

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CONTENT MARKETING

8 SIMPLE STEPS TO CREATING CONTENT
YOUR AUDIENCE WILL DEVOUR



By Liz Hawkins

 **iNeedArticles**
easy, affordable content

Table of Contents

Welcome	3
What Is Content Marketing?	4
STEP 1	
Define Your Content Marketing Objectives And Strategy	5
STEP 2	
Determine Who Your Target Audience Is	8
STEP 3	
Determine What Types Of Content You Will Create	12
STEP 4	
Planning Your Content	19
STEP 5	
Process For Creating Your Content	22
STEP 6	
Forming Your Content Marketing Team	28
STEP 7	
Promoting Your Content	32
STEP 8	
Measuring Your Content Marketing Results	35
Summary	36



W E L C O M E



Welcome to The Ultimate Guide to Content Marketing: 8 Simple Steps To Creating Content Your Audience Will Devour

We created this guide because we heard so many people in so many different industries all around the world tell us that when it comes to content marketing they felt like a deer in the headlights.

"What do I write about?"

"Who am I writing for?"

"What's the goal I want my content to achieve?"

"How can I create great content that people want to read?"

"How can I create content on a consistent basis . . . I've got a business to run!"

Any of these sound like you? Then you're in the right place!

This guide will lay the groundwork for a powerful content marketing strategy that can help your business grow. Just as you need to build a house from the ground up, starting with the foundation, the same is true for your content marketing.

You need to define WHO your audience is, WHY you're creating content for them, and WHAT you hope to achieve with that content. Only then can you get into more specifics of exactly what content will achieve those goals. Don't worry . . . we'll help you figure it all out.

I'm Liz Hawkins, co-owner of INeedArticles, the one-stop-shop where smart business owners go for all their written content needs. We create content for practically everything. We're passionate about helping small business owners like you create great content your readers will want to devour. We created this guide to help you do it on your own and if you follow the system, you will be able to create amazing content. You may also realize that "Hey, this content stuff takes a lot of time and effort. I know I need it, but my time and expertise are better spent on other things." If that ends up being you, we want you to think of us for your content writing needs. With a team of hundreds of writers with expertise in every niche, we can create amazing content for all of your needs.

This guide has everything you need to confidently plan and create your content, knowing you're creating the type of content that will engage your ideal customers and grow your business.

Let's get started!

Liz

What Is Content Marketing?

“Content marketing is the only marketing left.”

- Seth Godin

Content marketing involves creating, publishing and promoting content specifically for your target audience that can achieve these important objectives:

- ➔ *Build brand awareness*
- ➔ *Establish your company as an expert and leader in its niche or industry*
- ➔ *Generate new leads and build a mailing list for your business*
- ➔ *Increase conversion and sales*
- ➔ *Retain customers, clients or patients*



Creating high quality content is one of the most important activities you can do that will help to grow your business. That is because people online are searching for information to solve their problems and help them make purchasing decisions. Creating content to meet the needs of these searchers is one of the best ways to build brand awareness, establish your organization as an industry leader, generate leads, increase conversion and sales and retain loyal, repeat customers.

There are many different types of content that will help you achieve your goals:

- ➔ *Articles*
- ➔ *Special reports*
- ➔ *Blog posts*
- ➔ *Video*
- ➔ *eBooks*
- ➔ *Webinars*
- ➔ *Podcasts*
- ➔ *White papers*
- ➔ *Social media posts*

This guide will cover how to develop your content marketing objectives and strategies, how to determine who your target audience is and how to figure out which types of content to create. We then discuss the content creation process in three sections where we cover how to generate content ideas, how to plan your content effectively and what process you should follow each time you create a new piece of content. There’s also an entire bonus section on how to properly optimize your content for the search engines as well as a section devoted to how to best promote your content. We cover how to get all of these content ideas into action whether you do it yourself or put a content management team in place. We then show what metrics to focus on to measure your content marketing results. As you can see this is a very comprehensive guide that takes you through the entire content marketing process in a step-by-step manner. Let’s get started with the process now.



STEP 1

**Define Your Content
Marketing Objectives
And Strategy**

Define Your Content Marketing Objectives And Strategy

“A goal without a plan is just a wish.”

- Antoine de Saint-Exupery

When planning your content marketing strategy, it's important to decide WHAT you want to accomplish before you decide HOW you'll accomplish it. This means you need some marketing objectives.

What do you want to accomplish?

- ➔ *Increase traffic to your website*
- ➔ *Generate interest for your products and services*
- ➔ *Generate leads for your business*
- ➔ *Increase sales conversions*
- ➔ *Build brand awareness*
- ➔ *Establish your company and members of your management team as experts in your industry or niche*
- ➔ *Help customers get the most from your products or services*
- ➔ *Create rapport with customers and build strong communities and groups of followers on social networks*

All of these are important objectives but if you are just getting started with content marketing, then it is important to only pick one or two objectives to begin with. For example, you may want to focus on creating content to build brand awareness and generate leads to bring more customers into your business.

Whichever objective you select, know that it does not have to be set in stone. Content marketing is like any marketing strategy. You need to test to see what works. It's also important when making your content marketing plan that you commit to stick with it for three to six months. That gives you enough time to test your assumptions while finding the best methods that work.

Now it's time to write these down. We suggest using an Excel spreadsheet. Name the tab "Business Objectives" In column A write "Business Objectives". Below this write one primary goal and two or three lower-level goals for your content marketing plan. Be specific.

Next, in column B write "Business Impact." Here you'll note why you want to achieve each goal. Define how achieving it will help your business grow.

Now, you need a way to benchmark and track your results. In column C enter "Results" and define how you'll measure that (sales results, profits, number of click-throughs, etc) that will help you measure growth.



Then, in columns D through G name each "1st Quarter Results" through "4th Quarter Results"
Your spreadsheet should look similar to this:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Business Objective	Business Impact	Results	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							
22							
23							



STEP 2

**Determine Who Your
Target Audience Is**

Determine Who Your Target Audience Is

“Don’t just own the content, own the audience.”

- Joe Pulizzi *Content Marketing Institute*

Great! You now know what you want to achieve with your content marketing efforts, but that doesn’t mean you can just spew a bunch of stuff out and expect to reach your goals. It won’t work and you’ll just be frustrated with your results. But you’re smart . . . you’re following this guide step-by-step so you’ll get the most of your content marketing efforts.

The whole purpose behind content marketing is to provide your target audience with information and content that addresses their needs and concerns in order to accomplish the objective(s) you laid out in step one. To do this, you need to know who your specific audience is and what their needs, concerns and interests are, so you can create content that will specifically resonate with them.

Identify Your Specific Niche Or Industry

“You can’t be everything to everyone, so be something for someone.”

- Small Business Stacey *(Small Biz Marketing Specialist)*

When it comes to creating content, most small business owners think “big” – going after everyone. That’s just not realistic. You’ll be better off creating content for a very specific person than creating content that comes across as generic because the person reading it doesn’t feel it’s specific to them.

In determining who your target audience is, be very specific. Whose interests and needs do your products or services serve? For example:

- ➔ *Animal lovers (broad)*
- ➔ *Dog lovers (refining your niche)*
- ➔ *Lovers of hairless dogs (micro-niche)*

Animal lovers is a broad and general group of people. Dog lovers is much more specific. Refine it even further by specifically targeting only the lovers of hairless dogs. The goal is to pick a target audience that is as small a group as possible, but is large enough you can provide a solution that will help you meet your marketing objectives.



Here's some questions you can ask to help you define your niche:

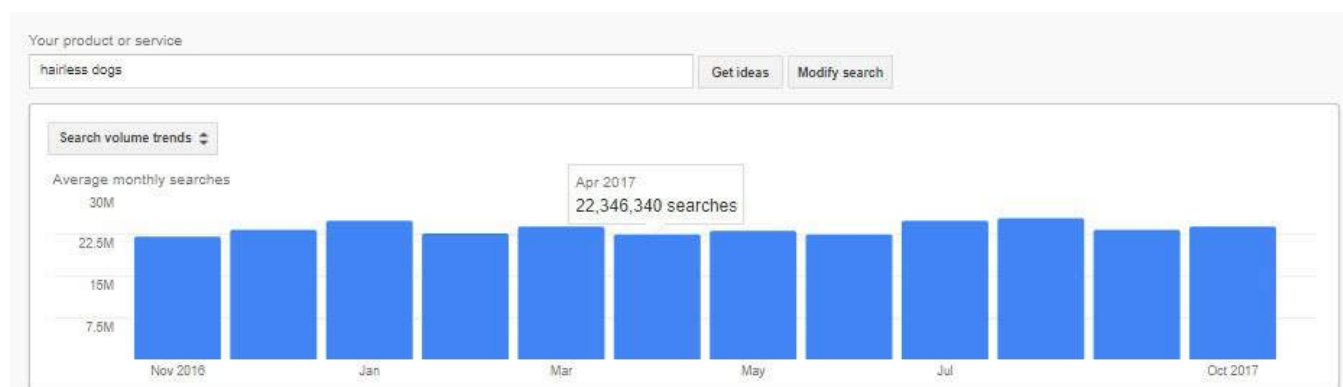
- ➔ *What types of people can benefit from the products or services your business offers?*
- ➔ *Do these people need or want the information that we can provide to them?*
- ➔ *What types of information and content are they looking for?*
- ➔ *What triggers their purchasing decisions?*
- ➔ *What are their pain points? What problems do they need solutions to?*
- ➔ *What channels do they use to communicate?*
- ➔ *Who do they listen to?*
- ➔ *What are their interests?*

In your spreadsheet create a new tab called CORE MESSAGE. Make Column A "Target Market", Column B "Keywords", Column C "Pain Points/Solutions", and Column C "Message" (we'll get to this in the next step). As you define your niche, write it in column A.

Verify There's a Viable Market

You need to do research to determine whether people are searching for the type of information and content you are planning to create. One way to do this is to use the Google Adwords keyword tool. Type in specific keywords that your content will be centered around. See how many monthly searches

there are to determine whether it is worth it to spend time and resources on creating content centered on these keywords. Verify there are at least 10,000 monthly searches. As you can see, for hairless dogs, it's a topic that is searched a lot:



For lovers of hairless dogs, there are the specific breeds. Each of those could be a keyword – you could have a specific piece of content specifically addressing that breed. Put these keywords into Column "B" of your spreadsheet.



Keyword (by relevance)	Avg. monthly searches [?]	Competition [?]	Suggested bid [?]	A
rottweiler	1,830,000	Low	\$0.33	
pomeranian	1,000,000	Low	\$0.30	
labradoodle	673,000	Low	\$0.40	
beagle	1,220,000	Low	\$0.33	
bulldog	1,000,000	Low	\$0.47	
dachshund	673,000	Low	\$0.45	
havanese	246,000	Low	\$0.48	
chow chow	1,000,000	Low	\$0.58	
schnauzer	550,000	Low	\$0.27	

Continue your keyword research looking for the problems that people are searching for relating to your keyword. For example, if you offer a lotion that prevents or helps with dry skin, you could search for terms related to that for hairless dogs. Put these terms in column "C" of your spreadsheet.

Keyword (by relevance) +	Avg. monthly searches [?]	Competition [?]	Suggested bid [?]
dry skin on dogs	18,100	High	\$1.68
dog dry skin treatment	1,900	High	\$1.78
dog skin problems	5,400	Medium	\$1.04
dog skin conditions	8,100	Low	\$1.40
dog skin infection	6,600	Medium	\$1.12
dog has dry skin	1,600	High	\$1.38
my dog has dry skin	1,000	High	\$1.25
dog dry skin remedy	2,400	High	\$1.47
puppy dry skin	1,000	Medium	\$1.67

Now you know what you want to achieve with your content marketing efforts, you've defined who your perfect customer is and the keywords they're searching for when it comes to finding solutions to their problems. Now we get into the content creation process.



STEP 3

**Determine What
Types Of Content
You Will Create**

Determine What Types Of Content You Will Create

“Provide good content and you’ll earn the right to promote your product.”

- Guy Kawasaki

There are many different forms of content you can create. As discussed in our earlier section on objectives and strategy, when you are first implementing your content marketing plan, it is usually best to focus on creating just a few forms of content. The types of content you create should be based on those forms that can best help you meet your content marketing objectives, resonate with your audience the most and ones that you have the available resources (content creators) and budget to create effectively.

In this section we will be covering the major forms of content that you can create so that you have a good overview of the various possibilities that are available to you and what objectives they can help you meet. Some forms of content you may create more than others. It is also possible to expand into new forms of content over time as you gain more experience and have a larger budget and pool of content creators available to you.

Note that not all of the following types of content are text-based. There are also visual and audio forms of content as well. When planning your content mix, try to incorporate various types of content to keep things interesting and to appeal to the different senses. We also encourage you to do things like add images to your blog posts to make them more interesting and visually appealing.



Types of Content

Blog posts - It can be very beneficial to set up a blog as part of your website and publish new blog posts on a regular basis. Doing this can help drive traffic to your website, help to build brand awareness, establish niche or industry authority for your company, as well as generate leads and sales. Blog posts can be written on topics such as issues that relate to your products or services, discuss news and issues that relate to your industry or niche, or provide additional information on your products or services. Blog posts tend to be fairly short forms of content, ranging from 100-2,000 words in length.

Articles and Guest Posts - This is content that is published on external websites and publications (can be both online and offline publications). This content can serve to drive traffic to your website as well as further establish your company's niche or industry authority. You can also improve your SEO through obtaining quality backlinks to your website from authority websites in your niche by offering high quality guest posts in exchange for a link.

Guides and Tutorials - These can be created and posted on web pages or compiled as PDFs that can be downloaded. Detailed guides and tutorials are basically lesson plans on how to do something or learn more about a certain topic. These documents can be an excellent way to build a mailing list and establish further authority within your niche or industry.



Special Reports and White Papers

- People are always searching for useful information that can help them make better decisions. This is why special reports, white papers and other detailed information are excellent types of content to use as free offers and premiums. They are highly effective for generating leads or as added value to give to existing customers.

eBooks - This is content that is usually published in PDF format. They can be used as lead generators to help build your email list. They can also help to build authority or even be sold to bring in additional streams of revenue.

Infographics - These are images which present information in a creative and visually interesting way. If they are well done, infographics can end up being shared widely and go viral. They can be used effectively to help build brand awareness and provide useful information that is easy to share.

Video - Videos can be created and posted on your website. They can also be posted to video sharing sites such as YouTube and Vimeo to drive traffic to your website.

Podcasts - Audios can be created and posted to sites such as iTunes and Stitcher Radio to drive additional traffic to your site.

Webinars - Hosting webinars can be a great way to build your mailing list and promote your products. Webinars can be hosted on various topics that relate to your products or services. They should be informational and provide value to webinar attendees.



Newsletter Content - Building an email list is one of the most critical and valuable assets your business can have to grow the business, generate sales and retain customers. Newsletter content can be a mix of information and promotional emails sent to a list of subscribers on a regular basis. An autoresponder series can be set up ahead of time and then mailed out on a set schedule. Broadcast emails can also be sent out on a regular schedule and for special occasions like promotions and important announcements.

Social Marketing Posts - Posting content on places like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram can be very effective at building brand awareness, engaging with prospects and customers, and driving traffic to your website.

Create another tab on your spreadsheet called CHANNEL PLAN. Create these columns across the top:

- **Column A** - "Content Types" - list all the types of content you want to create as part of your content marketing strategy
- **Column B** - "Channels" - list the channels where you will publish that content. Include your website, blog, social media sites, etc.
- **Column C** - "Objective" - note what you hope to achieve with each piece of content on that channel
- **Column D "Description"** - write a short description of the type of posts you'll publish in each channel
- **Column E** - "Frequency" - note the frequency of your posts in each channel
- **Column F** - "Tone" - you should have the tone of your communications in each channel, based on the audience you're reaching and the expectations of the people in those channels
- **Column G** - "Desired Action" - the primary action you want to drive in each channel. This is based on your content strategy.
- **Column H** - "URL" - record the URL of each channel once it's created



+ BONUS SECTION

How To Generate Ideas For Content

Now that you know what type(s) of content you want to create, you need to create it. And not just one piece of content. You need enough high quality content to publish on a regular basis. To accomplish this you'll need a system to capture and organize your ideas. That way you will always have ideas ready for creating content whenever the need arises.

Set Up A Document For Recording All Of Your Content Ideas

This can be a spreadsheet or document set up at Google Docs or some central area that all of your content creators have access to. You want all of your content ideas to be recorded in one central place.

On your document, note down your idea, type of content to be created, possible title and any notes to go along with your idea. Do this for each idea for content that you come up with.

The key here is to just record your ideas in rough form. Don't worry about refining or perfecting them. Just get the ideas written down.

The following are several tactics you can use for coming up with new ideas for content on a regular basis.



Brainstorm Ideas

There are various ways to brainstorm new ideas. One highly effective way is to simply use a list method. Think of a topic that you want to create content around. It should be something that your target audience will find valuable and useful.

Start out by choosing a subject that you want to brainstorm ideas on. Narrow your topic down before brainstorming so that your ideas are not too broad.

Write down the topic that you want to brainstorm. Then list everything that comes to mind that relates to the topic. The idea here is just to fill up the page with as many ideas as you can.

Review your list and determine which ideas are the best. Look for those ideas that have a unique angle or seem particularly interesting and highlight those. Eliminate any boring or generic ones.

Also look for ways to combine ideas to form a new and interesting idea for content.

Ask questions about your topic for even more ideas.

For any broad ideas, try to drill down to make them more narrow and specific.

Transfer your best ideas over to your master list of content ideas.



Eavesdrop

This method involves simply paying attention to what people are saying around you to come up with more ideas for interesting and valuable content.

Pay attention to what people are talking about at the coffee shop, grocery store, bank and anywhere else when you are out in public. Also, listen to what your family and friends are talking about.

- ➔ *What topics are people talking about the most?*
- ➔ *What questions do they have?*
- ➔ *What are their major concerns?*

Search for ways that regular conversations relate to some of your most important topics to come up with unique angles for new content and add these ideas to your master content ideas document.

- ➔ *Listen to what your customers are saying*
- ➔ *Pay close attention to comments, emails and other feedback you receive from customers.*
- ➔ *What are their biggest fears, concerns and challenges?*
- ➔ *What are they attempting to do?*
- ➔ *What roadblocks and challenges are in their way?*
- ➔ *What are their pain points?*

Write down as many content topics as you can to address these concerns and questions that your customers have.

You can get a practically unlimited number of ideas from just listening to your customers and those around you. It really is that simple to come up with great ideas for content.

Social Media and Forums

You can also get tons of ideas by paying attention to what is being discussed on social media and online forums.

With social media one of the keys is to make sure you follow the best people. Search for thought leaders from your industry, individuals who are coming up with unique ideas and those setting trends. Closely follow what they have to say to get new ideas for content.

Come up with a list of keywords and topics you want to generate content on and search for these terms on the major social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. On Facebook you can look for relevant groups and pages to join that relate to your topic or industry. On Twitter, identify relevant hashtags to use for your searches and look for industry leaders to follow.

There are social media tools that you can use to view all of your various social media streams from one place and to schedule your own posts. Some of the leading tools are Hootsuite, Socialloomph and Tweetdeck.

Schedule time on a regular basis to review your social media streams to generate new ideas for content. Search for trending and unique topics and ideas from industry leaders that could make interesting content and add these to your master list.

You can also get a ton of new content ideas by visiting online forums that relate to your industry or niche. Reading various discussion topics is a great way to find out what major concerns and questions people have.

LinkedIn has groups with forums for various professionals by industry. You can also do Google searches for forums by simply typing "Forum (topic)" in the search bar to find places for interesting conversations.



Other good places to find interesting conversations include Quora.com and Reddit.com.

Schedule times to visit forums on a regular basis to generate new ideas for content. Be sure to add your new ideas to your master list of content ideas.

News and Trends

Topics being reported in the news are an excellent source for new content ideas. Look for ideas in the news that relate to your most important topics. The intersection between the two will help you come up with interesting, unique and relevant ideas.

Identify important industry blogs and news sources and check them on a regular basis to generate new content ideas that you can add to your master list.

Keeping up with the latest trends that relate to your niche or industry is essential to keep current and generate timely and fresh content ideas. What are people discussing? What blogs, magazines and books are they reading? What do they watch on TV? Follow industry leaders, website and blogs to keep up with what is trending in your niche or industry.



Set up Google Alerts for your main keywords.

Go to <http://google.com/alerts>

Add the topic or keyword you want to Monitor into the field called "Search Query." Then select the options for the kinds of information you want as well as how often you want to get them. Then click on "Create Alert."

Set up an alert for every topic you want to stay current on. Google will send you emails with links to content that relate to your alert. Review these links to come up with new content ideas.

Use Google

You can also use the power of Google or another search engine to brainstorm ideas. You can use Google Suggest by typing in search terms and seeing what other terms are generated in auto suggest to find new ideas for content.

You can also perform keyword searches using the Google keyword tool or other keyword research tools to see what terms and topics people are searching for. Start out with a seed keyword and see what related terms are generated by Google to come up with more ideas for content.

You will never run out of ideas for new content if you simply follow a few of the above suggestions. The key is to keep one master list of all your content ideas and continue to add to on a consistent basis by paying attention and listening to all of those ideas and potential new ideas that are all around you.



STEP 4

Planning Your Content

Planning Your Content

**“Content marketing is a long term relationship.
It’s not a one night Author.”**

Now that you have a list of content ideas generated and where you’ll publish them, it is time to get into action and produce this content on a regular basis to meet your business objectives. In this section we will cover a few planning steps you should institute to help maximize the efficiency of your content generation process.

Set Up Your Editorial Calendar

This is the document you will set up that schedules which pieces of content will be created and by what date. You should include the content idea, type of content, date to be completed and published, and any relevant notes. Mapping your content creation process out ahead of time will help you stay on track to create content on a regular basis and identify any gaps or missing types of content that you want to create. It will also help you budget your money and resources to ensure that all the content you want to create has the appropriate resources allocated to it.

The purpose of your content is to get people to take a next step – your call to action. Make sure you include one that relates to the specific piece of content being created. For example, offering a “10 Signs Your Pomeranian May Be Suffering From Dry Skin” can be an additional piece of content (lead generation) someone opts in to get based on an article they read about the health problems to be aware of in small dogs or pomeranians.



There are many online content marketing tools you can use to manage your editorial calendar, but if you're just starting out, we suggest you stick to the basics and just use a simple Excel spreadsheet like this:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Date To Create Content	Content Creator	Content Purpose	Keyword(s)	Title	Author	Call To Action	Date Published	Published Location	Notes
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										
13										
14										
15										
16										
17										
18										
19										
20										
21										
22										
23										

Having an editorial calendar and established workflow in place will help to ensure that you are able to efficiently produce quality content on a regular basis. This is absolutely key in order to meet your content marketing objectives. Taking the time to plan and set up these processes will help set you up for success.



STEP 5

Process For Creating Your Content

Process For Creating Your Content

“The more content I put out, the more luck I have.”

- Gary Vaynerchuk, Vaynermedia

In this section we will be covering a process you can follow to create content. Although this process specifically applies to written content, it can be used as a basis for other types of content as well. By following a proven system, it can help make the content creation process more efficient and easier to produce high quality content.

Here’s the steps you’ll want to follow each time you create a piece of content:

- ➔ *Choose Your Topic*
- ➔ *Research*
- ➔ *Organize Your Ideas*
- ➔ *Write the Content*
- ➔ *Let It Cool Off*
- ➔ *Edit*

Choose Your Topic

First check your editorial planner to find out what has been scheduled for content creation. Review the topic, keywords and objective to help you further refine the idea to create an interesting and valuable piece of content. You want to make sure to engage your audience and also achieve your content marketing objectives to support your business goals.

Make sure that focus is narrow enough so that you can thoroughly cover the topic or answer one main question with your piece of content.



Research

You need to have relevant details to back up your ideas. That is why you need to research the topic for your piece of content. Search for information that will help to validate your opinions and back up your points. Some of the types of information you should look for include opinions from respected authorities, case studies, statistics and quotes.

Go to the Editorial Calendar and copy the topic and paste it into a new document to help you stay focused on your specific topic while you are doing your research.

Then conduct an online search on your main keyword using Google or your preferred search engine. Look to see what kinds of articles show up in the search results. Look for information that you can use to help back up the ideas and opinions in your article. Use authorities on your subject whenever possible as your reference sources.

Paste relevant research into your document. Your research might include snippets of statistics, facts, ideas or links. Include the URL so that you can reference your sources as needed.

Add in your own thoughts. Research should be used to give credibility and strengthen your own ideas.

Organize Your Ideas

The basic structure for any piece of content is the following:

- **Introduction** - *Get your reader's attention and inform them what they will be getting if they read your piece of content.*
- **Body** - *Deliver on whatever promise you made in the content's introduction.*
- **Close** - *Summarize and return to whatever your main point is.*
- **Call to action** - *Tell your reader what to do next.*

Your main task is to fit your rough ideas and research into the above structure.

What point are you attempting to make with the piece of content you are writing?

Come up with several supporting statements that develop or prove the main point.

You will usually start to see how your various ideas fit together while you are doing your research.



Write The Rough Draft

Start writing your ideas out. Refer to any notes from your research to add support to your points. Flesh out your ideas and expand them. Then fit them all together so that the ideas flow in a logical order.

Remember to write your content for your ideal client based on the research you completed earlier. Determine what you want your reader to understand or learn after they have read your content. Write as if you are speaking to that one individual.

Don't worry about editing or making your writing perfect at this point. Your goal is to just finish your rough draft.

Give Your Content A Rest

After you have completed your rough draft allow it to sit at least over night before going back over and editing it. You will be able to read what you have written much more objectively if you allow it to sit for at least a short period.



Edit

When editing your work, you want to focus on the logic and flow of your ideas. Try reading your article from the perspective of your ideal reader.

Mark any sections that are unclear or that don't make sense.

Fix any organizational issues first and rearrange any sections as needed so that the flow is more logical. Eliminate any sentences or paragraphs that interrupt your ideas or don't support your main topic.

Edit The Introduction

Make sure your first sentence and paragraph are as compelling as possible. Eliminate any waste. Make sure everything relates to your main point.

After your introduction and overall structure are in good shape, you can begin to focus on making any necessary changes to the language and grammar.

Save your document. Create or add your piece of content to a project folder.

Using the process above each time you create a new piece of content will help to make the content creation process more efficient and smooth. It will help you create high quality content quickly that focuses on the needs and concerns of your ideal reader.



+ BONUS SECTION

Optimizing Your Content For Search

Planning and creating content is just part of the overall content marketing process. It is also critical that your content be optimized so that it ranks well in the search engines so that your target audience can find it. Well-optimized, well-written content is the best type of SEO you can have.

In this section we will be covering the best practices you should employ to ensure that your content ranks high within the search engines.

On-Page Optimization

These days it is best not to focus too much on SEO during the writing process. Instead you should focus writing for people instead of the search engines. Most of your SEO efforts should be made after you have finished writing.

Determine which keywords you want your piece of content to rank for.

Choose one primary keyword to use in your piece of content. Make sure the keyword appears naturally throughout your piece of content.

Link To Related Pages On Your Website

This will provide link juice to whatever pages you link to. It also helps to keep visitors on your website longer and read more content on your site. This helps to improve your site's bounce rate and rankings.

The main key to successful on-page optimization is to ensure that each page on your site is about one topic and then provide as much unique and useful content on that topic as possible.

Optimize The Title

Your main keyword should appear once in the title.



Create An Authority Website

For best results, you need to go beyond optimizing individual web pages and work on optimizing your entire website and developing it into an authority site in your niche or industry. This is a long-term process that does take a lot of work and time, but it is definitely worth it.

In order for your website to be viewed by the search engines as an authority site, you will need to produce a large quantity of useful content on your main topics. All of your content needs to relate to those main topics in order for the search engines to recognize you as an authority on that topic.

An authority website is one that other high quality, authority sites link to. The site is viewed as a leader in its niche or industry. These sites also have many relevant web pages on their core subjects. The websites provide useful resources and are trusted by their followers.

The way to develop your website into an authority site is to produce a large amount of relevant and useful content that relates to your main topic and to continuously refine your internal links.

Linking out to other authority sites is also important since that shows you are providing valuable information and resources to your readers.

Get Other Authority Websites To Link To Your Site

Your goal is to get as many high-quality websites to link to pages on your website. Creating the highest quality content will support this goal. Create the types of content that encourages links: interviews, product reviews and useful resources.

Write Guest Posts To Obtain Backlinks

Writing guest posts for other authority sites in exchange for backlinks can be a very valuable aspect of your overall search engine optimization strategy. This can provide your site with valuable links and help to establish your reputation as an expert in your field. Make sure to stick with relevant high authority websites.

Request External Links

Simply requesting links can add authority to your site and improve your search engine optimization by gaining valuable backlinks from other highly trusted websites in your niche or industry. Create web pages that visitors from other sites would find valuable or mention a product of theirs on your website. Then simply request a link by contacting the website owner.

Search engine optimization has changed within the last few years. There is less of an emphasis on keywords these days and more focus on building social connections and authority to rank high in the search results. Using the above strategies such as creating lots of valuable content on your chosen topic, guest blogging for other authoritative sites and requesting links to your valuable content are all ways that you can effectively optimize your content and website so that your content ranks well in the search engines.

The search engines reward relevant, useful, high quality content these days. So creating and promoting high quality content are the best steps you can take to improve the visibility of your content within the search engines and drive more targeted traffic to your website.



STEP 6

Forming Your Content Marketing Team

Forming Your Content Marketing Team

“Content is king.”

- Bill Gates

Your content creators are the heart and soul of your content marketing strategy. You need talented and qualified creators to generate high quality and effective content to help you meet your business objectives.

Your content marketing team will vary greatly depending on the size of your organization, your budget, what types of content you are planning to create and what objectives you are trying to achieve.

If you are a sole proprietor you may have to generate your own content, hire freelancers or use a content creation service like iNeedArticles to get your content created. Large firms may have in-house content creators as part of their staff including writers, editors, graphic designers, social media managers, video makers and a content marketing manager to oversee all of the various content marketing activities.

Set Your Budget For Content Creation

Creating content is resource intensive. It takes a significant amount of time and usually money (unless you create it yourself) to generate content on a regular basis. Therefore, your first step is to determine your budget for content creation. Keep in mind how much your business can benefit when your objectives are met. For example, if your content creation efforts are able to bring in a certain number of targeted leads each month, this will eventually turn into a certain number of sales.

Another thing to consider is that once content is created it is a long-term asset. With paid advertising you must continue to pay for it in order to continue generating leads and sales. When you create content such as blog posts or lead generation magnets to attract new mailing list subscribers, this content can continue to work for you for a long time.



Hire Content Creators Or Locate Content Creation Services

If you've read up until this point, you can see there's a lot involved in creating and implementing a content marketing strategy. However, you also see the importance and benefit it can bring – from creating brand awareness to helping you grow your business.

The reality is that it's probably not a good use of your time to be researching and writing your content. What happens all too often is it ends up on the "back burner" and never gets implemented. If you're committed to content marketing, and we certainly hope you are, then we highly encourage you to build a team of content creators who can create amazing content for you regularly and stick to your schedule.

Here's the different options you can consider in building your content creation team.

In-House Staff

The major advantage to having in-house staff create your content is that it makes it easier to develop a consistent voice for your brand and to have members on your team work closely together on your content marketing strategy. The major drawback is that it can be very expensive to have in-house staff. You will not only need to pay professional salaries, but also benefits and insurance. Having an in-house staff also requires more management and resources to provide for your employee's needs.

Freelancers And Content Creation Services

In-house content creation is usually reserved for larger companies, whereas smaller organizations tend to rely on freelancers, writing services and other content creation providers. When you contract out your content creation services, the advantages are it tends to be less expensive to pay for outside services than having to pay professional salaries plus benefits. You can also contract out a wider range of content types and specialized services such as video creation and premium content.

Another benefit to contracting out work is that in many cases you can get content generated for you very quickly at a reasonable cost. For example, there are many writing services where you can order articles and other content and get the work back in a few days or less. Most of these services will allow you to provide detailed instructions along with your order to help ensure that you get the type of content you are looking for.

Hybrid Model

You can also have a few in-house content creators to do regular content creation such as blog posts and then contract out more specialized forms of content such as videos and longer content as the need arises.



Finding Quality Content Creators

The best way to find qualified content creators for either in-house positions or when contracting out the work to freelancers, writing services or other content service providers is to ask to see past samples of their work. Keep in mind the kind of style and brand voice you are wanting to achieve when considering individual content creators as well as services. When hiring freelancers you can also ask them for referrals from past clients. Always follow up with referrals to make sure the freelancer met their deadlines and delivered quality content on a consistent basis.

It is key to have your content marketing objectives and strategies developed before hiring content creators to ensure that you choose professionals who can deliver the exact types of content you need to meet your objectives.

Once you find the content creators you want to hire or contract for, be very clear on salary or price of content, deadlines and any other expectations you have to ensure you receive quality work that is delivered on time. Content creators can be invaluable members of your team to help you meet your business objectives. Hire or contract qualified and talented professionals and treat them well. It is well worth the money and time that you will invest in them since they can create quality content for your organization that will serve your business well over the long term.



STEP 7

Promoting Your Content

Promoting Your Content

“Content marketing is a commitment, not a campaign.”

- Jon Buscall, Moondog Marketing

It isn't enough to simply create and publish your content. That's like a "build it and they will come" mentality and it won't work. You need to promote the great content you just created to help ensure it gets found by your target audience.

Step 5 included a bonus section on optimizing your content for the search engines. That's definitely an important part of your content creation process. In this section, we will be covering additional ways to promote your content.

Social Media

Social media is a great way to get your content out there. Post content that your fans and followers will engage with and want to share.

Choose the appropriate channels for your content. Some of your content will be ideal for Twitter and some for Facebook, for example. Also post at the best times. Use the built in analytics within each social platform to determine who's engaging with your content and what type(s) of content do the best. Use a social management tool such as Hootsuite to schedule your posts and promotions.

The downside of many social media channels is that they're built on a "pay to play" model. For example on Facebook only 2 – 3% of your organic followers will see your posts in their timeline. This means that if you want more eyeballs, you're going to have to pay for it. Make sure you include this in your content marketing budget.

Email Marketing

A great way to build your brand and promote your new content is to build an email list. Each time you post to your blog or website, you can then send your list an email to inform them of your new content. You can also set an RSS feed up so that readers can automatically subscribe to your website or blog updates.

Content Distribution Networks

You may have run across content distribution networks in the past without even realizing it. When you see reading recommendations for other articles found at the bottom of articles, these are often paid placements that are run through content distribution networks such as Outbrain and Taboola. You can get your content set up for this type of distribution. These networks have a large reach and allow you to target your content through specifying the kinds of audiences that you are searching for.



Syndication

When an authoritative website that has a large audience syndicates your content it can be a highly effective way of expanding your audience. You will need to create very high quality content to attract these types of sites and motivate them into wanting to syndicate your content.



Paid Promotion

There are a number of different paid promotion methods you can use to promote your content, including using content distribution networks, paid social advertising, display ads and paid search. These are often referred to as pay-per-click (PPC) advertising. You will need to define your budget and determine which pieces of content you want to use paid promotions for.

Paid social media - Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter have very useful data on followers. Their advertising platforms allow you to customize who sees your ads in highly targeted ways. This can be very beneficial for advertisers who want to target specific audiences with their advertising.

Paid Search- Using advertising platforms such as Bing Ads and Google AdWords can be very effective at driving traffic to your content. The best use for paid search is as a direct response advertising method. So instead of just mentioning a brand or linking to content, your audience should be encouraged to take a specific action, like signing up for a newsletter or free trial.

Display or Banner Advertising - This form of paid advertising lets you place ads on various websites. This form of advertising is frequently used for retargeting, where a person who has visited your website will see ads for your site while they are surfing on the web.

Using some of the methods above can help to promote your content to get it front of as wide an audience as possible.



STEP 8

Measuring Your Content Marketing Results

Measuring Your Content Marketing Results

“The ROI on our content marketing work is among the highest of all of our marketing efforts.”

- Julie Fleischer, Kraft Foods Group

Analyzing your content marketing results and reporting them to management is key in continuously refining and improving the effectiveness of your content marketing efforts and proving their value to management.

Analytics Tools

There are many different analytics tools that are available to use. The following are some the main options for you to consider:

- ➔ **Google Analytics** - *This a free program that is commonly used by content marketers to measure their results.*
- ➔ **Piwik** - *This is another free alternative to using Google Analytics.*
- ➔ **Kissmetrics** - *This is an advanced platform that details critical behavioral metrics information.*

Establish Your Reporting Schedule

You need to determine when and how often marketing reports will be distributed and who will receive them. Some tools will even allow you to set them up so that these reports are sent automatically. In addition, some data may be needed more frequently than others. For example, you might want to set up a similar schedule to this one:

- ➔ **Weekly or Monthly** - *Specific metrics that connect to the performance of your content and creators.*
- ➔ **Quarterly** - *High-level summary of what progress has been made towards the company's long-term goals.*
- ➔ **Annually** - *Very high-level business goals.*

The more impact that a metric or goal has on your content marketing team's daily performance, the more frequently those metrics will need to be reported.



Recommendations For What To Measure To Assess The Performance Of Your Content Marketing

Whenever you are using a robust analytics program, there are numerous metrics available for you to review. However, when you have too many metrics to adhere to it can result in making it difficult to prioritize. It is usually best for content marketing teams to have 2 to 3 metrics that they measure, along with perhaps a few secondary metrics for sub-teams. Here are our recommendations of which metrics to focus on.

List Building

Blogs are a very valuable asset and critical component to any website. Given that they are highly effective in generating traffic, new blogs should be measured on the number of subscribers and traffic. As a blog continues to mature and traffic starts to grow at more predictable rates, the focus can shift to having lead generation goals.

Lead Generation

The content marketing team as a whole should focus on generating leads and website traffic. Leads are tied to revenue, while increased traffic means more visitors offer more conversion opportunities for making sales.

Gated Assets

A gated asset is a piece of content that someone must opt into to get. They're providing the name, email and/or other contact information you request in exchange for the content. Since this type of content is created to generate leads, you should measure the number of leads generated per offer.

Social Media

Reach is very critical to the ability of the social network to act as an effective content distribution channel. Therefore, you should measure how many fans or followers you have on each of your important social networks. It's also important to measure what content performs the best and use that as a benchmark to test other pieces against.

Reporting should be done regularly for all of these metrics. For most of these, monthly reporting will be the most appropriate so that you can see where your most important growth levers are. When you have regular reporting in place, it can also help you to identify any plateaus or negative trends early on in the process so that they can be addressed before they develop into serious problems. Most important of all, tracking how successful your content marketing efforts are will help you repeat those things that are working, cut out those that are ineffective, and demonstrate how successful your content marketing program is to expand it even further and to continuously improve the effectiveness of your content to resonate with your target audience and help your business meet its most important objectives.



Summary

“You need to create ridiculously good content that is useful, enjoyable, and inspired.”

- Ann Handley

You now have all of the knowledge you need to plan and execute your own effective content marketing program to grow your business and meet your most important objectives. All you need to do is follow the guide in a step-by-step fashion and before you know it you will have an effective content marketing strategy in place that can provide your business with numerous benefits for many years to come.

Keep in mind that this is a long-term process that will take time to set up and to start seeing results. However, the long-term benefits provided by content marketing are very substantial. Therefore, it is worth it to put in the effort to get your plan in place.

Another important aspect to remember is that your goal with content marketing should be to continuously improve your content marketing performance to reduce costs and increase leads and sales. You do this by testing various types of content and promotion strategies and by continuing to strive to produce the highest quality content possible.

Remember to focus on quality over quantity, although you do want to have both. The search engines favor high quality content that serves the needs of its readers. Producing a high amount of spam, thin or duplicate content is wasted effort. Do it right the first time by following our guide on how to create effective, high quality content.

Also focus your efforts on creating quality content on a regular basis. Consistency and producing new content regularly are important components of any successful content marketing program.

Make sure to use only qualified content creators who are capable of producing high quality content that addresses the needs, concerns and wants of your target audience. The content that is created should be designed to meet your company's most important objectives and be written in a style that is consistent with your brand and style.

Continue to try out new things, work to continuously improve the quality of your content and effectiveness of your promotions, and continue to monitor and measure the performance of your content over time. If you do all of these things your content marketing will be successful. Now it is time to take what you have learned and get your own content marketing plan launched and developed.



Your One-Stop Shop For All of Your Content Marketing Needs



Articles



Article Rewrites



Blog Posts



eBooks



Press Releases



Product Descriptions



Product Reviews



Proofreading

100% Proprietary Quality and Affordable Content

iNeedArticles.com