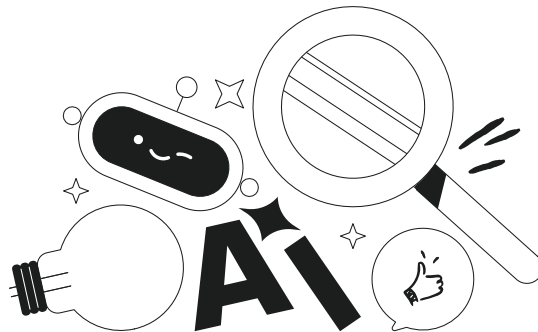


How to Improve AI Readiness



Introduction

It's no secret that AI has impacted what it means to be a marketer, for better and for worse. Marketers have been stretched thin, at risk of burnout, and set an unspoken (and sometimes even spoken) challenge: **keep up, or get left behind**. AI has business leaders asking the same questions they always have — how do we keep growing, how do we stay relevant, how do we capture new interest — but this time, they've added on “and how can we use this new technology to do it?”



If your cup is half empty as a marketer, it's easy to feel stuck; budgets have tightened significantly across the board, and teams are expected to do more with less. And time is running out on how long is left for trial-and-error experimental AI adoption, before teams need to start proving the ROI of their AI investments. If you can talk about AI performance measurement today in any meaningful way, trust us, you're already ahead of the pack.

That's where we come in, with **a masterclass on AI adoption for content marketing**.

We invite you to have a cup half *full*, one where you operate at the top of your game, and introduce your peers to a new type of measurement in marketing strategy: AI content readiness.

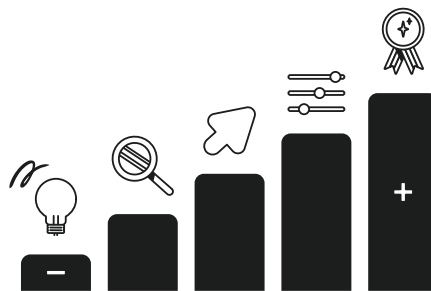
Yes, AI is highly-used, spoken about, and researched, but it's still growing in its dominance in workplace workflows and internet search. It's not just about being ready to use it right now, but keeping up in six months, or a year, as the technology continues to evolve. As of 2026, 61% of marketers we spoke to have not embedded AI tools into their marketing stack in any strategic way, and 50% don't have a solid understanding of how AI platforms surface or cite content. There's work to be done.

This whitepaper dives into seven core areas that combine content marketing and AI readiness, and how you can evolve each area so you (the human) and the machine can work together happily (and productively!)

PART I:

How to measure AI content readiness

To help you measure your AI content readiness, we've developed a simple but detailed maturity model to understand just how ready your content and operations are for the AI-driven present and future. You'll surface your current strengths, the gaps in your strategy, and the steps to implement going forward.



If you haven't yet taken the [AI content readiness assessment](#), it's the most accurate way of measuring your AI readiness level: Learner, Explorer, Builder, Optimizer, or Leader. Once you know where you have gaps, it'll be easier to find the sections most relevant for you.

We know that AI is the number one driver of change right now, but, according to the Fall 2025 Storyblok Marketers Survey, 67% of marketers cite lack of training as the primary barrier to adoption. That's where the AI content readiness assessment comes in.

Knowing how, where, and when to adopt AI into your content operations and your content observability is crucial. If you need a refresher on how AI impacts content operations or content observability, we have detailed articles on both of these topics.

LINKS TO ARTICLES

[Maximizing Content ROI Through Smarter Content Operations in the Era of AI](#) [↗](#)

[Content Observability Explained](#) [↗](#)

Where are you in your AI content readiness journey?



LEARNER

Your organization recognizes the potential of AI but has not yet built the skills, processes, or systems necessary to leverage it effectively — usage is ad-hoc or almost zero. Content operations rely mostly on manual effort and AI is either barely used or only tested here and there. AI search monitoring, entity-based content, structured data, and AI workflows aren't embedded parts of your content strategy yet.



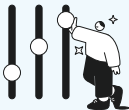
EXPLORER

Your team experiments with AI tools for tasks like content ideation, drafting, or basic optimization efforts but overall usage is inconsistent and not standardized. Some individuals understand what AI search is and how it relates to traditional SEO marketing, but there isn't a widely understood strategy nor is it included within reporting yet. There might be a few promising pilots in motion, but processes, governance, and tech stack integration are still early-stage. AI is helpful, interesting, and exciting — but not yet reliable or central to how the team works.



BUILDER

AI is now a regular part of your content workflows, and confidence in its use is growing. You're shaping clearer processes, guidelines, and internal knowledge. Content is partially structured for AI visibility, and a range of AI tools supports planning, creation, optimization, and analysis. Taxonomy and metadata are becoming more consistent. Composable content models are also beginning to take shape, helping you standardize structure and prepare for greater scalability. There's momentum — but still some inconsistency, some gaps, and plenty of room to tighten things up and scale what works.



OPTIMIZER

AI is a strategic partner across your content operations. Your team uses AI insights to shape decisions, and your content is structured for AI search with a robust knowledge graph, schema markup, and consistent brand and product messaging. Workflows are efficient, reliable, and supported by a solid tech stack. Content personalization and omnichannel delivery are in full swing, backed by governance, training, quality controls, and automated workflows. The system is set, now it's time to lead the way to stay at the forefront of AI development in content.



LEADER

Your organization sets the benchmark for AI-driven content excellence. AI is deeply integrated into systems, processes, governance, and strategy, and your team maintains strong AI literacy, continually experimenting with new capabilities with the ability to adapt quickly to market and tech changes. Content is fully machine-readable, API-first, and structured for maximum visibility in AI search, and you use advanced content models, custom AI integration frameworks, and predictive analytics to scale operations and innovate ahead of competitors.

Wherever you land in the maturity model, now you know where there's room for improvement across your content operations. To make it easier for you, we've split a typical content marketing and AI strategy into seven distinct functions. This way, you can dive into the different areas and develop an action-plan that's tailored to your brand.

The seven content marketing functions:

- ① **CONTENT STRATEGY AND PLANNING**
Utilize both human insight with intelligent tools to set a clear direction for who you're talking to, what you're trying to achieve, and how the content you create supports business outcomes.
- ② **CONTENT CREATION**
Combine human creativity with generative engine speed to create good content efficiently and at scale.
- ③ **CONTENT STRUCTURING AND OPTIMIZATION**
Structure and optimize content so that it's easy for both humans and AI engines to read, understand, and reuse.
- ④ **DISTRIBUTION AND PUBLISHING**
Ensure content reaches the right audiences in the right formats at the right time — without relying on manual effort and guesswork.
- ⑤ **PERFORMANCE AND ANALYSIS**
Turn content data into actionable insights that guide optimization and future plans.
- ⑥ **PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE**
Provide clear content guidelines, task ownership, and quality control to keep workflows that incorporate AI accurate, consistent, and trustworthy.
- ⑦ **CONTENT ECOSYSTEM INTEGRATION**
Connect systems, platforms, and teams so content moves smoothly, scales effectively, and delivers more value over time.

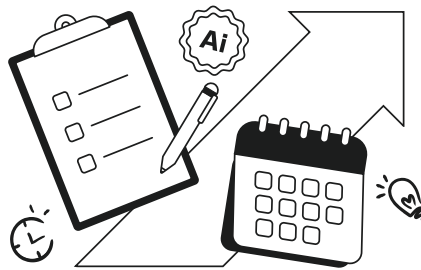
FOR EACH CONTENT MARKETING FUNCTION WE'LL COVER:

- ✓ **The challenge:** what typically holds teams back
- ✓ **The goal:** what AI-ready maturity looks like
- ✓ **The tactics:** practical steps to mature further along the model

PART II:

How to improve AI content readiness

Now we'll dive into the seven content marketing functions in detail, so that you can access the full scope of actions, strategies, and skills to improve your AI content readiness. Strap in.



Content strategy and planning

The challenge:

Yes, AI can be a fantastic tool for finding out pretty much anything, as long as you ask it the right questions. But generative AI is trained on what has happened before and what is already on the internet, so while it's the perfect assistant for competitor research and market predictions, your human brain still needs to take those insights and use them to come up with something interesting or new.

The goal:

Your content strategy clearly defines why you create content, who it's for, what problems it solves, and how success is measured. AI is a key tool in content strategy development: knowledge graphs, predictive insights, and continuous optimization for AI search are pillars of your team's content planning.

Tactics for Learner to Builder:

- Start by assessing what AI features are already available in your existing tools (CMS, SEO, analytics, writing assistants) and what you have available to support research, drafting, and optimization.
- Write down guidelines on how you believe AI should be used for planning, such as consistent prompts, protecting internal data, and human reviews approving all outputs.

- By yourself or with your team members, document clearly your core content audiences, goals, and topics in a shared strategy brief.
- Think about planning consistency: repeatable briefs, templates, workflows, that you can repeat every quarter with your team.
- Make sure AI is used to save time on setup and analysis, not to replace strategic or creative decisions.
- Use AI to take a list of brand-relevant topics (defined by you) and use them to develop a proposal of content ideas for you to choose from; go a step further and ask AI to map them to the marketing funnel stages.

The data tells us that AI prompt guidelines would come in handy for many marketers. **39%** consider themselves well-practiced or advanced at AI search prompt creation for tracking, but **37%** feel they are still beginners or don't know where to start.

The Fall 2025 Storyblok Marketers Survey

Tactics for Builder to Leader:


- Use AI-assisted research tools to analyze first-party data like customer insights, search behavior, and current content gaps so that you have a clear understanding of your current performance before you begin planning.
- Use AI-assisted research tools to analyze your performance against your competitors; be clear who your competitors are and what metrics you're interested in, so AI is better informed about what information to give you. E.g., “from my competitor list, share the content campaigns published in the last six months and analyze their strengths and weaknesses against typical SEO metrics, in a table format.”
- Build and maintain a content knowledge graph to map key topics, entities, relationships, and audience intents across your website. This is also great for AI search visibility — more on that in content structuring and optimization.
- Once you have a plan, try using AI for scenario modeling (e.g., “what content would we need if X market shifts?”).



WHAT IS A CONTENT KNOWLEDGE GRAPH?

A content knowledge graph is a structured map of the topics, entities, concepts, and relationships that matter to your audience and your business. It helps humans see the big picture and enables machines — from search engines to AI models — to understand how your content fits together.

YOUR READING LIST

[RAG with GEO Explained in 5 Minutes | Storyblok](#) 

[Content Modeling, Explained | Storyblok](#) 

[How to Manage Content Debt: A Practical Playbook | Storyblok](#) 

The big headless CMS benefit: A headless CMS supports strategy by separating content from presentation, making it easier to plan, model, and reuse content across multiple channels from day one.



Content creation

The challenge:

When it comes to writing content, utilizing AI feels like the biggest no-brainer — break the blank-page syndrome and save valuable hours of your time. But, it's not that simple. When you use AI to write brand content, making sure it sounds like the brand/written by a human and not like AI is half the challenge — and you're not saving that much time if you spend hours just rewriting what AI has given you. Yes, content creation without AI can be slow and inconsistent, with results often dependent on individual talent; however, when AI is used as a shortcut rather than a helpful collaborator, it results in content that is fast but often forgettable

"While AI offers efficiency in generating and managing content, editorial control remains essential to ensure outputs align with brand voice and strategic objectives."

(2025) IDC Report: Reinventing the Digital Core: How NordVPN
Scaled Global Content and Customer Experience

The goal:

AI and human collaboration are seamless. Content is comprehensive, localized, semantically rich, and consistently aligned with the brand voice through a combination of streamlined AI and human input. Better content, less chaos.

Tactics for Learner to Builder:

- Start by assessing what AI features are already available in your existing tool stack (CMS, SEO, analytics, writing assistants) and what you have available to support the outlining, drafting, and editing stage.
- Write down guidelines on how you believe AI should be used for drafting and writing, such as consistent prompts, protecting internal data, and human reviews approving all outputs.
- By yourself or with your team members, document clearly your brand voice and written style guidelines — this is essential.
- Use AI to save time and help you break the blank-page syndrome; never put content live without a human review and approval.
- As a test-and-learn project, try creating a full briefing document for AI to write a long-form brand article; think about what prompts you could incorporate to get a better result next time.

Tactics for Builder to Leader:

- Train an AI assistant with examples of your best-performing content and brand voice guidelines.
- Use AI for ideation, outlining, and potentially generating a first draft, as long as it's based on a human-approved brief.
- Treat AI like a mini brainstorming assistant, using it to generate variations of headlines, intros, and CTAs. Oftentimes, what it generates might just inspire you to come up with something better — a lightbulb moment.
- Use AI for easy localization of copy when producing content for different markets and languages — always with human quality control in the loop.
- Integrate AI directly into editorial workflows and content tools — more on that in content ecosystem and integration.
- Build a comprehensive workflow where humans brief, AI generates, and humans edit for accuracy, originality, and emotional resonance.

YOUR READING LIST

[What AI Search Means for Your Content Strategy in 2025-2026 | Storyblok](#) ↗

[The Future of CMS: How AI Will Reshape Content Marketing | Storyblok](#) ↗

The big headless CMS benefit: A headless CMS enables creators to focus on content quality and structure overall, while efficiently delivering the same content to multiple experiences (web, in-store, mobile) effortlessly.



Content structuring and optimization

The challenge:

Search marketing has drastically changed in the last few years, and as a marketing specialism, it's fair to say that role requirements have been in flux. While Google search optimization has never been an exact science, thanks to Google providing ranking insights (keyword planner and search console, for example), there are highly tried-and-tested strategies for increasing performance. AI platforms have completely disrupted the market and, at the time of writing, the search marketing industry is very much still in the testing phase. What we do know is that unstructured content confuses both humans and machines. Walls of text, inconsistent formatting, and unclear hierarchy make content harder to understand, reuse, and surface in AI-driven experiences.

50% of marketers consider themselves to have a solid or deep understanding of how AI search engines understand and surface content, but only 35% have clear measurement frameworks or established KPIs to track performance. 1 in 4 have no AI search metrics.

The Fall 2025 Storyblok Marketers Survey

The goal:

Content is fully machine-consumable (and human-friendly) with advanced schema markup, API-first delivery, well-developed knowledge graphs, and consistent AI search-driven optimization. AI-ready content is modular, scannable, and semantically clear. It's easy to read, easy to repurpose, and easy for AI to interpret — without sounding robotic.

Tactics for Learner to Builder:

- Gain an understanding of what Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) is, and where it fits into your current search optimization strategy.
- Attend a webinar or watch on-demand content to increase your knowledge of just how relevant your website content is to increasing AI content visibility.
- Begin documenting internally to standardize headings, formatting, and page templates across teams.

NEED SOME INSPIRATION?

We've got [plenty of webinars](#) to get started on Storyblok

- Use AI tools to recommend SEO and keyword optimization improvements.
- Research content format types that work well for being cited in AI engines, e.g., shorter summary paragraphs, FAQs, and comparison tables.

If structured content isn't your strong suit, you're not alone. Only 33% of marketers are currently applying structured metadata, schema, and composable models at a high-quality or expert level. 28% use little to no meaningful structure in their content.

The Fall 2025 Storyblok Marketers Survey

Tactics for Builder to Leader:

- Gain an in-depth understanding of technical AI terminology relevant to how AI tools generate or cite content, such as vector databases and retrieval augmented generation (RAG).
- Learn the technical steps necessary to make your overall website AI search-ready, so you're more informed when talking to your developer team — our technical GEO checklist is a great resource for this.
- Use AI tools to analyze your existing content and recommend structural improvements (headings, summaries, FAQs); make this a regular part of your quarterly content optimization strategy.
- Create a content optimization brief for AI to define the structured elements (definitions, bullet summaries, metadata) you'd like it to implement for you, once you have written or generated a first draft of content.

YOUR READING/WATCH LIST

[How Marketers Can Build Healthy Content in the Age of AI | Storyblok & CMI](#) [↗](#)

[GEO Explained in 5 Minutes | Blog | Storyblok](#) [↗](#)

[What's the Big Deal with Vector Databases? | Storyblok](#) [↗](#)

[Structured Content for the AI Era | Storyblok](#) [↗](#)

[Why SEO Still Matters in the Age of AI Search | Storyblok](#) [↗](#)

[Your Technical GEO Checklist | Storyblok](#) [↗](#)

The big headless CMS benefit: A headless CMS enforces structured content models out-of-the-box, making it easier to optimize and surface content consistently — ultimately supporting better performance across traditional search and AI search.



Distribution and publishing

The challenge:

Content distribution is often manual, channel-specific, and reactive. So it's no surprise that AI can't embed in the process when distribution planning lives in a spreadsheet, slide deck, or, fingers crossed, maybe a project management tool. Implementing AI into any content operations workflow involves stakeholder alignment, potentially involvement from security, IT, or your developer team, and even a third-party tool. All of these steps can be a roadblock to delivery when you're short on time and bandwidth.

The goal:

Real-time, AI-orchestrated content delivery across all channels, fully API-first, highly personalized, and scalable. AI-ready distribution uses automation, data, and adaptive publishing to get the right content to the right audience at the right time (without burning out the team).


Tactics for Learner to Builder:

- Use AI to manually adapt one piece of long-form content into bite-sized content for different distribution channels (social, email, website, etc.), adapting tone of voice to suit the channel.
- Automate basic scheduling and publishing, such as social media posts and blog posts.

Tactics for Builder to Leader:

- Automate AI to adapt content for different channels (length, tone, format); a human just needs to approve before go live.
- Use predictive AI to identify optimal publishing times and channels.
- Automate content refreshing and optimizing reminders — once a blog post has been live for one year, you'll get a notification to consider refreshing the content.
- Use AI to personalize content distribution by audience segment, such as dynamic email content based on the recipient.

YOUR READING LIST

[Five Signs Your CMS Isn't Ready for the Age of AI | Storyblok](#) 

The big headless CMS benefit: A headless CMS allows the same content to be published simultaneously to multiple channels and devices, enabling faster, more flexible distribution.



Performance and analysis

The challenge:

Content performance is often measured in isolation and by individual contributors: page views here, likes and impressions there, vibes everywhere. AI can't optimize what isn't clearly defined or consistently tracked.

The goal:

AI search performance intelligence is predictive, automated, and deeply integrated across your content operations and ecosystem, guiding strategy in real time. AI-ready measurement connects content performance to business impact and learning loops. Data informs decisions, and insights feed directly back into planning and creation.

Tactics for Learner to Builder:

- Define clear success metrics per content goal (such as awareness, consideration, decision, or conversion), and document them internally.
- Establish a consistent reporting cadence for each quarter so that performance is reviewed regularly, not reactively.
- Experiment with prompt-tracking — devise a list of 5-10 prompts that your brand should be mentioned or cited for in AI, and manually test your performance against them.
- Use AI analytics to surface basic insights about your content, such as top-performing content, content declining over time, and impression and engagement trends. Be careful about sharing any internal company data with an external AI tool, so check with your IT team, and make sure the tool settings are in-line with any company governance.
- Segment your performance data by channel and format, so you understand where content works best.
- Use AI to summarize reporting and highlight any key takeaways for non-technical stakeholders.

Tactics for Builder to Leader:

- Automate content refreshing and optimizing reminders — once a blog post has been live for one year, you'll get a notification to consider refreshing the content. Look at performance data to see if there has been a decline YoY before taking action.
- Invest in a prompt-tracking tool that will test your brand's performance against

millions of relevant user prompts, so you can more accurately understand how your brand is performing. [We like Otterly.ai](#) but there are other tools on the market.

- Use AI analytics to surface patterns that you might miss as a human, for example, topic saturation (are you writing too much about a topic?) or trend capturing (are competitors all talking about something you're not?)
- Apply attribution modeling, powered by AI, to connect content to revenue and pipeline — did an impression earlier on eventually lead to a conversion?

YOUR READING LIST

[How To Use Data Analytics To Get Customer Insights and Improve Performance | Storyblok](#) [↗](#)

The big headless CMS benefit: Having a headless CMS makes it easier to track how the same content performs across channels, providing cleaner data for analysis and optimization.



Processes and governance

The challenge:

Without clear processes, AI adoption will become very messy, fast. IT teams worry about quality, compliance, and consistency — and often respond by banning tools instead of helping to manage them. Teams need to align on the best way to use new tools and ensure they don't harm the brand externally in the process with misuse.

“The ability to adapt, govern, and align AI initiatives with evolving business and customer needs will determine long-term success in the digital content landscape.”

(2025) IDC Report: Reinventing the Digital Core: How NordVPN
Scaled Global Content and Customer Experience

The goal:

AI governance is mature: ethical use, automation, quality checks, accessibility rules, and continuous upskilling are fully operational. AI-ready governance enables creativity with guardrails. Processes define how AI is used, reviewed, and improved, without slowing teams to a crawl.

Tactics for Learner to Builder:

- Document where AI can and cannot be used across the content operations life-cycle (research, drafting, editing, publishing).
- Speak to your IT team if there isn't clear guidance on which AI tools are approved for use within your organization.
- Define clear ownership in your team for content quality, approvals, and final sign-off — make sure team members know what to look for (e.g., incorrect brand voice).
- Create shared guidance on prompts, data sources, and acceptable AI use for marketing purposes.
- Run regular retrospectives on AI usage within content processes, to capture how often it's being used, how it's being used, and ways it can be improved — why not encourage the whole team to take the AI content readiness assessment?

When it comes to AI governance, marketers are a mixed bag. 40% have clear or robust AI governance, while 28% rely on informal frameworks, or don't have any at all.

The Fall 2025 Storyblok Marketers Survey

Tactics for Builder to Leader:

- Establish formal prompt standards, version control, and audit trails for AI-assisted content.
- Introduce role-based permissions for AI tools and workflows.
- Regularly review and update governance as tools, regulations, and risks evolve.

YOUR READING/WATCH LIST

[Webinar: The IT Leader's Guide to AI Governance | Storyblok](#) [↗](#)

[The State of Security 2026 | Storyblok](#) [↗](#)

The big headless CMS benefit: A headless CMS supports governance through clear content models, roles, and permissions, reducing company risk while enabling your content to scale easily.



Content ecosystem integration

The challenge:

Content often lives in silos: CMS here, DAM there, analytics somewhere else entirely. AI struggles when systems don't talk to each other (and so do teams). The bottom-line is that disconnected systems prevent content from scaling effectively, which is essential for business growth, particularly into new markets.

The goal:

Custom AI tokens, advanced workflows, predictive models, and fully integrated AI systems create an adaptive, future-proof ecosystem that can manage whatever comes next. AI-ready content ecosystems are connected, interoperable, and designed for reuse. Content flows smoothly across platforms, tools, and experiences.

Tactics for Learner to Builder:

- Connect core platforms such as CMS, DAM, analytics, and marketing automation tools — with Storyblok, you can use [FlowMotion](#) to automate workflows and connect to other tools in your stack, seamlessly.
- Standardize basic taxonomies, naming conventions, and metadata.


Tactics for Builder to Leader:

- Gain a deep understanding of model context protocol (MCP), and how it relates to connecting AI systems to perform automated tasks, taking your AI strategy beyond generative AI, and becoming agentic.
- Design content as modular, structured components — a headless CMS is the perfect system for composable content from day one.
- Integrate your CMS with AI platforms — learn more about how FlowMotion with Storyblok can do this, with over 500 tool integrations.

YOUR READING LIST

[MCP and the Rise of AI Agents | Storyblok](#) 

The big headless CMS benefit: A headless CMS acts as a central content hub that integrates easily with other systems, enabling content to power an entire ecosystem of experiences.



“ Content is no longer just something you create - it’s your most strategic of assets. Just as data powers every decision today, content will define every customer interaction. Your CMS is going to play an all new role as the single source of truth for AI search, and hence the information that reaches the customer.

Julius Hemingway, Senior Product Marketing Team Manager, Storyblok

In another recent whitepaper of ours, [The Marketers Guide to Navigating the Era of Constant Change](#), we talk about how marketers are stretched thin right now and at risk of burnout — with 58% of marketers we spoke to feeling “overwhelmed” in the last 12 months.

Marketers need to ultimately be resilient in the face of change and demonstrate their knowledge and ability to implement AI successfully to the leaders. We explain the skills needed by marketers in 2026 to be able to drive change in their team, and move them into the next stage of the content maturity model. It’s the sidekick you need to keep moving up in your AI content readiness journey.

Closing

With the introduction of AI into the marketing mix, the criticality of content has become clear. Content is the backbone to your brand. As your brand reaches more channels, devices, and AI-driven experiences than ever before, content isn’t just a tool — it’s a strategic asset. Don’t leave it unmanaged.

About Storyblok

Storyblok is a headless CMS that enables marketers and developers to create with joy and succeed in the AI-driven content era.

Storyblok is a headless CMS that enables marketers and developers to create with joy and succeed in the AI-driven content era. It empowers you to deliver structured and consistent content everywhere: websites, apps, AI search, and beyond.

Legendary brands like Virgin Media O2, Oatly, and TomTom use Storyblok to make a bigger, faster market impact. It’s Joyful Headless™, and it changes everything.

Get Joyful. 

**See how Storyblok can revolutionize
your content at storyblok.com.**

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