

Marketing Insider Group

What Does a Content Marketing Plan Look Like?



8 Steps to Help You Create
Content Marketing that Works

Here are 8 steps to help you create content marketing that works.

Step #1: Get Buy-in For Your Plan

Before you can even start creating content, you need to get people within your company to understand and support your vision, especially the ones who will be providing you the resources, budget, and customer insights critical to the success of your content marketing plan.

To make this happen, [HubSpot](#) recommends doing these 3 things when pitching your plan to get buy-in:

1. ***Talk about the challenges your plan will solve.*** Summarize in a few bullet points or charts the key challenges your content marketing plan will solve for your business.
2. ***Show how your plan contributes to the company's bottom line metric.*** Cost and revenue are extremely important for the senior management team. Talk about how your content marketing plan will help with either of those two metrics.
3. ***Give a high-level walk-through on your strategy.*** Discuss how your content marketing plan will help solve those key challenges you mentioned, and make an impact on those business metrics. It should be evident to your stakeholders that you've done your research and have a very well-thought-out plan to turn your vision into reality.

Step #2: Determine Your Objectives

What goals do you want to accomplish with your content marketing? Is it brand awareness, engagement, lead generation, sales, or customer retention/loyalty? The content you'll be creating should always support at least one of your objectives. If you find a piece of content you've planned for does not relate to any of your objectives, it's very likely that this content is not a top priority for you.

Step #3: Define Your Audience & Content Gaps

Be as specific as possible about who you are trying to reach with your content marketing. What does your audience look like? Where are they most active online, and what topics are they talking about or searching for? Develop buyer personas and align content around these audience segments.

Once you have your buyer personas, conduct a content audit and look at where the content gaps are in the buying cycle for each audience. Does your buyer persona have all the information they need at each stage of the buying cycle? If not, these are the topics you want to produce content for.

Step #4: Decide On Your Content Types

According to [CMI](#), blogs, newsletters and magazines (print and digital), and podcasts are the types of content most readers expect on a regular cadence. Consistency is helpful but not required for content types like videos, whitepapers, eBooks, online presentations, and webinars. Regular cadence is even less critical for content types like branded content tools, research reports, books, apps, and games.

When creating your content, always think about how you can scale your content by repurposing it into different formats and channels. For example, you can repackage a series of blog posts you published into an eBook.

While your top priority should be producing content your audience wants, you should also keep SEO in mind and develop content that search engines love. Here is a [beginner's guide to SEO](#) if you need a refresher or are not familiar with how SEO works.

Regardless of the content types you decide on, focus on creating content that's [RITE](#) – Relevant, Interesting, Timely, and Entertaining. This will ensure your content can [continue to generate traffic and leads](#) for you even when it becomes old content over time.

Step #5: Commit To A Publishing Schedule

Consistency is key to building and maintaining an audience. Whether it's once a week or 2-3 times a week, stick to your publishing schedule. You may also want to create an editorial checklist to help you quickly review each piece of content for quality issues before it goes live, to ensure you are always publishing high quality content.

Step #6: Build A Promotion Plan

Distribution is just as important as content creation. If your content does not reach the audience it was intended for, it won't matter how good your content is. You want a social media content plan that supports custom approaches for each channel you're using to promote your content.

Here are some great questions from [CMI](#) that your promotion plan should try to answer:

1. What is the goal for this channel?
2. What is the desired outcome or action?
3. What are the types of content your buyer personas want to get via this channel?
4. What is the right tone or voice for this channel?
5. What is the ideal cadence or frequency?

When answering these questions, always go back to your objectives and make decisions based on how your promotion plan best supports your goals.

Step #7: Develop A Plan To Communicate Your KPIs

To get continual support and resources for your content marketing efforts, you need to regularly communicate your progress to your key stakeholders. These KPIs should be the metrics you and your senior management team have selected as the most critical KPIs to measure.

Here is the [dashboard template](#) (click to download) I created to help you:

Step #8: Track & Improve Your Content Marketing Strategy

Your KPIs tell you *how* your content marketing plan is doing, but it doesn't tell you *what* is working well or not. You want to look deeper at the performance of each content piece to better understand what can be adjusted and improved on.

CMI recommends this five-step approach to track the effectiveness of your content marketing plan:

1. Review all content by type/platform
2. Decide on the data you want to collect. For example, audience, format, topics, etc.
3. Identify the KPIs that align with each content piece
4. Calculate a baseline for each metric you are tracking to better understand which content piece is performing above or below average
5. Update your tracking plan regularly and as needed

I hope you've found these **8 steps to a successful content marketing plan** helpful! If you'd like more information, contact me on one of my social channels below.

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