

CONTENT MARKETING BLUEPRINT

How To Create A Successful Content Marketing Strategy

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Introduction

There are several ways you can present your company and products to the world. Some businesses use nothing but text-based content. Perhaps the most effective tool for getting your products and services in the hands of your prospects is with videos. Podcasts have exploded in popularity the last few years, largely because they allow listeners to consume content while doing other things, like driving to work or working out at the gym.

All of these are different ways to market your business. Marketing can be described as the method or methods you use to tell people about your brand, offer your products to the world, find new customers and keep your current customers happy. You do this with different forms of content, like blog posts or podcast episodes. As with any worthwhile endeavor, a clearly defined plan of action for marketing your content almost always delivers better results than a distracted, disjointed attempt with no plan in place.

In other words, your business can benefit from a content marketing blueprint. That's exactly what this special report gives you.

In it, you'll learn exactly what content marketing is and how it can benefit your business. You will discover that by answering 5 simple groups of questions, you create the bones of your content marketing strategy. Every business is uniquely different. This means when you move through the five stages of a content marketing blueprint creation, you end up with a marketing strategy which is uniquely suited to your business and your needs.

Finally, we will share with you some proven resources and tools that make understanding content marketing and implementing it much easier, no matter what business you are in or what you are trying to accomplish.

Your report closes with a list of 10 top practices for creating a successful content marketing blueprint. Let's get started helping you grow your business with a successful content marketing blueprint by defining this powerful and popular marketing strategy.

What Is Content Marketing?

Content marketing has been around for a long time. As long as there has been a product to sell or a service to advertise, spoken or written content has been used to spread the word. Incidentally, one content marketing plan or approach may be vastly different from another. For this reason, if you ask 10 different professional marketers to define content marketing, you are likely to get 10 separate responses.

If you ask the Content Marketing Institute, they will give you the following definition:

"Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach of creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience with the objective of driving profitable customer action."

For a simpler definition, consider content marketing as a way of creating and marketing different types of content to help you build your business. That content may be text-based, print media, video, or audio. Your content may be distributed online or off and could take the form of folders and flyers, blog posts and articles, images, infographics and digital posters, videos, e-books, webinars or podcasts. You may create your own content, or let your happy clients and customers make marketable content in the form of testimonials and interviews.

The content marketing blueprint you create using this guide will be catered to your unique business and needs. The many benefits of content marketing are as diverse as the different types of content you can use to receive those benefits. Let's explore just a few of the top rewards offered by a smart content marketing plan.

9 Ways Content Marketing Can Help Your Company

Traditional business owners often don't believe that content marketing is a "real thing" that can benefit their businesses. They have been implementing a marketing plan a certain way for the last several years or decades and see no need to change gears. However, marketing methods are constantly changing, as is their effectiveness. The first business owners to embrace the Internet enjoyed a global reach and saw their businesses explode, especially when their competitors were slow to jump on board the new technology.

The first bloggers to the Internet found sales and profits rather easy, and once everyone else started blogging, those early adopters had already established reputations as leaders in their fields. Writing blog posts is just one type of content creation. You can use a blog to build your email list, generate leads or sell products. There are a lot of benefits offered by content marketing, including the following 9 rewards this marketing strategy offers.

1. Improved Sales and Profits - It doesn't really matter what type of market you are in, at some point you're going to have to make a profit to stay in business. A smart content marketing strategy identifies what types of content produce the most sales and profits for your company.
2. You are Perceived as an Authority in Your Field - Social media posts, Amazon Kindle e-books, physical books, podcast episodes and dozens of other types of content boost the perception that you are a leader in your field. People prefer to do business with the best of the best, and smart content marketing places that desirable tag on you rather than your competition.

3. You Solve Big Problems for Your Prospects - When you answer the biggest questions on the minds of your prospects regarding your marketplace or niche, you make lifelong fans. You can use content to solve the big problems that keep your prospects up at night, and when you do so, both you and your prospects benefit.
4. Improved Search Engine Rankings and More Traffic - Keeping the search engines happy is important for generic, free traffic. The less money you have to pay for traffic, the more capital you can direct towards other areas of your business. Value-based, high-quality content can enrich your readers and viewers while also answering the needs of search engine algorithms, and improved traffic is the result.
5. Effective Data Collection - Polls, surveys, and contests are perfect for finding out what's on the minds of your prospects. Blog and social media posts generate comments that reveal important information that can help you grow your business. These are just a few ways that content creates relevant data you can use to achieve a number of business goals.
6. You Make a Good Connection - When you connect deeply with your audience, they remember you. People do business with individuals and companies they like, respect, and admire. Content can help you make a good connection with your prospects, and ongoing communication can mean a customer for life.
7. Build your Email List - Building and nurturing a list of contacts is extremely important, whether you have a big or small business. Podcast episodes, YouTube videos, opt-in bribes and Facebook advertisements are just a few types of content that allow you to build an email list, so you can continue to market to your prospects.

8. Generate Leads - Without new prospects, your business won't grow. Landing pages, autoresponder sequences, blog posts and other similar types of content can generate leads to keep your sales funnel filled.

9. Client Retention and Satisfaction - You should always be working to attract new customers. Your current customers should not be ignored, however. Someone who has already done business with you is more likely to make additional purchases in the future. Communicating with your customers also minimizes returns and boosts positive word of mouth advertising.

Building Your Content Marketing Blueprint

This chapter will outline the steps you need to follow to create your content marketing blueprint. There is no one-size-fits-all, cookie-cutter strategy that works for every company or entrepreneur. You may not use types of content that are absolutely essential to another business. This means your formula for creating and presenting content to grow your company and reach your business goals is going to be unique.

To discover a successful content marketing plan, you need to answer a series of questions. You also need to evaluate your content from time to time, to see if it is producing the intended results. The first step to developing a successful content marketing blueprint is to answer the following 5 groups of questions.

1. Niche down to discover exactly who your prospects are. Who is my laser targeted audience? What does my "perfect prospect" look like? What is the narrow consumer base that can benefit most from your products and services? If you go too broad you can get lost in a sea of competition, and the more narrowly you focus your content marketing efforts, the better your results.
2. Identify the story of your brand, your content marketing mission statement. Are my products or services unique? What do I offer that is different from everything else that is already out there? What makes my business a smarter choice for my prospects than my competitors? What value do I offer my customers? What are the big problems that keep my prospective customers up at night, and how can I solve them?
3. Before you start writing blog posts and making videos, ask yourself why you are creating content and how it will help your audience. Why are you writing blog posts, creating videos and spending time

on social media? How are your different pieces of content going to benefit your readers, viewers or listeners? Before you begin churning out content, you need to have a targeted goal or result you hope that content can help you reach.

4. How are you going to create and distribute your content? What specific schedule are you going to use so you are consistently developing and sharing valuable, high-quality content? This is the "how" of the content marketing process. What specific scheduling blueprint or formula do you need to create so your content helps you achieve your business goals, and so that same content becomes invaluable to your prospective clients and current customers?
5. Measure and evaluate, make any necessary changes. Is your landing page converting at a high rate? Are your email open rates where they need to be? Are your blog posts generating the amount of generic traffic you had hoped for? Is your video sales letter turning enough tire kickers into buyers to produce the profits you need? Here is where you gauge how well your content is performing, so you can focus on what is working and retool or abandon content marketing strategies that are underperforming.

The next 5 chapters are devoted individually to each of these 5 crucial steps in creating your unique content marketing blueprint.

Who are the Individuals That Make up Your Ideal Audience?

What is your target market? Who does your business cater to? If you are just starting a business, what is the demographic or group of people you want to go after? To create an effective content marketing strategy, you have to understand who you are trying to reach. Once you have a clear picture of your perfect prospect, then you can develop the type of content that individual wants to listen to, read or view.

Millennials vastly prefer video over text-based content. They also expect marketing messages to be short, to the point and easy to digest. Online and off, the over-50 crowd is more receptive to longer, text-based pieces of content. People of different cultures, geographical regions, genders and levels of wealth will additionally have different needs as far as content is concerned.

It is important to note here that you are not excluding anyone. Just because you are going to be marketing to those individuals who will be most receptive to your content and products doesn't mean other people can't benefit from them.

The idea behind targeting smaller niche markets is that you identify the unique value or benefit your company offers that is not being delivered by others. Then you target those specific individuals who will be most interested in your unique appeal, approach or products.

This strategy has been proven to drive up response rates, sales, and profits because you are not trying to sell a cheeseburger to a hungry vegetarian. If you produce the tastiest burgers on the planet and spend time and money marketing to everyone who is hungry, you are simply not going to be effective. You need to find beef burger eaters, differentiate your offering from other burger makers, and market to that specific crowd.

Successful Audience Identification Example

An excellent example of changing a content marketing strategy to identify a narrow niche rather than a broad market is the story of a pool installation company. The company in question was on the verge of going bankrupt. They built and installed fiberglass pools, but so did so many other companies serving the same geographical area. The Warsaw, Virginia company owner then tried something to make his business appeal to a unique and narrow segment of the pool buying marketplace. The results were incredibly positive.

Marcus Sheridan had a problem. His fiberglass pool installation company was constantly overdrawing its bank accounts to pay bills and stay in business. As things became worse over time, the end was in sight. Sheridan, the owner of River Pools and Spas, separated his company from the competition by changing its content marketing focus to sharing knowledge rather than trying to sell pool installations.

He used simple blog posts, and videos that offered content where answering questions and sharing knowledge was the focus. The sales took care of themselves. Sheridan's company began to develop a reputation as the go-to source for any and all information regarding purchasing a fiberglass pool. Other companies were trying to sell their services, and Sheridan was simply answering the top questions on the minds of his target audience, people that wanted to know more about installing, buying and maintaining a fiberglass pool.

When he changed his focus to people with questions rather than people who were already looking to buy, the River Pools and Spas became the most visited pool website in the United States, not just in the Warsaw, Virginia area. Sheridan moved from a large, broad audience (people looking to buy a pool) to a smaller, more refined market (people with questions about buying and owning a fiberglass pool). He addressed a need that was not being served, shrunk the size of his audience, and has

succeeded ever since. Sheridan got so good at content marketing that he wrote a book on the subject, with a link included in the chapter titled “Valuable Content Marketing Tools and Resources.”

5-Step Niche Audience Identification Formula

Look at your industry. Is there any area that is not being addressed? Are your past customers predominantly male or female, younger or older, or from a particular culture? Have you found that your prospects and customers ask the same questions? What are some of the objections you have to overcome when making a sale? Do you meet most of your customers online or off? These are all questions you need to answer to identify the target of your content marketing strategy, and the following 5-step audience identification formula can help.

1. Identify what you have to offer.
2. List the benefits your products and services deliver.
3. Use this information to deliver a unique approach, strategy or product offering. What area of your market is not being served properly?
4. Take what you have compiled to this point and ask yourself the question, "Who is the exact person my products are perfect for?" Don't think broad, think narrow.
5. Put yourself in that person's mind and try to understand the big problems you can solve for that individual and the big questions you can answer.

Perhaps you make maternity clothing and accessories. Your business is doing okay, but not as good as you would've hoped. Identify what you have to offer (maternity clothes). List the benefits customers get from your products that they may not be receiving from your competitors (such as top-quality for a fair price, and free home delivery). Perhaps there are

no other maternity clothing stores in your area that deliver high-quality, reasonably priced maternity clothes and accessories for no delivery charge.

The perfect person for this niche you have created is the busy, pregnant, stay-at-home mom or first-time mother-to-be that is working on a tight budget and has limited time to drive and shop for maternity clothing.

This approach solves so many questions for a very targeted audience. For many stay-at-home moms who are expecting, time and money are valuable commodities. By delivering high-quality maternity clothing at a value price to the homes of pregnant stay-at-home moms and expectant first-time mothers, you have identified a niche audience that gives your maternity clothing store a great chance at success.

Once you do this, you can identify what types of content will work better for your particular audience. In this example, you would absolutely have to have an interactive website where expectant ladies could shop your offerings whenever they have a few minutes spare time. They don't have to get into their car, corral their kids, spend money on babysitters, fuel, or lunch away from home, just to do their shopping.

By targeting women who are pregnant, those who have little time to shop, ladies on a tight budget, and by offering quality maternity clothing at a fair price with free delivery, you make life tough on your competitors. You have found a segment of your market that is not being served and narrowed your prospect pool considerably.

- **Action Step:** Write down a description of your ideal prospect. Think about an individual person rather than a group of people. When

doing this, think about the unique values and benefits your products and services offer, and who they are best suited to help.

What Is Your Content Marketing Mission Statement?

Without a clearly defined business plan, a lot of entrepreneurs limit their chances for success. Just as you should have an overall business plan written and in place, you need a clearly defined content marketing mission statement. You may have some vague idea of how you want to use different types of content to grow your business. If it isn't focused, your broad efforts can eat up a lot of time and capital.

If your content marketing mission statement is not written down and given to everyone in your company, how do you know it is being adhered to or followed? If your content marketing strategy is not recorded in a brief statement that is easy to understand, you may constantly find your content development and delivery efforts failing to produce the intended results.

What to Include in Your Content Marketing Mission Statement

The mission statement you create should be the foundation for all content development. No one should create any type of content without first referring to this powerful content development platform. With a concise and refined mission statement, you can quickly determine if a piece of content supports the values in that statement. If you are considering starting a podcast and it doesn't appear that this is the best way to fulfill your content marketing mission, then you can move on to some other content marketing tactic or practice.

There are lots of intelligent ways to create this mission statement. You can brainstorm with everyone in your company, or work on this step of your content marketing blueprint yourself. Depending on the unique nature of your business, this statement may be vastly different than those of your competitors. If this defining content development tool looks like a

cookie-cutter copycat of the competition, you need to go back to the drawing board.

The first step is to identify the unique story of your brand, products, and services.

What makes your company unique? What do you offer your prospects that is different from everything else that is currently being offered? What value proposition makes your company the no-brainer decision when someone is shopping for what you have to offer? Who are you trying to reach? What will your content deliver to your prospects? What content will you use? What is the eventual outcome you want your content to deliver to the end user?

Your mission statement should answer the question, "Why should your audience care?" You should convey how what you teach, offer or sell gives the consumers of your content what they want. Orbit Media is a marketing company that provides the following template for crafting a refined and direct content marketing mission statement.

"(Our company) is where (audience X) finds (content Y) for (benefit Z)."

Using this formula, Orbit Media has created the following statement.

"The Orbit blog is where digital marketers find expert practical advice on web design and content marketing. Our goal is to help you get better results from the web."

- Our company = the Orbit blog

- Audience X = digital marketers
- Content Y = practical advice on web design and content marketing
- Benefit Z = better results from the web

If the company is thinking about developing some content that isn't aimed at digital marketers, it gets consigned to the trash bin. If a content idea does not deliver better web marketing results or practical advice on content marketing and web design, the project is killed before it is ever begun.

You don't you have to use the particular template we just covered. For some people, fill in the blank templates work great; for others, not so much. If this template is not a good fit for your company, simply make sure your content marketing mission statement includes the following points.

- Who you are
- Who your audience is
- What you offer
- What's in it for your prospects, what benefits they receive

You should additionally bear in mind that when your content marketing mission statement is unique, and you follow it closely, you give yourself and your company a better chance at sticking out from the competition. Here is an example provided by the Content Marketing Institute that may help you make your own mission statement.

HomeMadeSimple.com

"Whether it's a delicious recipe, an inspiring décor idea or a refreshing approach to organizing, we strive to help you (busy moms) create a home that's truly your own. Everything we do here is designed to empower and inspire you to make your home even better, and most importantly, a place you love to be."

The core audience here is the mom that is constantly on the go and has limited time. This is not explicitly stated, because HomeMadeSimple.com publishes its content marketing mission statement on its website. What the company offers is "a delicious recipe, an inspiring décor idea or a refreshing approach to organizing." What the prospective audience gets, the benefit they receive is an improved quality of life at home.

Here is the content marketing mission statement developed and shared by Inc. Magazine.

"Welcome to Inc.com, the place where entrepreneurs and business owners can find useful information, advice, insights, resources, and inspiration for running and growing their business."

This directive is also shared on the company's website. It clearly indicates who the company is, as well as the target audience (entrepreneurs and business owners). This brief but revealing statement tells readers what Inc. Magazine's content will deliver (useful information, advice, insights, resources, and inspiration), and the benefit the magazine's readers will receive (running and growing their business).

- **Action Step:** Take some time to write your content marketing mission statement. Include who you are and who you are hoping to help. Discuss the type of content you will use to solve the big problems on the minds of your audience, and the specific benefits your prospects receive.

What Specific Goals Are You Trying to Accomplish with Your Content?

Is your biggest company need generating leads? Have you done a poor job building and cultivating an email list? Perhaps sales and profits have lagged the last couple of years. It might be that you have struggled to create a brand identity. People simply don't know that you exist, and when they do hear the name of your company, they have nothing more than a vague idea of what it is you offer.

Different types of content naturally align themselves with different business goals. Getting better at building an email list may simply mean updating your landing page, opt-in bribe, and autoresponder sequence. Perhaps the sales scripts you have developed for your sales staff are not converting properly. Creating a brand identity and getting the word out about your business might benefit from creating content that is used in a real-world, direct marketing campaign.

Developing a content marketing strategy means first understanding the very specific goals you are trying to accomplish.

It doesn't pay to be vague here. Every company would probably like to make more money. However, if you write "make more money" as a business goal, you will probably never achieve it. It is not focused enough. A goal to "make more money this calendar year by writing, publishing, and marketing 5 Amazon Kindle e-books" is a very definable and actionable business goal.

Once you decide that developing a passive income by selling e-books on Amazon is your plan, you can match the correct kind of contents to that goal. Obviously, e-books, book descriptions, sales pages, book titles, and

headlines are just a few of the pieces of content you want to add to your marketing strategy in this example.

It Is Okay to Have Multiple Goals

A smart content marketing blueprint will solve all your business problems, or at least attempt to do so. If you want to improve traffic to your website, grow product sales, create larger profit margins, drive customer satisfaction and overall reach while limiting sales returns and working fewer hours, those are seven worthwhile goals to work towards. You will be more successful in achieving all those goals if you take them one at a time, and specifically, detail how you are going to accomplish each in turn.

When you try to do too many things at once, your results are often watered-down, or not achieved at all. Concentrate on clearly defining a single business goal and then think about what type of content will be most effective for obtaining the set of results you're looking for. Then go through the same process with all the objectives you want to achieve for your business.

- **Action Step:** Write down the top 3 business goals that will have the biggest impact on your business. Be specific and detailed.

What Content Are You Going to Use, and How Will You Create and Publish It?

Decide what types of content can best help you accomplish the goals you uncovered in the last chapter. To this point, you will have identified your target audience and ideal prospects. You know what you have to offer and how it provides unique value to the marketplace. You have a clearly defined content marketing mission statement. Now you need to develop a schedule for content creation, as well as how you are going to deliver that content to your audience.

In the maternity clothing example earlier, you identified pregnant stay at home moms and ladies who are pregnant for the first time as your ideal audience. Additionally, you want to cater to those ladies who are busy and have little time to shop for affordable but quality maternity clothing and accessories. You have also identified free at-home delivery as a feature these women would love.

This means you're going to have to have a website where they can shop, an online e-commerce presence, a blog to answer questions and generate traffic, a tantalizing opt-in bribe and corresponding autoresponder sequence at the very minimum. This tells you exactly what pieces of content you need to develop.

How an Editorial Calendar is Indispensable in This Step

Write down the types of content you are going to use, and where you are going to publish this content. At this point, instead of jotting down a few notes or keeping your plan in the back of your mind, your content marketing efforts can benefit from the use of an editorial calendar.

An editorial calendar is nothing more than a set schedule for content creation and delivery. This should include who is going to be involved, the goals you are trying to reach, what content types you are going to use, as well as how frequently you will create it and where you publish your content. Depending on your specific business needs, your calendar may include other information. An editorial calendar (sometimes called a content calendar) can have multiple fields or just a few areas that need to be covered.

The Curata blog has identified 12 "must have" fields for every editorial calendar. You can find that information at the following link.

- <http://www.curata.com/blog/content-calendar-template-12-must-have-fields/>

HubSpot offers free editorial calendar templates you can download and customize. They are available at the following link.

- <https://offers.hubspot.com/editorial-calendar-templates>

If you prefer to create your own calendar using Excel, Open Office, Google Calendar or some other tool, feel free to do so. At the bare minimum, your calendar needs to address the "Who, What, Where and When" of marketing. Who is going to produce and distribute the content? What content is being developed? Where and when is that content going to be published?

- **Action Step:** You have identified your ideal prospect and written a brief but detailed content marketing mission statement. Along with the top goals you are trying to achieve, this information gives you an idea of what type of content and media you should add to your content marketing blueprint. Fill out 30 days of your editorial

calendar for scheduling the creation and delivery of the types of content you have selected.

What Are Your Results and What Changes Do You Need to Make to Your Blueprint?

A content marketing blueprint is a fluid business tool. You are probably not going to be fortunate enough to develop your unique blueprint one time, make absolutely no changes, and realize all the results you are trying to achieve your first time out.

You are going to have to test different types of content, different delivery schedules, and tweak your efforts along the way to achieve the best results. At this point, you have decided on what content to create and when to deliver it to most effectively satisfy the needs of your target audience, so that you also realize specific business goals.

Now it is time to monitor and evaluate.

This means you need to understand click-through rates, bounce rates, conversions, sales and profit numbers. Depending on the goal you have in mind, the analytics you are going to be studying will be different. If creating and publishing a new blog post each week is one of your content marketing strategies, you need to monitor which posts draw the most generic traffic. Which posts get the most comments? What topics drive the most traffic from your blog to your opt-in page or sales page?

Understanding these and other analytics is made possible with the following tools.

- Crazy Egg
- Google Analytics
- WordPress Analytics

- WordPress JetPack
- KISSmetrics
- Woopra
- Piwik
- MixPanel
- MonsterInsights
- Sumo
- Clicky
- Analitify (WP)

Don't forget that many paid advertising services offered by YouTube, Facebook, Amazon, and other big-name web properties offer incredibly diverse analytical tools. This makes monitoring and tracking your content marketing efforts simple. Once you identify those types of content that work really well for your business, focus more of your time and energy there, and spend fewer of your resources on those pieces of content which do not create a substantial return.

- **Action Step:** Give your content marketing strategy at least 30 days to produce results. See what is working and what isn't. Devote more effort to the successful content marketing practices, and less time to those that aren't working. Add any changes to your editorial calendar. Be sure to qualify any new types of content you are experimenting with, so they pass the mission statement test.

Valuable Content Marketing Tools and Resources

Listed below you will find some content marketing applications, websites, resources and other tools to make managing your content strategy much easier. When developing your unique content marketing blueprint, try not to get overwhelmed. Focus on just a couple of content types at a time. The same is true regarding the following resources.

Information overload and analysis paralysis can keep you from taking the important first step in any process. Choose a minimal number of tools and resources, try them on for size, and don't be afraid to ditch them for other alternatives if they don't work out for you. Not all the following content marketing helpers will appeal to everyone.

Generating Ideas

- HubSpot Blog Topic Generator
- ContentIdeator
- BuzzSumo
- Google Trends
- Idea Generator by FewBees
- Portent's Content Idea Generator
- Creativity Games' Idea Generator
- KopywritingKourse's Business Idea Generator
- Business News Daily's Business Ideas

Project Management

- Asana
- BaseCamp
- WorkZone
- Trello
- Podio

Managing Social Media

- Buffer
- EveryPost
- HootSuite
- HubSpot
- SproutSocial
- Agora Pulse
- CoSchedule

Freelance Content Creation

- Fiverr
- Freelancer.com
- UpWork
- Guru
- Toptal
- PeoplePerHour

Email Marketing

- AWeber
- GetResponse
- MailChimp

Editorial Calendars

- CoSchedule
- <http://www.curata.com/blog/content-calendar-template-12-must-have-fields/>
- <https://offers.hubspot.com/editorial-calendar-templates>
- <https://www.smartsheet.com/9-free-marketing-calendar-templates-excel>
- <https://coschedule.com/blog/annual-content-calendar-template/>

Content Marketing Books

- Epic Content Marketing - How to Tell a Different Story, Break through the Clutter, and Win More Customers by Marketing Less by Joe Pulizzi
- Content - The Atomic Particle of Marketing: The Definitive Guide to Content Marketing Strategy by Rebecca Lieb
- Master Content Marketing: A Simple Strategy to Cure the Blank Page Blues and Attract a Profitable Audience by Pamela Wilson
- Top of Mind: Use Content to Unleash Your Influence and Engage Those Who Matter to You by John Hall

- They Ask, You Answer: A Revolutionary Approach to Inbound Sales, Content Marketing, and Today's Digital Consumer by Marcus Sheridan
- The New Rules of Marketing and PR: How to Use Social Media, Online Video, Mobile Applications, Blogs, News Releases and Viral Marketing to Reach Buyers Directly, 6th Edition, by David Meerman Scott

10 Best Practices for Creating a Successful Content Marketing Blueprint

1. Never begin developing a content marketing strategy without understanding the desires, needs, demographics and other characteristics of your ideal customer. Niche down instead of going broad. "How to make money online" is too broad of a topic. Marketing to "over-40 single moms who want to make money online by self-publishing Amazon Kindle e-books" puts a better face on your prospects and gives you a better chance at success.
2. What is your content marketing mission statement? This should be a brief and descriptive statement that illustrates what sets your company apart from the competition, how your customers can benefit, and the specific types of materials and content you will be offering.
3. Every individual piece of content you create should have a specific goal. If you don't know where you are headed, how do you know when you get there?

4. An editorial calendar helps you schedule content creation and delivery. There are plenty of editorial calendar templates online, but as long as you have a calendar dedicated specifically to scheduling your content marketing strategy, that's really all you need.
5. Producing and publishing content without evaluating its success can be a waste of considerable time and money. You must use analytics to grade the effectiveness of each type of content in your marketing plan.
6. Getting new customers is always nice, but don't forget to take care of your current client base. Content marketing should always include a strategy for developing and distributing content geared at customer retention, and at selling more products and services to your current customers.
7. When you are just getting started creating your blueprint, don't try to do too many things at once. Remember, you are going to have to take time to study and evaluate how your content is performing. This is easier to do when you only have 2 or 3 different types of content to monitor at a time.
8. Consider getting started with video marketing sooner rather than later. To say that the move towards video over text-based content is on is a vast understatement. The written word will always be an important part of human communication, but if you are not testing video for its effectiveness to grow your business, you are losing ground to the competition.
9. Start out with the types of content you are most comfortable with. If you enjoy writing blog posts, add them to your initial content

marketing blueprint. Evaluate their effectiveness, and then move on to other types of content. You should constantly be monitoring your blueprint and making the necessary changes so your energy and time are always spent on the most effective types of content for your business.

10. Don't expect a home run your first time at bat. You may have to work through the content marketing blueprint process several times before you discover the media and content types that are perfect for your business and your customers.

Conclusion

Content marketing can have a lot of faces, from video to text, and audio to print media. Even the largest companies can't employ every possible piece of content in an attempt to grow their businesses. This is why moving through the 5 stages of content marketing blueprint creation are so important. You identify the face of your perfect prospect. Then you list your most important business needs and decide what types of content most effectively help you reach those goals, while also helping your prospects and customers.

This knowledge helps you develop a schedule of content delivery, and your content marketing mission statement keeps you on the right track. Then all that is left to do is to measure your results and tweak your content marketing strategy accordingly.

The 5-step content marketing blueprint plan in this report may seem simple. Just because it is easy to understand and simple to follow doesn't mean it isn't incredibly powerful. Don't just answer the questions in each stage of blueprint development in your mind. Take time to complete the Action Steps in this guide.

When you find what works and what doesn't work, spend more time creating and publishing content that is effective, and less time banging your head against the wall with poor performing content. What you will find is that just a few types of content will deliver the biggest bang for your buck. Over time, working through the 5 stages of content marketing strategy development in this report will provide an easy to implement plan that helps you achieve all your business goals with the least amount of time and money invested.