# Content Research and Planning Frameworks

## 

## Brief Development

### Core Components

Every content brief should include:

* Business objective
* Target audience
* Key messages
* Success metrics
* Distribution channels

**Pro Tip:** Keep briefs focused. A good brief should fit on one page—if it's longer, you're probably overcomplicating the assignment.

### Implementation Guidelines

* Start with the business goal first, not the content type
* Include specific KPIs for measuring success
* Define the target audience using existing personas
* Outline required resources and dependencies
* Set clear deadlines for each development stage

**Watch Out For:** Scope creep in briefs. If you find yourself adding "just one more thing" repeatedly, stop and reassess the core objective.

## 

## Source Identification

### Primary Sources

Develop a systematic approach to finding:

* Subject matter experts
* Customer testimonials
* Industry research
* Original data
* Market analysis

**Caveat:** Don't rely solely on internal experts. External perspectives often provide valuable contrast and credibility.

### Source Management

* Maintain a database of reliable sources
* Track source preferences and availability
* Document interview procedures
* Create source attribution guidelines
* Establish fact-checking protocols

**Pro Tip:** Build relationships with key sources before you need them. Regular check-ins keep connections warm and information flowing.

## 

## Subject Matter Expert Coordination

### Expert Engagement

* Set clear expectations for expert involvement
* Define time commitments upfront
* Establish preferred communication channels
* Create interview templates
* Plan for follow-up questions

**Watch Out For:** Expert availability challenges. Always have a backup expert identified for time-sensitive content.

### Knowledge Transfer

* Develop standard interview questions
* Create expert review checklists
* Document key insights for future use
* Build knowledge repositories
* Establish feedback loops

**Important Note:** Respect experts' time by coming prepared. Send questions in advance and stick to scheduled timeframes.

## 

## Competitive Analysis

### Market Research

* Track competitor content strategies
* Identify content gaps and opportunities
* Monitor industry trends
* Analyze successful formats
* Document best practices

**Pro Tip:** Don't just track what competitors are doing—analyze what they're not doing. Often the biggest opportunities lie in unaddressed areas.

### Differentiation Strategy

* Identify unique angles
* Develop original perspectives
* Find underserved topics
* Create signature formats
* Build distinctive voice

**Watch Out For**: The temptation to simply copy successful competitors. Differentiation is key to standing out in crowded markets.

## 

## Angle Development

### Story Framing

* Identify key narratives
* Develop unique perspectives
* Find emotional hooks
* Create compelling headlines
* Plan content structure

Caveat: Not every piece needs a revolutionary angle. Sometimes executing well on fundamental topics provides more value than forced originality.

### Audience Alignment

* Match angles to audience needs
* Consider buyer journey stage
* Address specific pain points
* Incorporate audience language
* Plan for objection handling

**Pro Tip:** Test angles with small audience segments before full development. This can save significant resources on content that doesn't resonate.

## 

## Implementation Framework

### Getting Started

1. Create basic brief templates
2. Develop source guidelines
3. Establish expert networks
4. Set up competitive tracking
5. Build angle validation process

**Watch Out For:** The temptation to skip research steps when under pressure. Good research saves time in the long run by preventing rewrites and revisions.

### Scaling Operations

1. Enhance brief development
2. Expand source networks
3. Deepen expert relationships
4. Improve competitive tracking
5. Refine angle development

**Important Note:** As you scale, maintain the balance between process and flexibility. Over-systematizing can kill creativity.

## 

## Best Practices

### Research Efficiency

* Set clear research timeframes
* Use standardized templates
* Maintain organized records
* Create reusable resources
* Document key findings

**Pro Tip:** Create a "research bible" for your industry that new team members can reference. This speeds onboarding and maintains consistency.

### Quality Control

* Verify source credibility
* Cross-reference key facts
* Document research methods
* Maintain source lists
* Track research updates

**Watch Out For:** The urge to reinvent the wheel. Good research management means building on previous work while staying current with new developments.