

CONTENT MARKETING

7 TIPS TO GET STARTED

brand
mentoringTM

Clarify. Unify. Simplify.

Overview

So you want to gain a foothold in content marketing? You have read all the statistics, 76% of nonprofit marketers and 88% of B2B marketers are doing content marketing. That is a lot of content marketing! This guide is designed to give you a brief introduction to content marketing and provide some practical tips.

IS CONTENT MARKETING NEW?

According to Joe Pulizzi, author and founder of the Content Marketing Institute, content marketing is not new, but it is enjoying a renaissance thanks to the internet. The first documented content marketing dates back to 1895 when John Deere first published his magazine called, "The Furrow". Deere's goal for the magazine was to educate farmers about new technologies and how to be more successful business owners. In other words, it was not about promoting agriculture products.

Fast forward 12 decades and we now see content marketing proliferating across the internet.

Simply defined, content marketing is a strategy that delivers the right content, to the right audience, through the right channels with the objective of **driving profitable customer action**; that last part is key.

However, content marketing is more than just publishing content. It's really a one, two punch. First, there is the content itself, which usually has an editorial feel to it. And then there is the marketing of content assets in order to attract your audience and encourage some action (ex. learn more, download, buy, share).

KEY PRINCIPLES OF CONTENT MARKETING



What Content Marketing IS

- Acting like a publisher
- Relevant, useful, high-quality content
- Persona-driven content
- Designed with a call-to-action
- Distributed and marketed



What Content Marketing IS NOT

- Acting like an advertiser
- Fluffy content
- One-size-fits-all content
- Hard selling throughout
- Just published

WHY IS CONTENT MARKETING SO POPULAR TODAY?

The rise in content marketing activities can be attributed to three things:

- Increased consumer skepticism of advertising and overt marketing
- Google rewarding providers of high-quality content with better search engine results
- Organizations are reporting that content marketing costs up to 62% less than traditional marketing
(Source: Demand Metric).

KEYS TO GETTING STARTED

Here are 7 practical tips to keep you focused when starting content marketing:

1. Start simply, with ONE audience
2. Write an editorial mission statement
3. Develop an editorial calendar
4. Brand your content
5. Catalog and track content assets
6. Treat content marketing as a team sport
7. Start small

TIP 01.

Start simply, with ONE audience initially

The first time I started a content marketing team, I borrowed our mantra from the software development world which was, "we can do anything, but we cannot do everything." This mindset empowered us to say "no" to certain ideas and set expectations appropriately.

Starting with one audience will keep you focused in terms of developing both a thoughtful editorial mission and highly relevant content. Expect your audience personas to be refined over time as you gain additional insight about who is actually consuming your content.

It is important to recognize that you have many audiences you could pursue with content marketing. However, you need to focus by starting with ONE audience persona; perhaps this will be your most important audience, perhaps not. The key is to pick one. Then build content around this persona and truly master your content marketing efforts with this first persona before diversifying into other personas. According to the Content Marketing Institute, most content marketers have 3-4 audience personas they address with content marketing.

What goes into an audience persona?

Your first persona can be as simple or complex as you want to make it. You should start very simply and include:

- Name
- Photo
- Basic demographic data
- Psychographic insights, like values and/or 'state of mind'
- Sample content topics that persona is interested in

Your persona should be based on data you have collected about your audience, not stuff you simply make up. You will create this persona based on a combination of people, but it will ultimately be a fictitious person. Having an audience person visible in your workspace will also remind everyone of who you are trying to reach and engage with your content marketing.



SAMPLE PERSONA

Veronica,

The Veteran Marketing Leader
Demographics: Age 42 | Gen X

Position:

Marketing VP at a mid-sized company

State of Mind:

Marketing has changed—but I am changing with it and it's humbling at times.

Content topics of interest:

- Content marketing team structure and roles
- Hiring content marketing ready professionals
- Demand generation vs. lead generation
- Marketing automation systems vs. a la carte technologies
- Tips for planning, executing and measuring content marketing activities
- Key metrics for measuring success
- Emerging social media platforms
- Real-world content marketing examples

Media preferences:

- Webinars
- eBooks
- Videos
- Infographics



TIP 02.

Write an editorial mission statement

Every publisher understands the importance of an editorial mission because it identifies who your content is for and how they will benefit from it. When content marketers get clear on their editorial mission, it keeps their content efforts focused.

If we look at the software development world, we can use their user story format to write our editorial mission statement, here is the format:

As a _____ (your one audience), I want to _____ (accomplish what?), so that I can _____ (enjoy what benefit?).

Here is an editorial mission statement for one of Brand Mentoring's audience personas:

As a senior marketing professional, I want to discover how to make my inhouse marketing team more effective at content marketing, so that we attract more of our ideal customers to our website.

Expect your editorial mission to go through an evolution as you gather additional insight about which content pieces resonate and why.

TIP 03.

Develop an editorial calendar

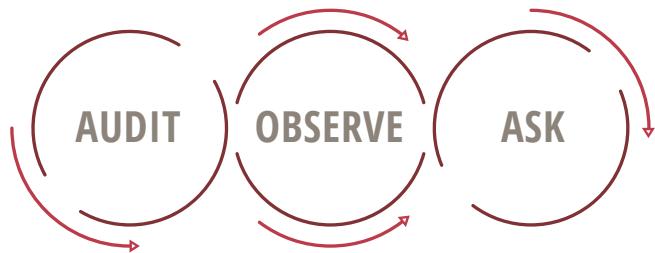
If you like to plan, you will enjoy editorial calendar planning. The purpose of an editorial calendar is to establish a series of relevant topics and commit to a regular publishing cadence.

Your first step is to **audit** the content you already have to see patterns in platforms and any themes in topics. Print out these assets (or representations of them) and hang them all on the wall so it is very visible to those in the planning session. Notice how your content has evolved, maybe you prefer to write and therefore have many blog posts but not very much in terms of infographics, video or podcasts. Or perhaps you notice that most of your content is shorter and designed to attract new followers, but there is not any longer-form content to address topics more deeply. Take note of the patterns.

Next, **observe** what your audience/followers are doing with your content. Are there certain assets that have

a high volume of visits and/or comments or shares? Within social media, are there certain questions or ideas that keep resurfacing? You can find many clues regarding which topics to create content around when you observe your audience's content behaviors.

Last, **ask** your audience/followers what topics they want to learn more about or have explained more deeply. You can do this through official surveys, using tools like SurveyMonkey, or start a discussion about this via social media or online chat forums where your members are congregating. The point is never to assume, ask your members what they are concerned or confused about. Asking for input will make your content a lot of more valuable.



When you are ready to get your ideas into an editorial calendar, see the sample template below.

SIMPLE EDITORIAL CALENDAR TEMPLATE

Audience Persona	Content Type	Who will lead production	Jan. Topic(s)	Feb. Topic(s)	March Topic(s)	April Topic(s)	May Topic(s)	June Topic(s)



TIP 04.

Brand your content assets

Once you have created content, it is important to brand it so that audiences recognize the source of that content. A few branding elements you can include:



YOUR
LOGO



LINK TO
YOUR WEBSITE



BRAND COLORS,
TYPEFACES AND
DESIGN ELEMENTS



"ABOUT US"
BOILERPLATE

TIP 05.

Track your content assets

Tracking content assets is critical. Think of this as a directory or catalog of all your content assets. In the beginning, steer clear of an elaborate system. A simple Excel worksheet will do; you can graduate to a fancier system later.

When you track your content, you gain:

1. Visibility— Content tracking creates visibility of your team's content work to both the team itself and other stakeholders, such as leadership. From the smaller assets, such as landing pages or blog posts, to bigger assets, such as e-newsletters, videos, and special reports, be sure to include them all in your worksheet.

2. Findability— Content tracking helps you quickly find content because links to each asset are centralized in

one place. As your content activities grow, so will the need for quickly tracking down specific content assets.

3. Important Reminders— Content tracking reminds us of some important operational tasks, like updating or removing certain content. It can also remind us to look at our web analytics to see how certain assets are performing, which can be very useful when you are putting together reports for management.

You might be thinking to yourself, "we do not need a directory of content, it is all saved in our website content management system." However, the problem with that logic is two-fold:

- Only certain people have access to your content management system, so that diminishes the visibility of that content and
- Some content will end up "living" in places other than on your website, like in a marketing automation system or file sharing area, which makes tracking more complex.

Treat content tracking as an important asset management step and make your content tracking tool available to everyone, after all, it will be a living document. You can store this document alongside your editorial calendar in a separate worksheet.

SIMPLE CONTENT ASSET TRACKING TEMPLATE

Our Content Assets									
Asset #	Doc Name	Format Type	Intended Audience	Marketing Goal	Distribution Platform	Date Created, Updated or Removed	URL	Status	
Can be a publication number or use sequential numbering	Title of the piece	Examples: Landing page, article, success story, special report, video, infographic	Refer to one of your audience personas	Examples: Build awareness, lead generation, engagement, purchase, renewal, tell others/ evangelism	Examples: Our website www..., blog, e-newsletter, LinkedIn, FaceBook, Twitter, YouTube	Day, Month, Year	Where this asset can be found online	Examples: Current, Needs Updating, Expired	
1.									
2.									

TIP 06.

Treat Content Marketing as a team sport

No one person can successfully implement content marketing; it takes a team. The roles on a content team align with the three stages of content marketing.

CREATING

Some people on the team will be responsible for actually creating content, such as the content architect, subject matter expert, managing editor, writer, designer, and producer.

Content architects are like the CEO of a content team because they provide the vision and direction for the team. **Subject matter experts** are responsible for being the authority on a topic and making sure the facts and spirit of a content piece are correct. A **managing editor** can serve as both an editor and a project manager who coordinates the **writer(s), designer(s) and producer(s)**. Within content marketing, producers usually focus on video and podcast production.

DISTRIBUTING AND MARKETING

Your content team also needs people who can publish and market content assets, think of them as distributors. If your e-newsletter has healthy open rates, get the person who builds that e-newsletter to be part of your team.

If your organization has a healthy social media presence, get **your social media pro** involved on the team.

And, of course, you will need someone who knows how to post and edit content within your website's content management platform, make this person part of the content team.

ANALYZING PERFORMANCE

Finally, the last role involves measuring how each content asset is performing. This role should be filled by a content analyst (i.e. this person knows where to find the data and how to synthesize it). This role should produce actionable insight, not just a lot of spreadsheets, charts, and graphs.

Your content analyst will look at a variety of metrics including:

- email metrics, such as open and click-through rates,
- web analytics, such as unique visitors and time spent with an asset and
- social media engagement metrics, such as commenting and sharing.

As your team evolves, you may find yourself re-organizing and expanding; this is to be expected. Also, team members typically like to play more than one role, let them as this creates "bench strength" and creates professional development opportunities. For more insight about structuring teams, check out [Ann Handley's content marketing organizational chart](#).

TIP 07.

Start small

Start small, you can always scale later. Your first content marketing campaign should be something manageable, such as a blog post or infographic, where you can learn the necessary workflow and **contain your mistakes**. When you start small, it is easier to learn from what you are doing and adjust from there.



ABOUT CLAIRE EBY, MBA

After many years as a marketing director, CMO and advertising agency executive, Claire Eby, MBA founded Brand Mentoring—a marketing consultancy that respects clients' intelligence and time.

Claire has worked inside five advertising/digital agencies, collaborating with top creative talent on B2C and B2B marketing challenges. These experiences shape her methods for working with clients today. Claire wears multiple hats including marketing strategist, content architect, big idea person and writer. Claire uses her extensive facilitator experience to help clients discover their brand truths, marketing priorities, and the path forward. Her goal is to bring about optimal outcomes for each client. Learn more at www.brandmentoring.com.

