content Pillar**, choosing primary keywords that support a natural explanation of the processes and concepts involved. We might include pages on chemicals, cleaning processes, staffing, and safety. Finally, we leverage the keyword research to write content that addresses the common searches people are using to get to this kind of information and present it in a way that's friendly to search engines.

Steps for Optimizing Content Pillars

1. Understand your company's visibility needs
2. Evaluate keyword traffic in the industry
3. Analyze the top rankings for your company and its competitors
4. Map focus keywords and secondary keywords
5. Map and analyze SERP ranking potential
6. Optimize during drafting and publishing
7. Optimize URL structure, image names, and metadata for search engine visibility

Which chemicals will be best for my customers in my region? When do I need to add new equipment as my business grows?

The Power of Existing Content

How to repurpose existing assets to build effective Content Pillars

Many organizations already have the right content to build traffic, it's just not online or in a format searchable by Google or usable by prospective customers.

PDFs online, but buried where customers and search engines can't easily find them

⁄ PDFs hidden behind a paywall

⁄ Internal training material

⁄ Sales material

⁄ Printed books and pamphlets

> **"It's a matter of taking all that great, rich content and putting it into an experience that people can find and use—and that can grow the traffic that creates interest in your company. The best way to serve your customers and your company is to expose that content through Content Pillars."**
>
> **— Rob Bean, Partner & Marketing Strategist, Refactored**

Anatomy of a Content Pillar Project

Learn how we turned the topic of Statistical Process Control (SPC) into a magnet for attracting high-value leads for a global brand.

InfinityQS® is the global leader in quality management software for manufacturers. The company's solutions are based on enabling better, more effective use of Statistical Process Control (SPC)—an industry-standard methodology for measuring and controlling quality during the manufacturing process. The keyword SPC drives 90% of the organic traffic to the InfinityQS website.

Through Refactored's ongoing SEO program, in concert with our technical SEO partners at Pico Digital, we realized that competitors had begun building SPC-related content on their sites. Those additions were eroding InfinityQS's lead in SERPs and eating into their share of organic traffic.

Content is expensive to create. But after brainstorming with the InfinityQS team, Refactored realized that InfinityQS already had all the content it needed. The catch? That research and knowledge was locked away in unsearchable formats:

⁄ A published book

⁄ PowerPoint® presentations

⁄ Training manuals

⁄ Online training module

A set of Content Pillars was the perfect way to surface that valuable content and add significant keyword gravity to their already strong site.
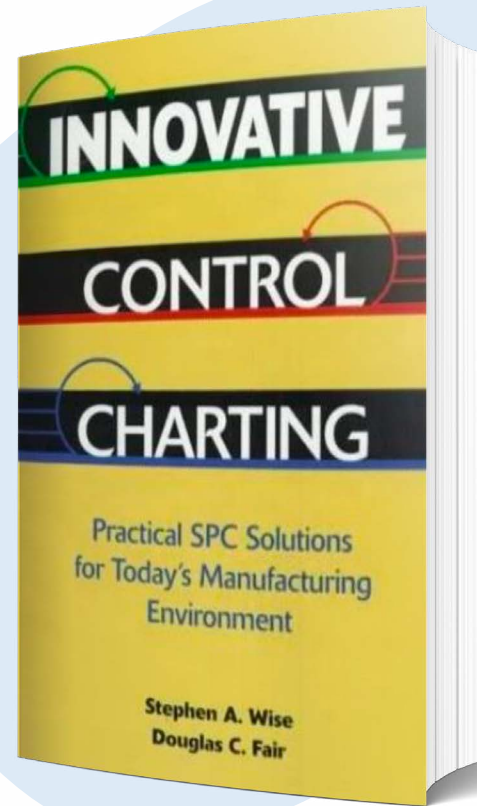
InfinityQS had a wealth of unpublished information about the topics their audience was seeking. In fact, when it came to SPC, they wrote the book. Literally.

Creating the Pillars

Refactored and Pico worked with InfinityQS to conduct **keyword research** and analyze competitors' keyword strategies. That information provided the primary and secondary keyword lists we needed to develop multiple Content Pillars.

Then, the Refactored team **developed a strategy** for three new interactive, multi-page resource sections: The Definitive Guide to SPC Charts, SPC 101 for Manufacturing, and an SPC Glossary.

Refactored began the **production** stage by updating and revising InfinityQS's existing material, repurposing and restructuring it to fit the proposed Content Pillar sections we were planning for their site. We also added new content to ensure that the sections are useful,

providing site visitors with a coherent and cohesive experience as they learn about the topics they are seeking. We also wove in fresh information about how InfinityQS software can help them make the most of the SPC data they work with.

The company's repurposed material added 248 keywords across the site and provided highly relevant, useful resources for customers seeking that information. Altogether, the new content added 31 pages and about 40,000 words to the website.
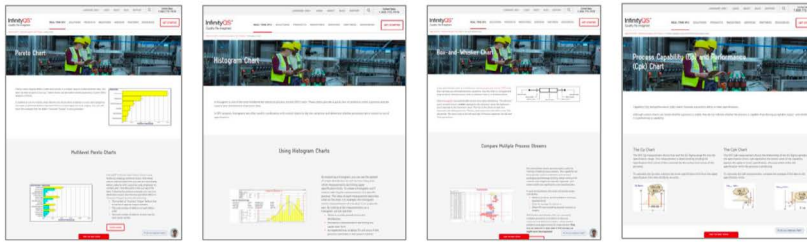

SPC Control Chart Main Page
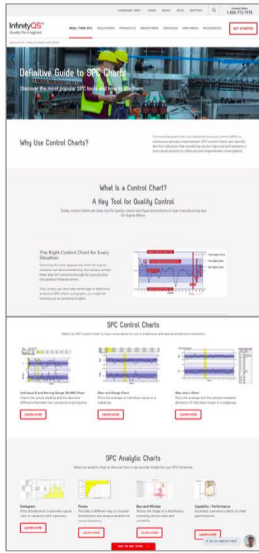
SPC Control Chart Types – 3 core pages, 15 examples-in-use pages
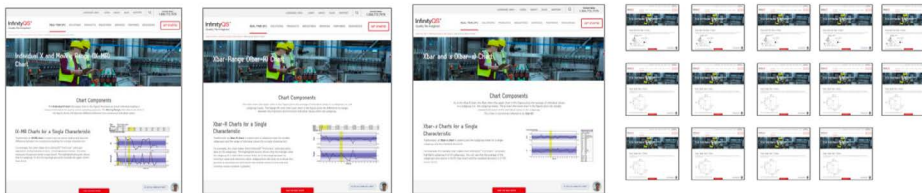
SPC Analysis Chart Types – 4 core pages

> "InfinityQS's new Content Pillars weren't just created for SEO and content marketing. They were carefully prepared to be relevant, clear, and have a good overall fit within the existing site. It's important to put the new material where it can be found easily, but where it won't overwhelm users not looking for it."
>
> — **Rob Bean, Partner & Marketing Strategist, Refactored**

Game-Changing Results
and Deep Savings

The highly engaging Content Pillars that Refactored created for InfinityQS **produced both immediate and sustained success across the board.** The new Content Pillars:

/ Increased keyword rankings

/ Increased organic traffic

/ Boosted visitor time on page to more than four minutes

/ Increased conversions

/ Reduced the need for paid search to get customers in the funnel

All those improvements resulted in a **six-figure savings** for InfinityQS.

Most important, the pages demonstrate that InfinityQS is invested in the learning and success of its customers and is dedicated to serving them at every stage of their journey.

Month-Over-Month Results From September 2018 to October 2018:

Sessions	Avg. Time on Page	% New Sessions	Avg. Session Duration	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Goal Completions
20.96% ▲	4.78% ▲	0.58% ▲	7.52% ▲	1.86% ▼	1.43% ▲	24.19% ▲
16,300 vs 13,475	00:03:39 vs 00:03:29	80.98% vs 80.51%	00:02:45 vs 00:02:33	76.01% vs 77.45%	1.75 vs 1.73	616 vs 496

In the first month, InfinityQS saw marked upticks in its SEO metrics. In just one year, organic traffic had increased 16.97% year-over-year, and **+72 keywords in the top 4-10 positions.**
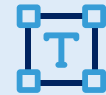
Remarkable Results

+291% goal completions

+325 keyword rankings

+248 keywords sitewide

+13 keywords in the **top 3** positions

+366% increase in organic sessions

Time on page to **4:09** average

Build Content That Builds Your Brand

As a marketing leader, you already know the value of great content. Carefully and strategically crafted Content Pillars address multiple marketing goals—for a fraction of the time and expense of many initiatives.

Of course, as a marketing leader, you also may already be overwhelmed just keeping up with your existing content programs. That's where an experienced partner can help. The team at Refactored brings decades of combined experience and a dedicated focus to your project.

Let's dive in and discover how you can make the most of your available assets and expertise to provide transformative results for your company.

SEO

Ready to supercharge your own SEO results?

Contact Refactored at 970.545.4171 for a no-risk SEO audit and learn about opportunities for building a Content Pillar section on your site.

We'll perform a free audit of your keyword cluster opportunities. Just provide us the following and we'll get going:

/ Your name/URL

/ Your top three keywords

/ Your top three competitors

We help B2B companies develop and realize robust, high-achieving digital marketing strategies. We're here to help.

Refactored

About Us

Refactored is a full-service digital agency that specializes in marketing for complex, B2B companies that need to speed up, get unstuck, or start from the ground up. We develop and execute strategies based on deep industry understandings, audience insights, and recognition of the right channels and technologies to accomplish your goals. Our clients don't just achieve incremental gains. They leap forward. *Momentum Begins Here.*

Connect with us at **www.refactoredmedia.com**.

For more information, visit
refactoredmedia.com.