

What is content modeling

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If content was a coffee, the content model would be the coffee cup, which holds all ingredients and the final product together. The cup is a constraint but together with the ingredients, it also gives you a lot of possibilities when making a coffee. Content modeling is very similar to this real-world scenario.

🔑 Key points

- Every content model is unique and consists mainly of content types and content type elements.
- Creating a content model is a collaborative effort and the best results are achieved if all stakeholders are involved.
- Having a content strategy, mapped out customer journeys, and an [audit of the existing content](#) is invaluable.

In content modeling, ingredients would be your **content type elements** (sometimes also called *content attributes*). The same ingredients can be used to make different types of coffee, so you are also able to **create different content types** with your content type elements.

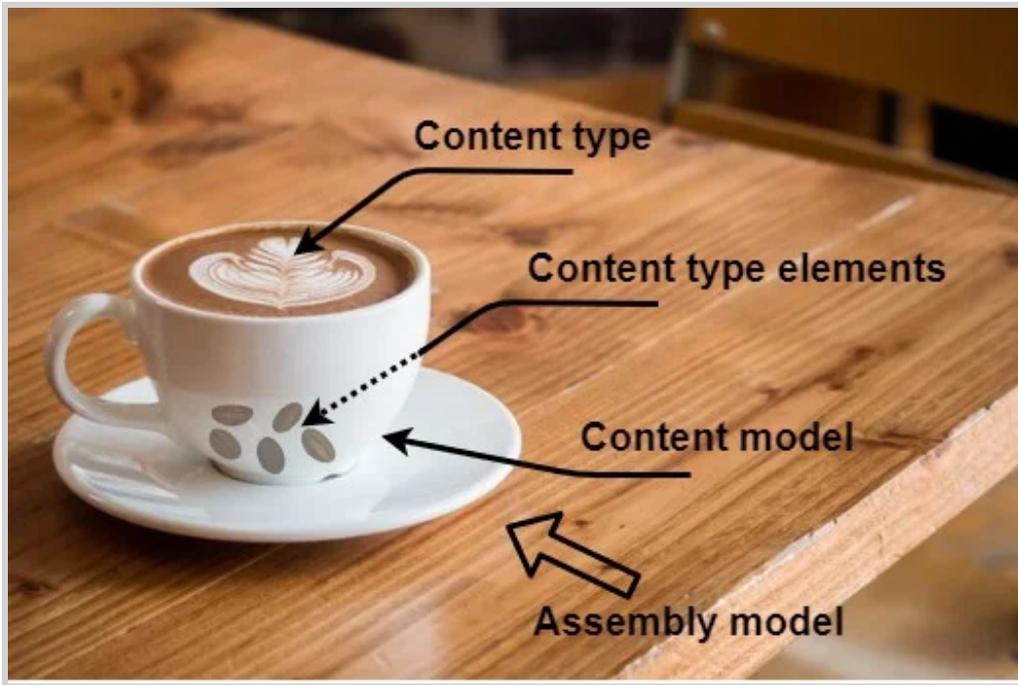
Overall, the process of preparation would be the *assembly model*. You don't need to remember this term but it can be a suitable keyword if you look for [more content modeling information](#).

✅ How important is content modeling, really?

From the Kontent team's experience, well-modeled projects are more successful from both result and satisfaction points of view. For us, content modeling is one of the most important things that can decide the success of your project.

If you already know the basics and want to go further, take our [e-learning course](#) to master content modeling today.

Detailed and careful preparation, with great ingredients and a bit of uniqueness, will set you up for success if you plan to open your own coffee chain. The same can be said for the content model.



The content model is the foundation of your project and although it may have similarities with the content models of others, it will have some unique traits. It's so unique that no one will have exactly the same content model as you or your company. It's only yours and no one else's.

Creating a good model is hard, so the best approach is to **start small and iterate**. This can be done by building it in a flexible and extensible way. This should be your mantra for the whole process. On top of that, **involve at least one stakeholder per department** to address their needs and get internal buy-in for the model.

In this tutorial, we will use the coffee example to illustrate content modeling better, but here are some other real-life examples you could use to understand different content modeling terms.

Building	Coffee	Article	Content
Building blueprint	Steps	Order of sections	Assembly model
Building codes	Coffee cup	Structure of articles and how they relate to each other	Content model
Bungalow, Duplex, Villa	Flat white, Cappuccino, Latte, Long black	Blog, News, Breaking news	Content types
Mortar, Bricks, Water, Cement, Timber, Tiles	Water, Beans, Milk, Creamer, Sugar	Images, Text, Video	Content type elements (or content attributes)
Pre-fab walls, Windows, Doors	Coffee pods, Creamer, Nescafe 3-in-1	SEO fields, Metadata fields, CTAs	Content chunks

Before you start modeling

This series is focused on content modeling itself. However, to become well-prepared and make content modeling easier, we recommend that you do a couple of activities that will help you **understand your**

existing customers and content:

- Map your customer journey across all channels
- Dig into your current information architecture setup
- Audit your existing content

After reading this introduction, you should have overall knowledge about what content modeling means. Would you be able to explain what content type elements are? If so, continue to the next step to learn more about content modeling in Kontent. If you are still unsure why you should learn content modeling, check out [more on this topic](#) and [what could go wrong](#).

Continue to **Content modeling in Kontent** by clicking the **Continue to next step** button:

Content modeling in Kontent

Jumping back to the coffee example, every barista goes through some training. They learn how to set up and use the espresso machine, how to froth milk, or how to dose coffee.

Later they can apply that knowledge and modify steps to prepare different kinds of beverages. They do it because **knowing your tools and how to use them is essential** to get the best possible results. With content modeling, the same rule applies. You can't be a master just from the theory.

🔑 Key points

- Get yourself familiar with Kontent's highly flexible content modeling options – [content types](#), [content items](#), [components](#), [content type snippets](#), taxonomies, [guidelines](#), and [content item variants](#).
- [Create a testing project](#) in the Kontent app for training purposes, and try modeling scenarios described in this guide.
- Maximize the use of content type snippets, [linked items](#), [components](#), and variants to build a highly flexible model.

Before you start creating a production-ready content model, we recommend that you follow this modeling example to **familiarize yourself with Kontent's fundamentals**.

Intro to content modeling fundamentals

Imagine that you own a coffee shop that sells two different flat white coffees. The goal is to model this in Kontent for your website. To get the most out of the exercise, [create a testing project](#), and try to model it yourself along with the article.

First, you'll need a *Flat white* [content type](#) to represent all flat whites. **Content types are basically templates or forms**. When it comes to content, every coffee has the same structure, so one content type is enough.

Then, you need the coffee to have a name, a description, and ingredients. Add three content type elements to your *Flat white* content type:

- A text element named *Name*
- A rich text element named *Description*

- A rich text element named *Ingredients*

This could be enough for a basic coffee model, yet wouldn't it be superb to have also a photo gallery for each coffee on the menu? Pictures are usually reused and also contain special information like a title or a description. So that you can do all of that, create another content type, named *Coffee picture*. Add these two elements:

- An asset element named *Picture*
- A text element named *Description*



A diagram of the model so far

Add metadata and connect everything together

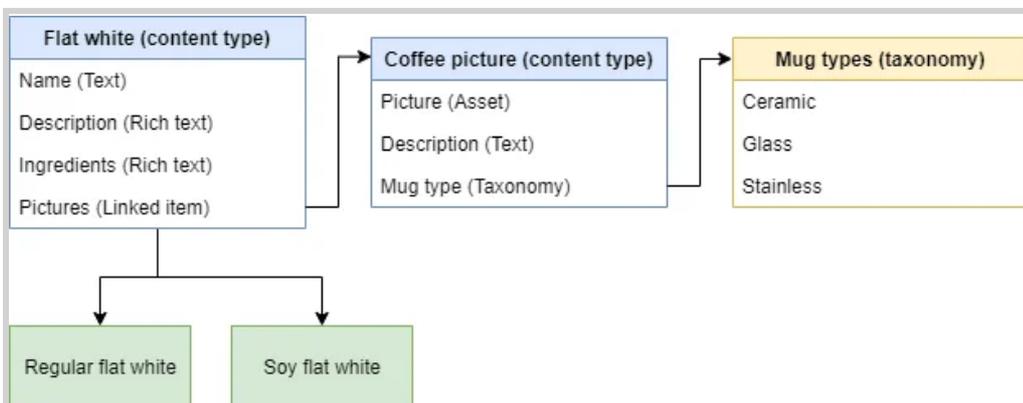
It's also suitable to tag what's in the picture so that you can filter pictures better later on. Such information is called **metadata**. For example, to filter the pictures based on the used mug type:

1. Create a *Mug types* taxonomy with some terms.
2. To the *Coffee picture* content type, add a taxonomy element called *Mug type*.
3. Set the *Mug types* taxonomy to be available in the *Mug type* element.

Now, the only thing that's left is adding the pictures to our content type for coffees.

1. Go back to the main *Flat white* content type.
2. Add a linked items element called *Pictures*.
3. Set up the properties of *Pictures* so that [only Coffee pictures are allowed for the photo gallery](#).

The main part of content modeling is now done. However, flat whites can be a regular flat white or a soy flat white. The regular flat white is an instance of flat white. In content modeling, that's called a **content item**. Content items are the actual representations of the content type (the template) that you created before.

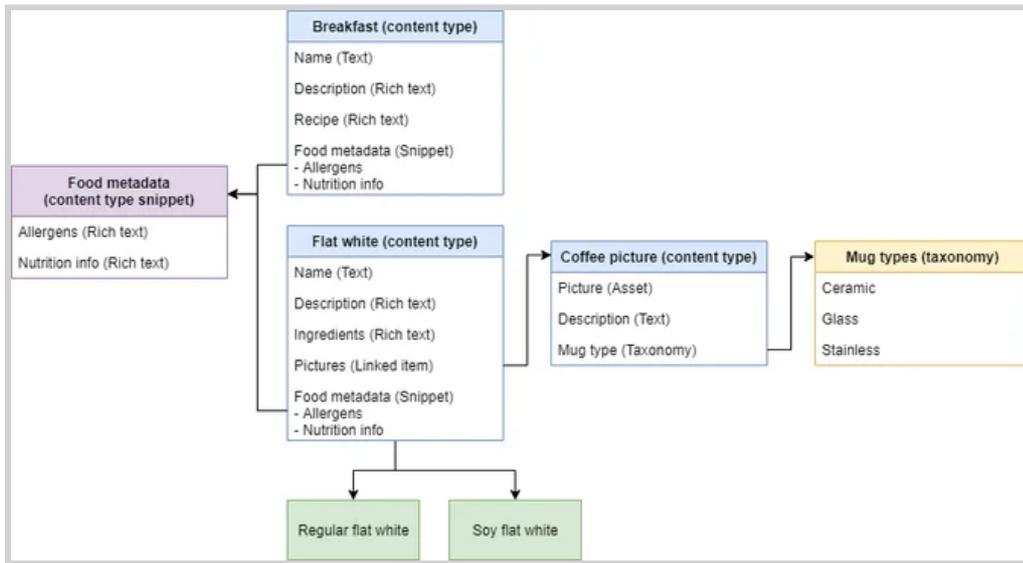


Content types and taxonomies with visible relationships

Extend the content model

If you decide to serve breakfasts later, you might realize that you miss nutritional info and allergens on the website. These are common for coffee as well, so you want to add them to the existing *Flat white* content type, too.

As you'll use the same set of two elements in both content types, you can make your work easier by using [content type snippets](#). That way, you can reuse or extend them in one place.



The great thing about Kontent is its content reuse. Once you create a content type, it can be seamlessly reused and embedded as [linked items](#) or directly within rich text areas as [components](#). Every content item can also have variants, which are usually used for [translations](#). You never know if you don't go international one day.

Reusing vs. copying

In some cases, copying can still make more sense. For example, when a content item or type serves just as a template for another item or type. When this happens, you can clone both [content items](#) and [content types](#).

Completing this exercise should give you a good feel of the available tools in Kontent and how to use them. In the next step, let's go quickly through all the available options and their best practices.

Which tool is useful in what situation

Before you move further, let's go through what can come in handy in different situations. Bookmark this page for later when you're modeling content. But even passive knowledge can make a difference when you read further.

Content types

- Templates/forms for content items
- Contain content type elements or content type snippets
- A typical use case is a concept of a blog post, testimonial or article

Focus on the purpose of the content type, not its representation. However, if you need to embed layout into your model, use a generic *Page* content type. Don't create types such as *Page with left section*. Instead, use taxonomies or components to specify the layout options.

Avoid one-off types or being too specific, such as creating *Home page* or *About us page* content types.

Content items

- Some content based on a content type
- Contain filled elements
- A typical use case is one specific blog post

Use for content of the same type, such as different articles, CTAs or FAQs.

Avoid using for content that's only part of one specific item. For example, an article-specific slideshow or attachment.

Content type elements

- Atomic part of a content type with optional [validation](#) that later works in content items as a piece of structured information
- Contain a piece of content (text, numbers, dates, etc.) but also linked items, components, and taxonomies
- A typical use case is a blog post title, target persona, text voice, related articles

Use the right element based on the information purpose. For example, if you want to pick the content creator from a list of options, use the *Multiple choice* element for checkboxes (if multi-choice) or radio buttons (if single-select).

Don't be too specific, such as *Twitter summary* (more suitable would be *Social network summary*).

Content type snippets

- A bunch of content type elements re-used in multiple content types
- Contains content type elements
- A typical use case is metadata for SEO, content brief, customer journey context

Use for sharing elements across content types. It can be only one element if you want to maintain consistency, such as a detailed guideline that would be difficult to manage separately, persona, or page options.

Use to ensure the same naming of content type elements' [codenames](#) to make your developer's job easier.

Linked items

- Link content items together, create relationships
- Contain other reusable content items
- A typical use case is related articles, author, child navigation

Use [validation](#) in the element to ensure that content creators will link suitable content only.

Component

- Inline, non-reusable pieces of content inside a *rich* text element that work similarly to content items but don't have a name and are not listed among all content
- Similar to content items, contain filled elements
- A typical use case is a slideshow, attachments, poll, one-time images

Use when the item is tightly related to the parent content item only. When a second use appears, or you want to decouple the workflow, convert it into a content item.

Use for anything that can't be represented using the out-of-the-box rich text toolbar. For example, prices, images, names, or phone numbers.

Taxonomy

- A tree of tags for settings or categorization
- Contains its terms
- A typical use case is a persona, text voice, category, colors

Use to [manage site relationships](#), personalization, layout, content discovery, or tags that won't be displayed to your visitors. Useful for internal filtering in the inventory.

Don't use if you want to display the taxonomy term to your website or app visitors. Instead, define a content type as taxonomy metadata.

Collections

- A way to compartmentalize different kinds of content
- Similar to taxonomy, used for filtering content items
- A typical use case is dividing content between company departments or separating regional content

Use to [classify content items](#). For instance, a university would use collections to group content by faculties. An international company could use collections to separate region-specific content from the shared one.

Depending on your use case, you can also decide to use [variants](#) to manage regional content.

Variants

- Variants of a content item, with the same structure and connected to the original content item
- Similar to content items, contain filled elements
- A typical use case is translations, region-specific content

Use for fallbacks of content.

Subpages

- Specify child items of a content item
- Similar to linked items, exist only with Web Spotlight enabled
- A typical use case is a page tree for a website

Separate the actual content from the navigation. Create the content in a separate content item and then link your page to it. This way, your content will be ready for an omnichannel presence. Later, you can create a different hierarchy for another channel and reuse the same content.

For more information, you can also check our [content strategy glossary](#) and [Kontent's terminology](#).

Now, let's take a look at how to discover what kind of content types you need for your project.

What content types should be created

Continuing with the coffee example, the first step of coffee preparation is to decide what kind of coffee you are going to make. Those coffee recipes are different content types. **One recipe allows you to make the same coffee over and over again, and so do content types.** They allow you to create content items, instances of the content type.

For example, Australian coffee drinkers love flat whites, cappuccinos, and lattes so those are the content types you should focus on when opening a cafe in Sydney. Do not focus on the coffee cups when buying and making coffee. A flat white in a ceramic mug is the same flat white as in a glass mug. **The important part here is not to focus on the form.**

Key points

- Identify your core content types based on your content analytics and/or business and customer goals.
- Focus firstly on modeling internal content relationships, structure, metadata, and leave presentation dependent objects last or don't include them into your model at all.
- For every content type, think about how it will serve your internal and external stakeholders, and if it should be part of the content model at all from the point of view of the content process.

Each project will have its own content types. To figure the content types out, **have a look at the most important information** you are trying to convey. What's important?

If you are re-platforming an existing project it's easy, **analyze your Google Analytics and its search keywords**. That's what is important for your visitors. Match that with the business needs and you'll slowly get an idea of what your core content is.

With new projects, the approach is similar but since you don't have previous data, **take a look at your goals or set personas and look into their needs**.

Don't focus on how the content types will be presented to your visitors yet. Thinking about how the content will be presented only at the end of the content modeling process is a good sign. This mind shift is essential when re-platforming as most other typical CMS platforms have a bias towards a form of presentation. Most commonly, it's their focus on web and pages.

To overcome the bias, **do a [content audit](#) and group pages** with the same or similar content together. Metadata and tagging will help with this process. Maybe you have several flat white recipes with different mugs or dosages.

If you've come to Kontent because of your website, we recommend including Web Spotlight to your subscription and use their [predefined content model](#) to get ahead at the start. Yet, put effort into preparing a content model in this case too so that you can get the benefits of using headless CMS.

Every project has some kind of calls to action, so **create a CTA content type** to progress your visitors towards their and your goals. If stakeholders want to manage them directly, include them in the model. That's how you should approach each decision – **think about if the content type is useful for your business and your customers**. Think about who your internal and external stakeholders are. Think about who will be responsible for managing that content.

What's next?

By now, you should have a general knowledge of how to set content types in your project. As noted before, getting content modeling right is a must within your project. Yet, the process is pretty complicated to get right so feel free to choose from the following options:

- [I'm ready to build a production-ready content model with a step-by-step tutorial!](#)
- [I'm still a bit unsure and would like to see a Spotify-like example described differently!](#)
- [I want to become a master, take me to the Advanced content modeling course!](#)