

Creating consistent, high quality content can tax even the most creative people. If you're looking for inspiration, here are a few everyday resources that will help you become an idea factory:

1. **Clients and Customers:** you are witness every day to stories, breakthroughs, insights, and interactions that give an intimate view of your work. Use stories directly with permission and/or credit, or draw on their experiences for inspiration by sharing anonymously with identifying characteristics altered.
2. **News stories/Headlines:** use current events as a hook into your specific message; be honest though; "bait and switch" tactics are annoying and are likely to cause someone to mistrust you and your content.
3. **Quotes:** look for inspiration among your favorite quotes, plus ones that are provocative, apply to a current event or offer a starkly contrasting opinion or perspective to yours. I love browsing quotes on Goodreads, since they tend go beyond the typical quotes everyone hears all the time.
<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes>
4. **Lessons Learned:** your own lessons and/or those of others in your field or among your clients
5. **Response to someone else's blog, book, quote:** you can do a review, post an opposing opinion or alternative yet agreeable perspective. Hint: one way to build readership and awareness of your own material is to comment on others'. In the process, you learn what other people are writing, can see how people are responding, and begin to establish yourself as a knowledgeable, thoughtful resource. Be sure you are adding to the discussion and not being blatantly self-promotional; remember, you're on their turf!
6. **Holidays/Anniversaries:** Check in with <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Holidays/Calendar> - for instance, did you know May 4 is Star Wars Day, and May 6 is "No Pants" day? Think of the possibilities!

7. **Personal experience:** Draw on experiences in your personal, not just professional, life. Sharing a story with heart and insight connects with people in a meaningful, memorable way. In some cases, you are asking people to trust you with their stories and lives, so it makes sense to share pieces of yourself with them.
8. **Google Hot Trends:** sign up to receive hourly e-mails on the most searched-for terms on Google. This keeps you up-to-date with the “latest and greatest” and if you can make a compelling and appropriate tie-in to your content, you might increase your ability to be found by the search engines. <http://www.google.com/trends/hottrends>
9. **Twitter and Facebook Trending Topics:** similar to Google Hot Trends, this information tells you what the most popular Twitter and Facebook topics are at any given moment. Hash Tags (#) are also helpful in identifying trending topics (these tend to be fleeting and sometimes silly – but still might provide inspiration).
10. **Google News Alerts:** Google Alerts are useful for multiple reasons. Set one for your name and/or business to see when mentions are made online. Choose keywords applicable to your business or clients; look at the keywords that are used to find your website for ideas. I have an alert set on “introvert,” so I receive an e-mail whenever the word “introvert” is used in an article, blog or news item. I then share these items on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc, and use them as catalysts for original content creation (see #5, above) on my blog or other social media outlets.
11. **Popular Books, Movies and TV:** specific episodes, themes, and characters all make timely and accessible conduits through which you can share your message.
12. **Social Networking postings, status updates, comments, articles** (Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube, TEDTalks, Facebook): make a habit of looking at what’s being posted in your network. One of my favorite articles was inspired by a friend’s Facebook status update, when she wrote, “Just hit send.” The article focus? Perfectionism. My friend actually meant that she had sent off her doctoral dissertation, so she’d “just hit send.” My mind interpreted her comment in the same way I read “Just do it.” Even misinterpretations can result in fabulous content!