The Content Engine Checklist

This checklist provides you with a high-level overview of priorities when looking to implement a scalable, predictable Content Engine that drives visitors to your blog to then turn them into leads in your lead database.

Building your Content Engine

A Content Engine can be a valuable revenue driver for your business. This checklist will help you get started building one.

- ☐ Set up a blog and content management system
    - ☐ Use your primary domain (not a subdomain)
    - ☐ Next.js and Netlify recommended (but also check options on https://jamstack.org/
    - ☐ Where applicable, install plugins to optimize images, improve performance
- ☐ Set up analytics
    - ☐ Key metric: unique visitors, search impressions, AI citations
    - ☐ Secondary metrics: time on page, traffic source, location
- ☐ Collect leads in your database
- ☐ Set up email marketing platform (Mailchimp, ConvertKit or Hubspot recommended)
    - ☐ Set up newsletter signup form and welcome email
    - ☐ Offer gated asset in exchange for email and first name information (if possible)
- ☐ Set up retargeting (even if you don't run ads right away)

- [ ] Install tracking scripts
- [ ] Create relevant custom audiences where applicable
- [ ] Create a [content calendar](#)
  - [ ] Plan to publish at least twice per month, ideally weekly
  - [ ] Build a backlog of content
  - [ ] Work 1-3 months ahead

Starting and Running your Content Engine

- [ ] Plan to create "evergreen" content (2+ posts per month)
  - [ ] Topics based on keyword research
  - [ ] Often easier to outsource to an agency/freelancers
  - [ ] Track unique visits over time, watch for steady rise
  - [ ] Build clusters with internal backlinks
- [ ] Plan to create "spiky" content (1+ post per month)
  - [ ] Topics based on understanding your audience, what might go viral (timing is important)
  - [ ] Help fill up the retargeting audiences
  - [ ] Usually written internally or by good ghostwriters
  - [ ] Track unique visits after sharing, watch for "spikes"
  - [ ] Track backlinks, should see uptick
- [ ] Publish and promote

- [ ] Follow the cadence set by your content calendar: a content calendar shows your team an overview to orchestrate publishing and distribution

- [ ] Promote each piece of content on social media, newsletters, direct outreach, etc.

- [ ] Set up retargeting ads to expose previous readers to your brand and tagline

- [ ] Set a 90-day or shorter window

- [ ] Customize your message to best fit the different audiences you set up

- [ ] If budget and a gated asset is available, additionally run an ad that links directly to the gated asset

About the Author

Manuel Weiss is co-owner of Draft.dev, a Content Creation Agency for Technical Companies. We help Marketing and Developer Relations teams in tech businesses **drive awareness, capture leads, and build trust**.
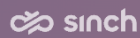
In the last 15 years, Manuel has helped small and large businesses build lead engines based on content marketing that generated millions of unique visitors per year, driving thousands of marketing-qualified leads every month, helping generate millions of dollars and 1,000s of customers.

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