

Content Marketing **Strategies**

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Introduction: Taking Your Content Marketing to the Next Level

Once your content marketing is up and running and your website is growing at a steady pace, it's time to take your content marketing to the next level. That means having more integrated content and using a wider variety of formats.

Advanced content marketing also means working to strengthen your brand, voice, and personality because through that you'll become more widely known. You'll become the website and business that your prospects turn to.

Advanced content marketing also gives you the unique ability to begin to fine-tune your audience and your customers. Through personas and market segmentation, you can begin to craft content that speaks to your ideal customer. You'll forge a stronger bond and create brand loyalty. This is the power of content marketing and if you're ready, it's yours for the taking.

Tell Your Story

As your business has grown you may have strengthened your brand identity or you may have veered away from it. Revisit your business plan. Review your vision and mission. Are you on track? Has anything changed? One of the best ways to cultivate a following is to create a strong brand. Identify your brand promise. What do you stand for and why? Then make sure that promise is instilled in every piece of content you create.

Increase Your Formats and Mediums

Begin reaching out to a wider audience by using different content formats and mediums. For example, if your content has been primarily print content, consider trying infographics or create a six-second Vine video. Branch out and embrace more content marketing opportunities.

Dig Deeper and Really Get to Know Your Customers

Until now, you may have been marketing to a broad audience. For example, if you were a small business coach then your content may have been directed at all small business owners. By now you have an idea of who you prefer to work with and what types of customers are the best for your business.

You have the opportunity to create an ideal customer profile using marketing segmentation tools, and you have the ability to take your marketing to the next level and create unique messages for various market segments.

Next Steps...

Review your brand vision and mission. Is your current content marketing strategy in line? Are you sending the message and telling the story you want to? Also draft a few paragraphs that describe what you believe to be your ideal customer. Who are they? What benefit do they gain from doing business with you? Why are they your ideal customer?

Next let's take a look at how to use market segmentation to further identify your ideal customer and to take your content marketing to the next level.

Market Segmentation

Are you marketing to your ideal customer? Are you making the most of your analytics to craft targeted messages to your audience? Marketing segmentation is an essential aspect of a content marketing strategy.

What Is Market Segmentation?

Market segmentation is an approach that essentially quantifies your customers based on various criteria including buying habits, money spent, location, age and other demographics. The information will help you fine-tune your content marketing so that you can attract more of your ideal customer and build a stronger and more profitable business. For example, using your analytics you can organize the information based on:

- **Path** – How did the customer arrive at your website? Did they arrive via organic search, referral, or social media?
- **Geography** – Do your ideal customers come from any particular geographic area? If so, you can construct content that speaks directly to them.
- **Behavior** - How do new visitors compare to returning visitors in terms of their level of engagement on your site? Do they spend more time there? Do they click on more links?
- **Action** - How do your conversion rates vary with respect to users who visit your site from guest blog posts versus social media posts, or from email messages versus calls to action from your downloads?
- **Buying behavior** – When does your ideal customer buy your products or services, and how long do they stay clients? How often do they buy? Do they buy from your competition too?

As you're pulling together a concrete description of your ideal customer and their behavior on your site and within your business, also strive to identify their psychographics. Psychographics include things like their activities and interests as well as their values and beliefs.

Next Steps...

Once you have a detailed description of who your ideal clients are based on your review of your analytics and perhaps some additional research, you're able to take the next steps. Begin a content marketing campaign to better serve the needs of your excellent customers. Keep them happy and engaged in your business.

Also begin implementing content marketing tactics to attract more of the same type of customer. You can use the information you've gathered to begin reaching your audience in a more deliberate manner.

Make the Most of Your Content (Integration)

How integrated is your content marketing? Do your Facebook posts support your opt-in? Does your blog support your downloadable content? To take your business to the next level, it's important that your content marketing efforts are integrated.

The Heart of Integrated Content Marketing

Integrated content marketing means that you're not only communicating a consistent brand and message with every piece of content that you create, you're also taking your content goals into consideration and connecting those goals between your different content channels - from blog posts to downloads and everything in between.

Delivering a Consistent Message

Are your customers receiving a consistent message wherever they encounter your content? Consistency is a primary content challenge for businesses of all sizes. Regardless of the channel or format you're using to connect with your audience, you want them to have the same experience.

You want the same voice, personality, values, vision, and branding to come regardless of the format. For example, your email content should ideally have the same brand message as your eBooks. A consistent message teaches your audience what to expect from you; it bonds them to you and helps create recognition, loyalty, and ultimately purchases and profits.

Presence

Are you using marketing tactics and channels where your audience hangs out? Perhaps you've identified that your audience primarily reads your blog, downloads your free monthly content and subscribes to your email. Integration means that each of these content marketing channels supports the others.

For example, if your goal is to boost your website traffic to generate higher advertising premiums, then your blog posts, downloads and email content should all work together to motivate readers to visit your site more often.

Pulling It All Together

Take a look at your content marketing strategy. As you add new marketing channels to your strategy, make sure that they deliver a consistent message, support ongoing content marketing goals, and are supported by your other marketing channels. You can use technology to help facilitate the integration process. For example, your autoresponder messages can be shared on social media. Your tweets can be scheduled via HootSuite and shared on Facebook.

If your communications are consistent and your channels support one another, your message is strengthened. Your audience learn to trust you and to recognize you. It creates a stronger, more unified and more enjoyable customer experience.

Next steps...

Review your current marketing strategy and begin to make plans to add a new marketing channel. Just focus on one channel at a time. Plan how your new content will support your message, goals, and other content channels. Next time we'll take a look at how you might add mobile content marketing to your strategy.

Mobile Content Marketing – What Is It and Is It for You?

More and more people are using their phones to access information online. The technology has advanced to the place where in addition to taking and sharing photographs, playing games, and interacting on social media; your audience may be reading and consuming content online.

In fact, one of the largest growing areas of content marketing is mobile content marketing. Due to the nature of a smartphone, this tactic requires special attention.

Know Your Audience

The first and most important consideration when adding mobile content to your content marketing strategy is to have a clear understanding of your audience.

- Are they searching with smartphones?
- If so, what are they searching for?
- Do they buy products and services with their mobile devices?
- How much time do they spend on your site?

- What information do they access online? For example, do they prefer visual content or do they read blog posts?

Types of Content

While it's a good idea to experiment with various forms of content for mobile users, it's also a good idea to understand where they are most likely to be interested and active. For example, video is more often consumed via smartphone than a downloadable report.

Short form content may be more readily consumed than a thousand word article. That isn't to say that your content can't go in depth into a subject, rather you may want to break it up into smaller pieces so that it's more easily read on a mobile device.

Formatting

Speaking of making something easy to read on a mobile device, your content will be more mobile friendly if it is well formatted. That means short paragraphs with subheadings. It means breaking up ideas into small pieces using bullets or numbers. Big fonts are easier to read and colors and visual elements need to add to the content, not distract.

Headlines Are Even More Important

Spend more time on your headlines. Mobile users have an even shorter attention span than those on their computer. You have to immediately grab their attention if you have any hope of them opening your content and spending time with it. Test and track various headlines to learn what your audience responds to.

Next Steps...

Research your audience and explore the mobile content opportunity. Should you decide to add it to your content marketing strategy, make sure to create specific goals for your mobile content. Also explore how you might integrate sharing features into your mobile content to keep your audience engaged and active with your brand.

The Role of Social Media in Content Marketing

It has been said that no content marketing strategy is complete without social media. For many new marketers social media can be overwhelming. It's easy to spend hours networking on social media sites and the results can be less than exciting.

However, social media has real power to bring awareness to your content and to your business. A recent report published by Braffton found that 70% of consumers click through to a brand's blog content after reading stories shared on social media. And once they arrive at the blog

they're more likely to take action, including downloading more content or signing up for an opt-in offer.

Social media not only provides you with the ability to capture prospects' attention and drive traffic to your content, it also reaches substantial numbers of people and can increase awareness quickly. Viral content is spread through social media and can change the face of a business practically overnight.

So How Do You Embrace Social Media without Losing Hours of Your Busy Life?

Strategy, strategy, strategy. The key to successfully integrating social media into your content marketing is to have a clear-cut strategy. What are your goals? How will you achieve them? What social media sites does your audience participate in and how do they interact on social media? How will you track and measure success? Many social media sites offer analytic information to business users. Additionally, there are tools available to help you track social media efforts.

Focused Efforts

Instead of hitting six social media sites and trying to build your content marketing through all of them, consider focusing on one primary site. For example, perhaps after some research you learn that your audience is heavily involved with Twitter. If so, that's where your attention should be focused. Create an effective Twitter strategy to promote your content marketing. Once the strategy is successfully achieving results, then you can add another social site.

Remember to integrate your efforts. It's not enough to use social media to drive content marketing. Create a loop and ask your existing visitors and audience to connect with you via social media. Keep your audience engaged by integrating your marketing efforts.

Next Steps...

Begin researching your audience and their social media habits and preferences. Identify one social site to focus on and begin crafting a strategy to use social media to promote your content marketing efforts.

Next up, we'll look at how to take your blog to the next level. You'll be driving tons of traffic to your blog via your social media efforts, so it's time to increase the value and your visitors' experience.

Take Your Blog to the Next Level

One of the best ways to enhance your content marketing and to make your business a household name with your audience is to enhance your blog. Now, we're not talking about a blog overhaul exactly, though you can do that if it will improve your visitors' experience. When it comes to content marketing the best way to take your blog to the next level is to write more content.

Publish More Content on Your Blog

How often are you currently publishing content on your blog? For most business owners the answer ranges from one to three times a week. To take your blog to the next level, consider creating a strategy that supports you to blog every single day.

Now that doesn't mean you personally have to write a blog post every day. In fact, a variety of blog post formats will actually help improve your audience experience. Consider adding graphics, infographics, video and lists to your traditional blog post content.

The more you blog, the higher your search engine rankings. As your rankings increase so too does your inbound traffic. You can take your everyday blog and turn it into a media center by providing multiple streams of content and increasing your publishing schedule.

There are many ways to publish more content on your blog. You can:

- Utilize quality guest bloggers
- Hire writers/ghost writers
- Ask for submissions from your audience
- Use PLR
- Repurpose content
- Update older content
- Invite well-known industry leaders to blog – forge a partnership

Market Your Blog

While publishing more content may be enough to reach your goals, it's always helpful to spread the word and let more people know about your increased activity. If you're using email marketing, consider adding links to top blog posts. Also embrace social media as a means of boosting traffic.

Navigation and Integration

As you publish more content on your blog, you'll enhance your visitors' experience by making sure that navigation is simple and straightforward. Consider utilizing tags to facilitate searches. Also include a call to action at the end of your blog post to help achieve content goals.

Internal linking can also provide a structure for your visitor to follow to help keep them on your blog and engaged with your business. Integrate social media and email marketing tactics with your blog marketing efforts to create a full experience and many opportunities, to create a sense of community and build a loyal following.

Next steps...

Review your current blogging schedule. Are you blogging enough? Are you tracking results? How can you add more content to your blog and enhance your visitors' experience? Start making changes to your blog content strategy to support growth.

Moving right along, let's take a look at how to add live content to your content marketing strategy – this not only provides additional value to your audience, it also creates new forms of content which can be repurposed across multiple channels.

Go Live – Add Webinars and Online Seminars

Have you ever participated in an online course, a webinar, or a chat room meet-up? These types of events can provide profound benefits for your business. They help further enhance your credibility and authority as a leader in your industry. You earn the trust of your audience by providing substantial value to your prospects.

You also create a tremendous amount of content for such events and from events. This content can be used in a variety of ways to increase your content marketing reach and functionality. For example, let's say you host a live event on how to improve cash flow. To prepare for the event you'll create an outline and a speech for yourself and any guests that are also presenting.

You'll probably create a few videos or slide shows to help attendees visualize the information you're presenting. And you may create checklists, worksheets, and even downloadable reports for those who participate in the event. If you record the event then you'll have the audio which can be transcribed to create print content.

You now have a wealth of content that can be tweaked and repurposed to support a multitude of other content marketing efforts. You can create social media posts, blog content, and newsletter content and even make the relevant downloads available on your website. Live events are a goldmine.

Preparation Is Key

Before you even begin planning a live event, the first step is to decide what you want to accomplish with it. What's your goal? For example, will you use the live event to convert attendees into paying customers? IF so, then the event will have to have a natural lead into your entry level product or service.

The second step, once you've identified a goal, is to create an event that your audience will find tremendously valuable. This requires a good degree of brainstorming and research. What topic would draw the most prospects and be an organic path to achieve your goal?

For example, if you are a realtor you might want to increase the number of people who list their homes with you. Your live event then would need to help potential sellers solve a problem and naturally motivate them to contact you for a listing.

Heavy Promotion

Give your live event full opportunity to reach as many prospective attendees as possible. Promote it using all of your existing marketing channels. Live events often require the time and dedication that goes into a product or service launch. You want to build buzz and get people excited for the occasion.

One last tidbit of information about live events: test everything beforehand. Make sure your content is well prepared, edited, and practiced. Make sure your links work and your technology is functioning. Finally, prepare a follow-up plan. What will your prospects do when the event is over? How will you follow up with them and help keep them engaged and active in your business community?

Next steps...

Begin formulating ideas for a live event. What type of event might work best for your audience? What topics would they be interested in and how can you best present the information? How will you market the event and how will you follow up? What are some possible goals for a live event?

I've given you a lot of information so far, but we're not quite through. Let's now look at advanced monetization tactics. Live events to provide a unique opportunity to convert sales and so do many other content marketing channels and formats.

Advanced Monetization Tactics

For many business owners the goal of content marketing is to generate a profit. From affiliate marketers to membership sites to information marketers, the ultimate goal of any piece of content is to convert a reader into a buyer.

Even service providers can benefit by monetizing their content. This lesson offers a handful of different tips and approaches to help experienced marketers further monetize their content and increase sales and profits.

1. “Hire Me” - You can add a hire me page to your blog or website to monetize the site itself. You can also add a hire me call to action in the bio box of any article you publish online or any guest blog post you publish. Additionally, consider adding a call to action at the bottom of key blog posts and downloadable content that motivates your readers to hire you.

For example, a virtual assistant might create a report on how to manage multiple contractors. At the end of the report they might transition into the benefit of hiring a project manager to oversee contractors and include a “hire me” link.

2. Increase advertisers – Once you’ve attained a respectable amount of blog traffic, consider adding an “advertise with us” page on your blog. You can also help potential advertisers see the benefit of advertising with you by helping them visualize it. If you don’t have any present advertisers, use affiliate ads on your blog.

You might use a widget that places ads between blog posts or in the header or footer of posts. You might also create a static sidebar for advertiser placement. If increasing advertisers is your goal, make sure that there’s an opportunity and/or call to action on every single post or page.

3. Boost subscribers – One of the best ways to convert readers into buying customers is to get them to sign up for your mailing list. In the age of video and visual content you can embrace this by creating a personal message that invites readers to subscribe to your list. Monetize each post by including a call to action that invites readers to subscribe, and offer subscription opportunities to folks who comment on your blog.

4. Happy customers – Monetize visual content by sharing photos or videos of happy customers. They can read their testimonial, take a photo of themselves using your product or even share a helpful video or photo hint for benefiting from your products or services. Make sure the content links to your sales page.

Next Steps...

Assess your current monetization tactics. What is working and generating sales? What isn't? What monetization goals do you have and how might you use your content to help you achieve those goals? What goals best suit your business model and audience needs?

Visual Content Is a Must

Content marketing experts predicted a rise in visual content. However, they didn't expect it to surge to the level it has. Some of the big players are YouTube, SlideShare, Visual.ly, Pinterest, and Vine for Twitter. Their growth amongst consumers has been phenomenal and presents a very real opportunity for business owners.

Pinterest, one of the fastest growing providers of visual content, has 70 million users and 2.5 billion monthly page views. It also experienced a 125% increase in international users last year.

Vine, the six-second looping video tool available on Twitter, was the fastest growing application of 2013 with 403% growth. It has more than 40 million users worldwide and according to website stats, five Vine tweets are published every second. You might also like to know that a branded Vine video is four times more likely to be seen than a regular branded video.

This is just the beginning of visual content. If you want to truly grow your content marketing efforts, visual content is a must. Let's take a look at how to embrace visual content in your content marketing strategy.

#1 Choose Your Medium

There are many different visual content opportunities. Identify the type of visual content your audience is most likely to embrace. Are they active on Pinterest or do they prefer videos? (Note, you can share videos on Pinterest but that's not the primary graphic of choice.)

Take some time to research your audience and identify the most popular form of sharing and viewing visual content. Choose one medium or site to focus on first. Once you've reached your goals, then you can add another type of visual content to your strategy.

#2 Goals and Strategy

What do you want to achieve with your visual content? You might use visual content to motivate purchases. Or, you can create comparison infographics to promote affiliate sales. Videos can drive traffic to your site when they're shared on social media. Decide what you want to accomplish and make sure your chosen format is a good fit for your goals.

Keep in mind that your visual content should still be an integrated part of your overall marketing strategy. If your overarching goal for example is to grow your email list, then your visual content should also support that goal. Also take a look at how you can use technology to create a

cohesive message and experience. For example, if you create a profile on Pinterest, then add a Pinterest widget to your blog that allows visitors to pin images and follow you on Pinterest.

#3 Schedule It

Because visual content may be new to you, consider outsourcing some of the more technical tasks. IF you're not a graphic designer, for example, then you may want to hire someone to make sure your graphics look professional.

Next steps...

Begin exploring your visual content options. Research your audience and determine the best place to focus your attention. Start creating a visual content marketing strategy that supports your other marketing goals. Next time we'll take a look at how to make the most of all of your content – make it work harder so you don't have to.

Conclusion - Repurpose and Optimize Existing Content

At this point in your business you probably have a vast collection of content. Take a look at all of the blog posts, downloads, eBooks, reports, social media posts, articles, audio and video content that you've created to date. You probably have accumulated enough content to fill a library! You can use this collection of content, and future content, in a more productive manner. This final lesson takes a look at tips and ideas to repurpose and optimize existing content.

- Pull key ideas from your content to create tweets that provide value.
- Pull key ideas from your content to create motivational graphics. Do you have a tip or quote that you can place over a relevant image? You can then share the graphic on your blog and on social media sites like Pinterest and Facebook.
- Pull key ideas from your content to create a slide show. This can be particularly effective if you have a report, eBook, or online learning program. You can simplify the information and use the slideshow to motivate purchases.
- Pull together relevant content to create a live event, eBook, or online learning program. You've probably already published enough information to create a fuller product. Blog posts can be pulled together to create a report. Reports could be compiled to create an eBook or a downloadable course.
- Record live events and have them transcribe to create tons of written content that can be used in your newsletter, blog posts, or for downloads.
- Transcribe videos and use the information on your blog.

- Pull key facts and statistics together and create an infographic.
- Review old content and look for opportunities to update it with new facts, examples, and information.
- Review old content and look for opportunities to present the information in a different format. For example, product reviews could be used to create a product comparison.

The list of ideas is extensive and with proper planning and attention you can repurpose just about every piece of content you create. A blog post can be tweaked and then shared on social media and vice versa. The key is to make small changes to your content so that you're providing relevant information and value to your audience.

Having a repurposing strategy is just one more way to take your content marketing to the next level. It makes the most of your assets and saves you valuable time, energy, and money. Create a repurposing strategy today. Begin by looking at your old content and looking for opportunities. Include repurposing opportunities in your content plan for future content too.

Next steps...

Identify one area of your content marketing strategy that can be improved on. Look for ways to add more value to your prospects and to enhance their experience with your organization. Align these opportunities with your goals and take action. Embrace advanced content marketing tactics just like you did when you first got started as a marketer – one goal and tactic at a time.