



Knock Out Content Strategy

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Content Makes Great Marketers

We all have the capacity, and some might say, a responsibility, to deliver more useful, more impressive content to our audience. This is for both our money sites and also social media. Sure, spun content works. Duplicate content still works in some cases, but if you are building your own business or a content for a client, you want the best...

But how do you get there?

No one is born an expert. The setbacks content marketers encounter are normal and everyone goes through the process. Expertise develops from a continual investment in marketing education, training, and mentoring.

As far as social media, you don't need to be on all channels. It's really about being where your audience is. And understanding the channels that matter to you, that matter to your brand, and really where your customers are. You know there is definitely a wide range of different audiences on each channel.

To future-proof your content marketing efforts is really about the strategy and being consistent. No matter what the channels are or what the distribution mechanisms really are. Unless you are testing, keep the same volume of content consistent.

Don't be afraid to try new things. You absolutely need to experiment and learn quickly but at the same time take the time to learn and feel your way through each platform. Understand who's actually using that particular channel and does it make sense for you or the brand you are promoting to be there.

You have to build to be flexible with the real time. You might deal with customer service complaints or issues live on each platform. It was once said that if you have a problem with American Airlines, tweet them the issue and they will quickly respond to you and get you taken care of.

That is an aspect of social media you should be prepared to provide. Make sure to take a pause to ensure that you have all your ducks in a row so you can respond in real-time.

You should absolutely have a schedule that you're sending out content because then those that are consuming it get used to you those times they should see your content. The same goes for blog posts. If people are used to you publishing every day at 5:00 p.m., they can depend on consuming your content at that time. But if you start to publish haphazardly at different times or different days, you'll lose some of your base.



You should have planned content. Pre-build your content so that you know you're going to execute this piece of content on August 1st.

Make sure you have a content plan. Factor in content around the holiday or a special day around the country or around the world. To make it more personalized, you want to create a special piece of content or just wish them a happy holiday. Treat people online as if you would in person. If you have a different person or team for producing videos, have them both sit down together and figure out an editorial calendar for the year. See where there are opportunities based on products, launches, seasons, holidays or events.

Also look for gaps in the year to keep content flowing and keeping your consumers happy.

People appreciate entertainment. Consider making documentaries. Or Pictures that are silly but have a way to highlight your business. What about if you had a client in the natural health field. You could do a picture of Socrates saving himself with natural medicine after he was sentenced to kill himself by drinking poison hemlock.

It's silly but it's a fun way to connect with people and they appreciate the entertainment. This is what helps things go viral. Remember the purple mattress and Goldilocks? Or how about the squatty potty pooping mockumentary? People don't always want to know about you. They want a reason to like you and entertainment is the best way. It's good to look at where you need to put those silly pieces. Those are the ones that are likely to get likes, shares and have viral potential.

Make sure there's a balance of some fun and entertaining pieces in your content plan. This way, your viewers don't feel like that's all they hear is the company talking about themselves or their products.

Your content should be engaging and you want to be on trend or ahead of trends or thinking about what you know people are going to be thinking about in a few months from now.

It all comes back to understanding your audience. A lot of marketers say they understand their audience but they're making a lot of assumptions and they're not actually doing the research at LinkedIn or Instagram. Testing your CTA and even your headlines will help you to understand what's truly resonating with the audience. Take your assumptions and back them up with the data from testing. If you're not testing you're losing money.



Content Strategies

Behind beautiful newsletters, polished videos, and insightful blog posts is a sound content marketing strategy. Strategy may not be sexy, but without a clear future state in mind, it's hard to evaluate the purpose, clarity, and impact of the content you create.

Think of it as driving the DeLorean wherever the road takes you versus setting an exact year and lead-footing it to 88 MPH.

While no single content strategy fits all businesses and situations, there are common elements between the variations.

Marketers can set smarter goals by aligning the goals with business objectives. Research is how marketers understand why customers buy, and which information they desire during each stage of their decision making journey.

You'll need a documented content strategy and a workflow that doesn't get forgotten about.

If all that sounds intimidating, content strategies don't have to be complex to be effective.

If you're just starting out start small. Get a few quick wins before expanding your efforts. Choose a single audience target or channel they love. Concentrate on developing content that's relevant, useful, and written from a fresh perspective.

Keep your budget focused on two things and two creation or distribution channels. You can invest in tools but be selective so they truly make you or your team a lot more efficient.

Analytic tools can give you data you can't otherwise get on a platform for free. There's a lot of tools and software but the majority of your results should come from great content. Make sure the bulk of the resources are focused on creating great content and making sure that people are seeing that great content.

If your investment in tools is out weighing your investment and creation or distribution, you have the potential for a big problem. On top of having a dedicated writer or two, consider having a content marketer and a blog editor. A blog editor is someone who's whole job is focused on the blog. His or her job should be completely and utterly focused on your blog. He or she will also manage the outward facing aspect of the blog and focuses on cleaning up the submitted articles.

This person will also be in charge of the content calendar and analytics because you have to be



able to prove the work that you're doing. The only way to do that is by having the proper analytics. You can get a lot from Google Analytics but you will probably need to go out and pay for other analytic software depending on what your needs are.

There's an endless supply of content right there every day to pick from so you want to make sure that your content stands out. Your content marketing team is the priority. They will publish strong and interesting content that people want to see. You'll need a good group of writers and editors and producers who understand with your company's goals in mind. It should be a top priority to get the team in place or at least enough of a skeleton team to get your content machine up and running.

There was a time you could just put out content and people would see it and follow you back to your site. Now, it's different. It's a big machine with a lot of pieces to figure out. When you don't have a lot of big team you need to rely more on tools and software to do this work for you to make sure your content gets to the right people.

When you're thinking about making investments in tools, you want to think about the resources that you have and what you might be missing. You want to think about the analytics. Don't do something because it's just cool or it's the latest marketing buzz. You want to see content that works. Is it hitting the audience? Is it making an impact on the sales? If it's not doing those things, look at what you can do to adjust.

Analytics is really important marketing right now. It's pushing content to see what's working. what's driving engagement, driving usage not just views. You need to look at what's driving engagement and getting people down the sales funnel.

Number one is documenting what the action plan is.

Two is assigning ownership. Typically have one person own a project end to end, but that person should really know the target audience for an effective content production.

Three is aligning to your business objective. Make sure there is a review process or an approval process for the content to make sure it reaches business objective.

Four is making sure that the all aspects of your content or your campaign is has been put into action. You not only want to look at content creation but how to keep it alive once it is out there. Make sure the strategy is solid.



Content Planning, Publishing, And Promotion

Name a brand whose content marketing really grabs and holds your interest. Why do you like the stuff they put out? Is it funny? Inspirational? Do you identify with the brand's story?

Any combination of these and other reasons might be compelling enough to snag your attention. But what makes the content work the way it's supposed to?

85% of marketers that believe they are creating better, more impactful content tend to plan it more than two weeks in advance. Content planning is what allows content marketers to select topics that will be interesting to their readers, and eventually make their brand more attractive to qualified buyers.

Don't fret if it takes a little trial and error to arrive at the ideal process for your organization.

People like a lot of different content types. Every business should have a story. What is the best type of content for your story. Everybody's talking about video. It's the hot thing right. You should have video of course but there's a definite place for things like infographics and content articles. If all your thinking about is SEO, you're missing a lot of your audience. You shouldn't commit to one one particular format, you need to have a wide range of platforms.

This format should be determined by the story and the information you're trying to share. That's the first step is to look at; who is your audience? You can do that through various ways.

For some companies, their brand team might already have some of that data and some of that information but one of the things that the best brands around do is that they actually physically map their content. They might draw it out and put it on a wall. It might be with post-it notes, it might be on a dry erase board, or something as simple as copy paper. (I'm a BIG fan of this method!)

You want to map the piece of content or an entire journey start to finish.

You'll have all the types of content that you want to create here's why or how you're going to create it. Map out the release dates. You'll then have a map section of how you can reuse that piece of content.

This map will walk through that entire journey. You should be able to use a piece of content seven or eight times. Take each piece of content, take it apart and reuse it. For example, if you create a slide deck, that becomes a SlideShare. That SlideShare can be embedded in a



blog post. That blog post can be taken apart and used on different social media channels.

When you do that, you start touching on the different areas that people want to consume content. Some people only want it in 140 characters because Twitter is their primary way of getting news. Some people will consume that content over video because that's how they prefer to look at it. Maybe they're looking at it while they're at the gym or just laying on their couch. Some people prefer visuals like SlideShare or infographic. Some people like Instagram or Pinterest because they're visual and they scroll.

You have to be able to think about it through the eyes of how your customers and your prospects are going to look at it - not through your eyes of what you want.

There needs to be a lot of looking out as opposed to looking in that brands and businesses need to do.

Think of creating content like a series. Each series is centered around a theme or a plot. You can plan out the episodes. Say there are 12 episodes. These episodes are tied to a certain objective or event. Think of all the way a tv series advertises... buses, SM, commercials, radios, etc. You want to do the equivalent online in your own way. Curate each episode across multiple platforms and medias.

Everyone says video is the future. It's more engaging. People want to get things in two or three minutes and leave with something of value. The other thing to think about is interactivity. People want to be engaged. They want to have experiences and you want to offer really great experience to your customer.

Think about bringing interactive media into your plan. Interactive ebooks are powerful. Make it so someone can click on things and drill down further into an area. If there is a specific topic they want to see, they can click and read more about it. If not, they can keep reading through the ebook. People want and need to be engaged.

If you have the budget, think about how you can use virtual reality in your business marketing.

Interactive content will be part of the future. Videos are engaging. If you can bring those two things together, it be really powerful for your brand.

Every marketer should be experimenting with new content formats. If you're not, you may be left behind. Be willing to work and fight for your brand. Get creative and be willing to go the distance with something.

What happens a lot of time is that there is excitement for new formats. There is a shiny object syndrome where we just jump on new formats without any context as to why and how. People drop off when the newness rubs off. The ones that stay have measured and figured it out.



If you are going to start a new format, decide the goal and how you are going to measure success before you even sign up for the format. Doing things the wrong way can cost a lot of time and money. You have to have a very strategic context on what you would do, why you would do it. Also vision out what success would look like so you can adjust if it doesn't look like you are marking those goals.

Empower individual team members to make decisions on the fly. Not only will this give rise to a sense of ownership, but it will keep things moving along without any bottlenecks. Assign one big project for each team member and have them own the project from soup to nuts.

You can be involved early on in the project with inspiration, direction, and objectives, but after that - when they know what they are doing, step out and only have them call on you for roadblocks or showstoppers. Be there in an instant if they need you at any given time throughout the entire process, but if you have great team members, they will shine much brighter with a bit of autonomy.

Content Measurement And Optimization

Navigation system set? Plutonium charged up? Time to put the pedal to the metal! With content measurement, that is.

Don't shudder. You're a creative type, a natural communicator with a strong EQ. In order to consistently plan, produce, publish, and promote top content, you have to be able to figure out what works. Your gut may have gotten you this far, but hard data will take you farther.

Chris Moody, Content Marketing Leader, GE Digital, recommends separating awareness and demand metrics. *"By grouping awareness metrics, you will have a better understanding of reach, impressions, clicks, views, and other indications of how your content is spread and consumed. By grouping demand metrics, you are able to better communicate acceleration through the funnel, return on your marketing spend, and what channels are most effective for leads and opportunities. This allows you to have two chapters to your content distribution story."*

Compartmentalizing your data sets can drive continual content improvement over time because you're focusing on one aspect, and any trends or patterns that emerge.

The most underappreciated metric by Content Marketers is Page Value. If you are not measuring it, you are sucking without knowing you are! Only partly kidding. Page Value is such a fab metric because it requires the identification of goals that then require answering the question, "why do you write?".



This brings the type of strategic clarity that will deliver the magic missing ingredient to your content: purpose. Play that back. Have purpose, inform strategy, focus writing, solve for specific goals, measure Page Value, win!

Work With the Right Influencers to Build Trust

Influencer marketing will be ground zero of the place where modern business finds its soul. As businesses optimize 'network jacking' and dissolve trust the premium marketers (you) will have been growing and will start to shine brightly.

Progressive businesses will learn that they can't just hire specialists with influencer, community and customer relations specialties. They will increasingly hire people with a soul, who want to dissolve the space between personal and professional activities, who are the right fit to build real relationships based on affinity, and how commit to this with investment in more quality time with their influencers and audience.

Adopt Advanced Tagging

In the future, businesses will find that the major technical hurdles of attribution will be cleared up by Google's free attribution tools in Google Analytics. You will still need to properly tag your campaigns and integrate your data across channels, but once this is done, analysis will become much easier on which types of content work best at each stage of the customer funnel.

With Google's computational power + a solid tagging strategy, you will be able to focus on providing the meaningful analysis necessary to make key decisions about your efforts. This means more targeted content, and highly targeted promotion strategies will become the standard of professional content marketers.

You don't have to reinvent the wheel all the time. Be creative and measure, measure, measure!

