

How To Create a Content Marketing Strategy

What Is Content Marketing Strategy?

Content marketing strategy is creating, publishing, and distributing valuable content to attract and engage a target audience. It aims to build brand awareness, generate leads, and drive customer action.

Why Is a Content Marketing Strategy Important?

- **Build Trust with Your Audience:** Regularly providing valuable content establishes your brand as an industry thought leader.
- **Improve Brand Awareness:** Quality content can increase traffic to your site, exposing your brand to a wider audience.
- **Boost SEO Efforts:** Search engines favor businesses that are consistently publishing high-quality content, as both are key rankings factors in SEO.
- **Generate Leads:** Content marketing helps generate leads by providing potential customers the information they need to make informed decisions.

How To Create a Content Marketing Strategy

Step 01: Set Your Mission and Your Goals

Step 02: Establish Your KPIs

Step 03: Know Your Audience

Step 04: Assess Your Current Position

Step 05: Figure Out the Best Content Channels

Step 06: Decide on Content Types

Step 07: Identify and Allocate Resources

Step 08: Create a Content Calendar

Step 09: Create Content

Step 10: Distribute and Market

Step 11: Measure Results

I will walk you through 11 simple steps to developing and executing a content marketing plan to help you grow your business without wasting time and money.

Step 01: Set Your Mission and Your Goals

A good starting point for your content strategy plan is to set out a content marketing mission statement. This is a brief statement that makes it easier to focus on what's important – and what's not – in creating your content so your content marketing strategy stays on track.

A content marketing mission statement outline:

- Your target audience.
- The content you'll use to reach them.
- The benefit they'll get.

To create a mission for your own business, try this formula:

"We provide [target audience] with [type of content] to help them [business goals]."

While the mission statement covers what your audience will get from your content marketing strategy, you also need to think about what your business will get from it. That's where your business goals come in.

Typical goals include:

- ***Improving revenue*** as a result of your content marketing strategy.
- ***Making more sales*** and getting more high-quality leads, it will help you meet your revenue goals.
- ***Getting more traffic*** to your site, as the more traffic there is, the greater the possibilities for meeting your other goals.
- Improving the perception of your business, so you gain ***influence and authority*** and are seen as a thought leader.
- ***SEO success***, which leads to more organic traffic.
- ***Reduced marketing costs***, as your content becomes more effective.
- ***Social media engagement***, which can help with both website traffic and authority.

Once you know your goals, it's time to move to the next step.

Step 02: Establish your KPIs

The best way to achieve goals is to make them specific and measurable. That means setting key performance indicators (KPIs) for your content marketing strategy.

The KPIs will help you know when you have achieved your goals by providing milestones you can check off. They'll include what you plan to achieve in terms of revenue, sales, traffic, SEO, traffic and different aspects of digital marketing like email marketing and social media metrics.

Typically, these will have specific numbers attached to them. For example, you might want to:

- ***Hit a certain revenue target*** within the month, quarter, or year.
- ***Get more signups*** for your lead magnet as a sign that you're getting more high-quality leads.
- Get a certain number of ***new email subscribers***.
- See an ***increase in site traffic*** and in engagement with your onsite content.
- ***Improve the search ranking*** of some of your key pages to help boost traffic.
- Get a certain number of ***mentions, shares, and comments*** for your pillar content.
- Be invited to participate in certain ***key industry events***.

You'll also want to pay attention to marketing expenditure, tracking your spend on different campaigns, and keeping an eye on the cost of acquiring leads and making sales.

Step 03: Know Your Audience

As mentioned earlier, for a successful content marketing strategy, you'll need to be clear about who your audience is so you can create the right content to reach them. There are three actions you need to take.

Collect Demographic Data

The first step is to collect demographics on your visitors, email subscribers, and social media followers.

Web analytics, social media analytics, and email subscriber analytics will give you the data you need on your audience's:

- Age
- Gender
- Education
- Income

Get Customer Feedback

To learn even more about your target audience, try collecting feedback from your current customers. That'll give you insights into:

- How they feel about the content you're currently producing.
- What their most urgent needs are.
- How you can address their problems with your content

Getting the right customer feedback can help you:

- Understand your readers' and subscribers' priorities.
- Decide on the best places to reach your customers.
- Flesh out your buyer personas, which we'll talk about next

Create Buyer Personas

When you have demographic data and customer feedback, you can create or flesh out buyer personas. Buyer personas, also known as customer avatars, describe your ideal readers and customers so that you can target content better.

The best customer avatars include information on your customers' pain points, challenges, sources of information, and behavioral motivators.

When you know all this, you'll have a better understanding of:

- The kind of content your audience will respond to
- How it will help them
- What will make them care about it

Step 04: Assess Your Current Position

Many businesses already have content out there. This will include content that's on your blog, as well as social media content, podcasts, video content, white papers and so on.

That's why the next step is to figure out whether that content is helping you to meet your goals.

To do that, you'll need to carry out a content audit. That means:

- Logging all the pieces of content, such as blog posts, guest posts, and so on
- Assessing their usefulness or success
- Identifying the gaps

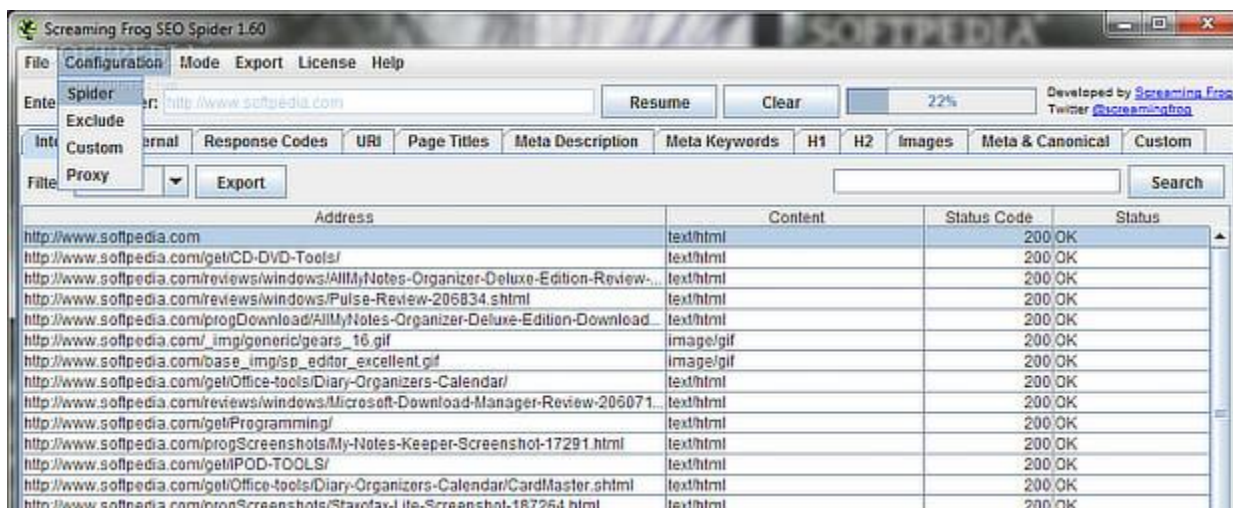
You may also want to look at how your content compares with that of your competitors, and see how any new content will fit in the market.

Let's look at one example of how this would work for your content marketing strategy.

How to Log Your Content

If you want to log all your site or blog content, **Screaming Frog** is an excellent starting point. It's a URL crawler that will:

- List URLs
- Analyze page titles and descriptions
- Find duplicate pages
- Create sitemaps.



The free version crawls up to 500 URLs. SEER Interactive has an excellent, in-depth guide to Screaming Frog. As a bonus, you can also use this tool for competitive research, carrying out the same kind of analysis on your competitors' content.

You can also log your content with the Content Audit tool from SEMrush. To do this, set up a project and select the section of your site you want to audit, such as your blog. Once you select the URLs, press the *Start Content Audit* button.

Content Analyzer

Content Audit

Post Tracking

Compare

Audit your sharonhh.com content!



Select sections of your website you'd like to audit. We're getting your website sections from your sitemap.



Identify pages that are not doing well and take action: update their content, or merge or remove them.



Connect your Google Analytics account to get more accurate data, so you can see which pages are the most engaging.

Select domain sections you want to audit

We've built your domain structure based on your sitemap.xml file.

[Change](#)

Please note that we'll only audit 20,000 URLs.

- ☐ /about (3 URLs)
- ☐ /blogger-for-hire (2 URLs)
- ☐ /author (1 URLs)
- ☒ URLs without section (186 URLs)

Start Content Audit

URLs selected: 186/20,000

You'll get a complete analysis of your content, including:

- Content titles and descriptions
- Content length
- Backlinks
- Social shares

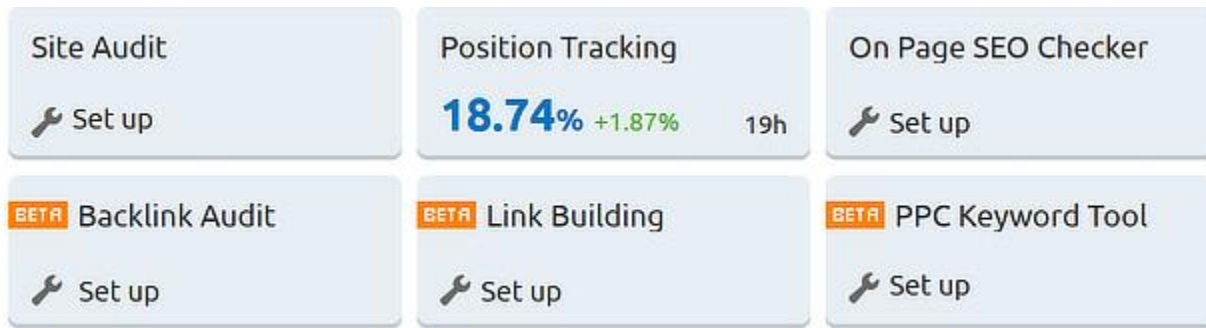
Export the data to create a simple spreadsheet that contains all the URLs.

See How Your Content is Working

Next, it's time to assess the usefulness of the content. You'll be looking for metrics like:

- Whether there are a lot of inbound links to the content.
- What the search engine ranking is for keywords associated with that piece of content.
- If the content is widely shared

You'll get some of this information from the SEMRush report above but can also find more by using other SEMRush tools, such as the site audit and position tracking tools.



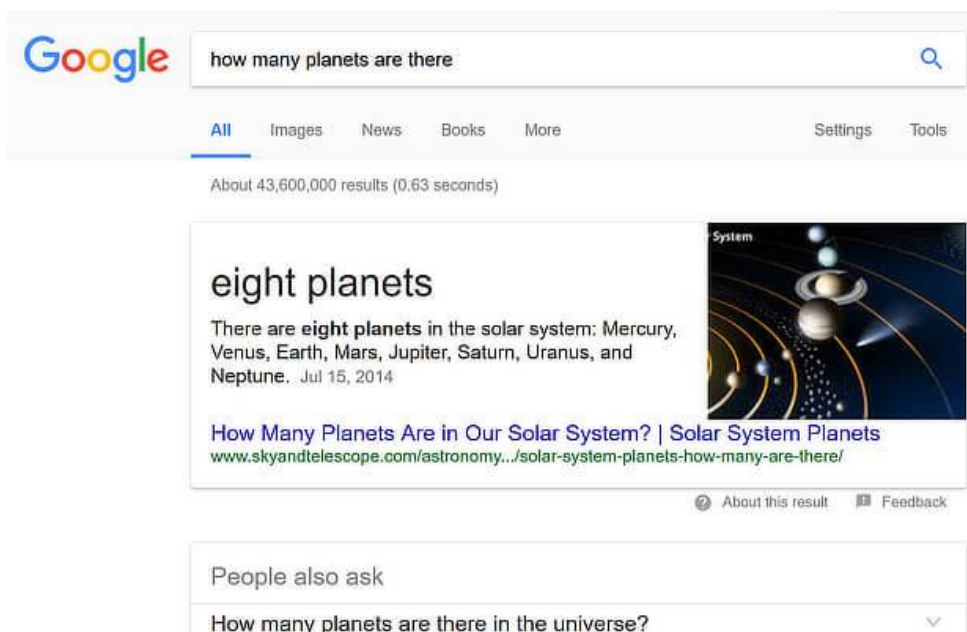
This'll tell you:

- Which pieces of content are so effective that you don't need to change them?
- Which ones need some improvement or updating to meet your goals?
- Which ones need to be removed or replaced?

Identify Content Gaps

Finally, work out where there are gaps you can exploit. These might include:

- Keywords related to your niche that you're not targeting with your content
 - Questions your target audience is asking that you're not answering
 - Content that's starting to rank well but could be improved, say to target Google's answer boxes.
- These are the boxes that appear above search results and provide the answers to a specific question.



You can use Ahrefs to carry out a content gap analysis.

To do this, go to Organic search » Content gap. Add the domains for your main competitors under Show keywords that the following rank for. Add your own domain under but the following target does not rank for. Press Show keywords.

Content Gap

Show keywords that **any of the below targets** ▼ rank for

.domain/ ▼	menwithpens.com
.domain/ ▼	allfreelancewriting.com
.domain/ ▼	getpaidtowriteonline.com

☒ At least one of the targets should rank in top 10

But the following target doesn't rank for

.domain/ ▼	www.sharonhh.com
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Show keywords

You'll see a list of competitor keywords you can target with your own new content.

Volume ▼ KD ▼ CPC ▼ Words ▼							
US GB AD AE More ▼ 610 keywords							
Keyword	Volume ↓ ⁱ	KD ⁱ	CPC ⁱ	Highest position			
					menwithpens.	allfreelancewr	getpaidtowrite
yay definition	3,300	4	0.01	—		6 ▼	—
novel outline template	2,800	17	0.20	—		4 ▼	—
yea or yeah	2,800	6	—	—		8 ▼	—

You can carry out a similar analysis in SEMRush.

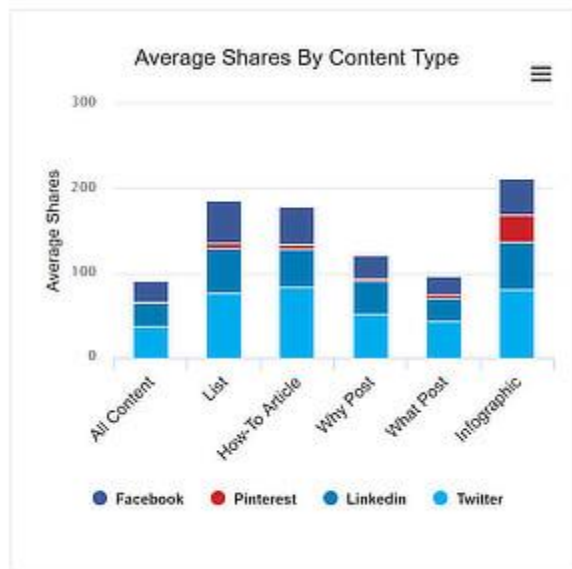
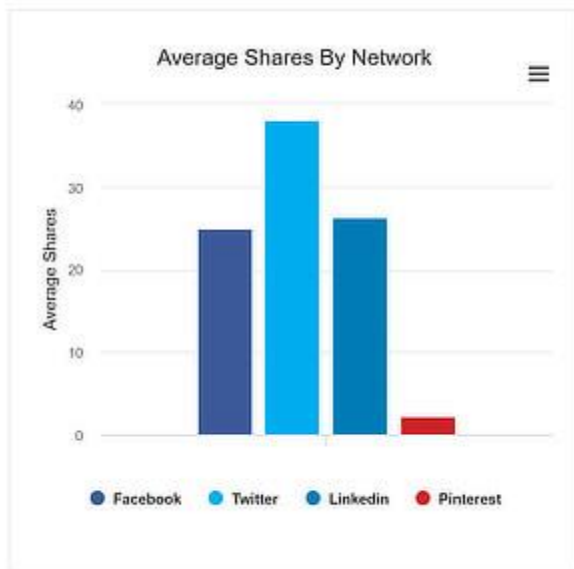
Step 05: Figure Out the Best Content Channels

As you work through this process, you'll start to get a sense of where your audience is hanging out, and where you already have a successful online presence. It's best to focus on what's working and expand from there, rather than try to do everything at once.

But to be absolutely sure, you'll need to take another look web analytics. When you're in Google Analytics, go to Acquisition » Social » Overview to see the main social networks where your content is being shared. For example, in our screenshot, most of the social activity takes place on YouTube.

You can also use Buzzsumo to find similar data. Go to their Content Analysis tool and type your domain name into the onscreen search box. Press enter and you'll see charts showing:

- Shares by network
- Shares by content type
- Shares by content length
- Top content in the past year



You can also refine your search terms for more detail.

With this information, you can easily decide which networks to target to get social media engagement and shares for your content.

Step 06: Decide on Content Types

Next, think about the types of content you need to create. There are some content formats that every content marketing strategy will include.

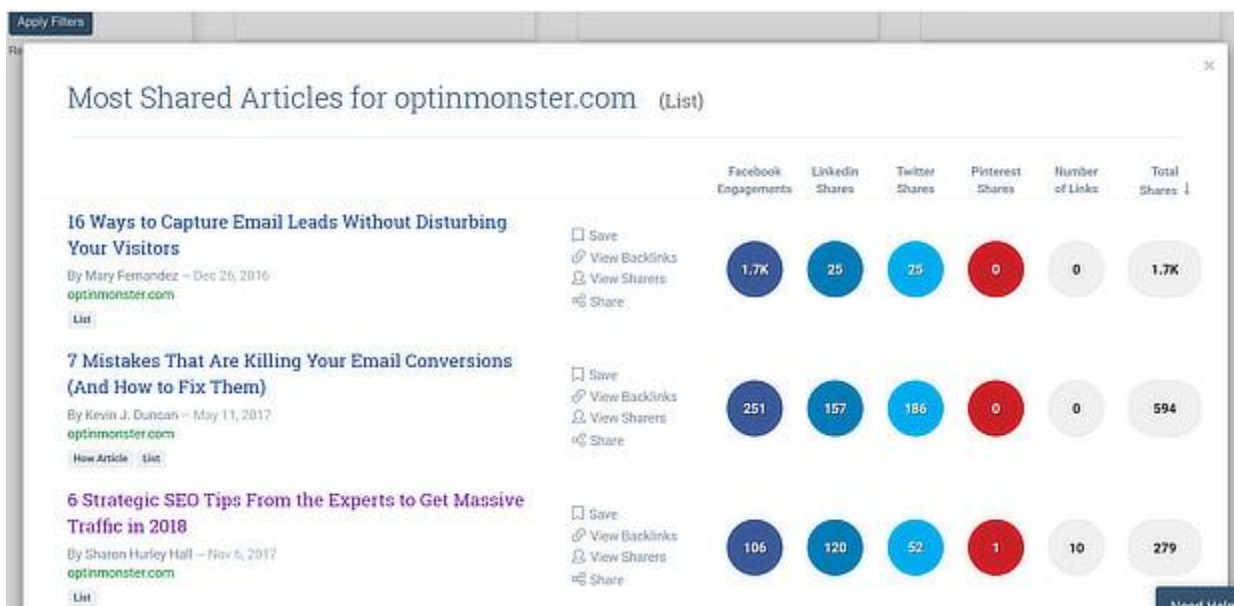
Most successful content marketing strategies rely on having a central core of content published on your own site (or home base) which can then be repurposed and shared on other sites (outposts).

So, blog posts are an essential part of your content marketing mix, and they still deliver strong results. Ideally, your blog posts will be actionable, valuable, and shareable, and may include a range of article types.

How to Map Content to Social with Buzzsumo

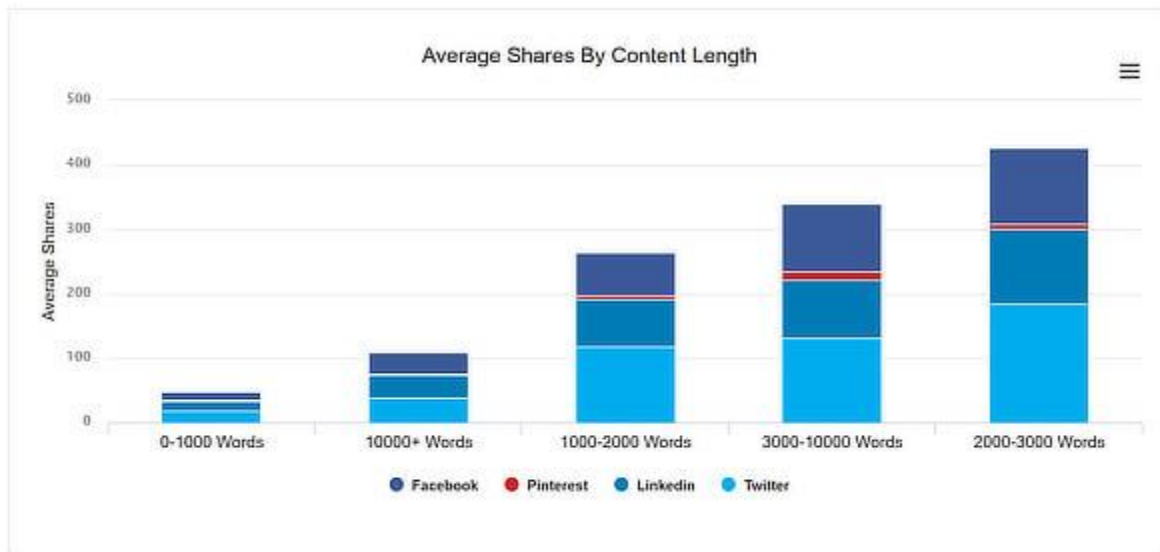
You can use the Buzzsumo tool mentioned above to map the types of blog posts you want to create to the potential for social shares to boost engagement and reach.

For example, OptinMonster readers really like how-to articles and lists. Click on a content type and a network to see a list of your most shared articles for that metric.



Of course, creating a successful content marketing strategy isn't just about navel-gazing to get stats on your own site. It's also about seeing what other successful content is out there that you can use for inspiration. Buzzsumo can help with this, too.

Using the same tool, type your topic into the search box. You'll see sharing statistics from across the web. For example, one chart suggests that long-form content on content marketing is very popular:



There are also data on the most shared domains publishing on this topic, and the top pieces of content shared relating to it. Other Buzzsumo features allow you to track backlinks, trending content, and questions people ask, and the standard Buzzsumo search includes sharing data for videos.

Other Content Types

What other content should be included in your content strategy plan? As our own research shows, video marketing should be an essential part of any marketing, as it's proven to engage your visitors to keep them on-site longer, improve lead generation, and reduce abandonment.

You'll also want to include other types of visual content to improve engagement.

Consider creating infographics with tools like **Piktochart** and **Canva**, and using Canva and similar tools to create customized graphics and memes for social sharing, as Grammarly does.



Other content types to include for improve lead generation include lead magnets like webinars, e-books, checklists, worksheets, and more.

It's also worth thinking about podcasting as a content delivery mechanism.

The next step is to figure out what you need to create that content.

Step 07: Identify and Allocate Resources

Now that you know what type of content you're planning to create, who it's for, and where you're planning to share it, it's important to make sure you have everything you need to deliver on your content marketing strategy. That involves answering questions like:

- Who's in charge of producing and maintaining content?
- What human, physical or digital tools and resources do you need to create the content?
- What will your publishing workflow look like, including content scheduling?

Who's in Charge of Content Production?

This question is about allocating roles. You'll need to think about who's in overall charge, as well as who is responsible for delivering individual content items.

This will depend on the size of your company and marketing team, and on whether you're doing everything in-house, or farming out content production.

One example of how this might look would be:

- The CEO or chief marketing officer has overall final approval over content and content strategy.
- Your content marketing manager will be in charge of delivering on your content marketing strategy on a day-to-day basis and will work with the content team.
- Individuals will create content, according to their expertise.

What Tools and Resources Do You Need?

Next, figure out how you're actually going to create the content. Your content producers might include:

- In-house content creators
- Specialists in video creation, podcasting, or graphic design
- Freelancers

One way to find great freelancers quickly is to return to your Buzzsumo search results, and see who's written the top content. There's no harm in approaching them to see if they're willing to contribute to your content team. You can also find freelancers who produce great content through networks like Contently, NDash, ClearVoice and similar.

You'll also need equipment for podcasting and creating professional videos, and you'll need to arrange for hosting on sites like YouTube, Vimeo, Spreaker, and Blubrry.

Content Workflow

Next, work out what your content production process is going to be. For example, for a typical blog post, you might have to:

- Create an outline and have it approved
- Write the post
- Create accompanying images
- Send the post to the editor
- Make any changes
- Upload
- Publish

There's just one more thing to do before you get started on researching and creating pieces of content: creating a content calendar, so you know what'll be published when. We'll look at that in the next step.

Step 08: Create a Content Calendar

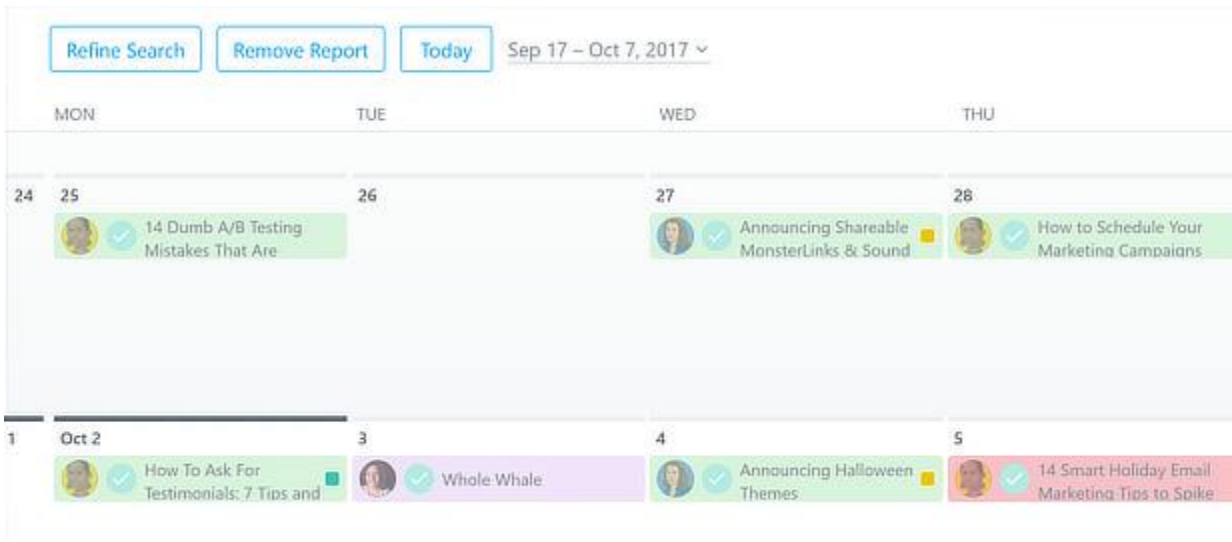
As part of your content strategy, you'll need to know exactly when you want to publish your content on each of the platforms you want to use.

Lack of planning is a key content marketing mistake, so it's essential to use a content calendar to get all your content scheduled. There are several ways to do this.

For example, you can use Google Calendar and simply put the due dates for each piece of content there. That works pretty well, especially if you're not publishing a lot of content.

That's the simplest approach, but if you're publishing a lot of content, and have to manage a content team and the production workflow you've decided on, then you'll likely want some more features.

Options for managing this include productivity and task management tools like Asana (shown below), or a purpose-built editorial calendar tool like CoSchedule. Both of these will allow you to schedule different parts of the content creation process.

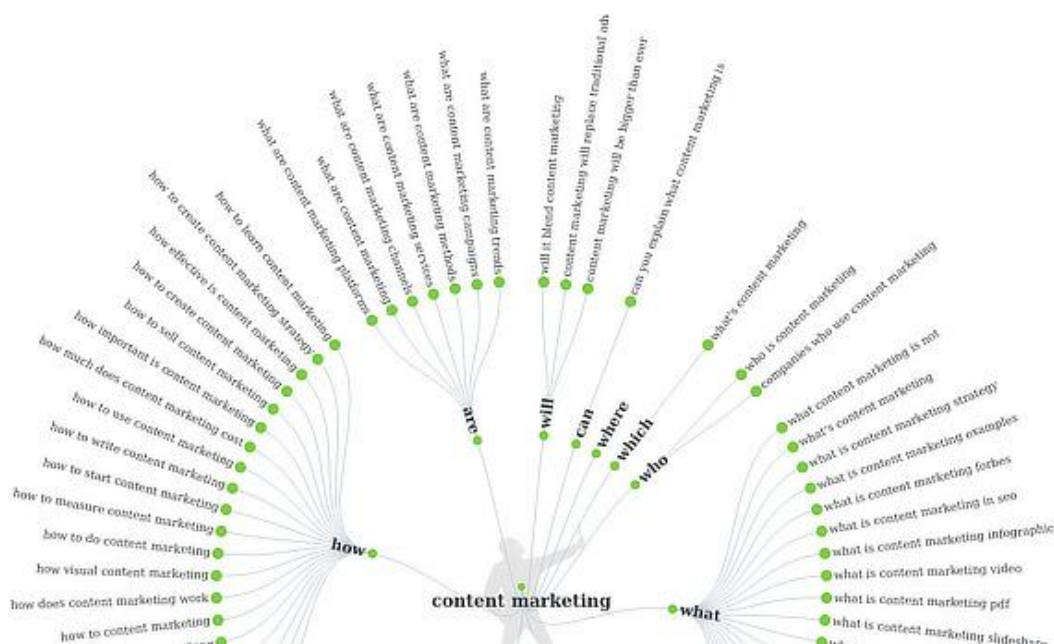


One way to find content to add to the calendar is to do some initial research to find the topics your audience will respond to.

Find the Questions Your Customers Ask

We mentioned earlier the need to create content around what your audience wants. One way to find that out is to use Buzzsumo's Question Analyzer or Answer the Public.

Type a topic into the Answer the Public search box, and you'll get a list of questions people have actually searched for on Google.



Pick a question that seems relevant to your audience, decide on the type of content, such as a blog post, and add a title to your calendar. Repeat the process till you have planned out content for the next few months.

Step 09: Create Content

As you've seen, there's a lot of prep work in your content marketing strategy before you actually create a piece of content. But now it's time to do just that. We're going to use a blog post as our example, but these tips will work for almost any type of content creation.

With the research you've already done, you'll have an idea of what type of blog post to create. For example, we know that list posts and how-to's are popular with our readers.

Now it's time to pick a title from the content calendar and start working on it.

Research your Content

When you're ready to write, you'll need to find out:

- What's already out there
- How your new content can add value for your audience

This means doing a Google search, checking out the top content for your topic, and seeing how you can improve on it. That's called the skyscraper technique.

Original research also does well, so consider this as an option if you're collecting the right kind of data.

Include keyword research to identify the key terms to use for better SEO and improved search ranking.

Create the Content

Finally, start writing or creating your content. At this point, you'll have to think about how to reflect your brand's personality in the content you write.

You may want to be super-professional, very casual, or something in between. And you'll have to manage the balance between showing your expertise and not patronizing your audience.

Step 10. Distribute and Market

The next key part of your content strategy is distribution and marketing. That's because you won't get the results you want unless these are handled correctly. For example, you will likely:

- Set a schedule for sharing your content on social media platforms, both immediately, and through a drip campaign via a tool like Missinglettr.
- Use email marketing to distribute your content to subscribers.
- Notify any influencers mentioned in your content to spread the word even wider.

Step 11. Measure Results

Finally, it's time to assess the success of your content marketing strategy. To do this, you'll return to those KPIs you set at the start of the content strategy plan, and see what's changed and whether you're hitting your targets.

To do this, you can:

- Check Google Analytics as described above to see how your content is performing
- Measure social sharing activity via Buzzsumo and other social analytics tools

Other tools for tracking content marketing success include Google Alerts and Mention. Both of these will let you see if your content is being mentioned and shared, helping you hit those KPIs for awareness and engagement.

Tools like SEMrush will help you to assess KPIs for the search rank of your content. And you'll be able to track email signups through the analytics in your email marketing software.

By monitoring your progress, you'll be able to tweak your content marketing strategy at regular intervals, so it's always up to date.

Benefits of Paid Marketing

What is Paid Advertising?

Paid advertising, as the wording implies, is online advertising that one pays for. Examples of paid ads include Pay-Per-Click (PPC), Programmatic advertising, Google Ads, Google Display, Facebook Ads, Twitter Ads, LinkedIn Ads, Google and Facebook remarketing, and more.

Paid ads are powerful because a marketer can segment their audiences and present very specific ads to potential customers.

There are typically two billing methods the ad platforms utilize:

- **PPC (Pay Per Click):** The advertiser is billed each time the ad is clicked.
- **CPM (Cost Per 1K Views):** The advertiser is billed per one thousand ad impressions on a web page.

Types of Paid Ads

- Search Ads
- Social Media Ads
- Display/Banner Ads
- YouTube / Video Ads
- Instagram Ads

The 7 Benefits of Paid Advertising

1. Organic reach on social media is down. Paid is the only way to deliver results.

"On social media, organic reach is the number of people who have seen your content through unpaid distribution, i.e., without you putting a budget towards reaching a specific audience."

Organic social media content has been on the decline for a few years now. Social media is now a pay-to-play model for brands/companies.

According to Studio93, the average reach of an organic post on a Facebook Page is a super low 2.2%!

So only one in every 19 fans sees your non-promoted content.

The answer is to boost your distribution by increasing your paid social media ad budget.

You're guaranteed to reach a defined audience and can utilize your content to elevate your brand with specific targeting and get more qualified leads.

But don't underestimate the importance of organic marketing. Behind any good paid ad campaign is a consistent and creative organic strategy.

2. Ads are very affordable and measurable

When you're running paid advertising campaigns, you're able to reach a very targeted audience. Costs related to these ads are dependent on the objective or type of ad you are running.

For example, if your objective is website traffic or leads, then you will opt for a Pay Per Click (PPC), or if your aim is brand awareness, you will opt for a CPM (Cost Per 1,000 Impressions).

Ads can be created in mere minutes, and there are many tools that help you to create the necessary images at very little or no cost at all.

For example, Google Responsive Ads automatically adjust in size, appearance and format to fit any available ad space on the Google Display Network. Google then applies machine learning to serve only the ads that perform the best for you.

You can also keep track of ad spend and set daily and total budgets for campaigns on all paid ad platforms from Google to Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn advertising so that you never overspend.

3. Specific and granular targeting is available

Paid ad targeting can be very specific and allows you to reach relevant visitors who are interested in your brand, fit the demographics of your sales personas and reside in the exact geographic location you want to target.

Let's say you own a hair salon. You can advertise to potential clients within a 2-3 km radius of your store. ***You can't do this with organic SEO or social.***

Take a look at your analytics across all your digital platforms and analyze your audience to identify common factors such as keywords, geographic location, demographics, job titles, interests and topics.

You can use all of this information to refine your paid ad targeting and pull in more qualified leads and customers.

4. Test and gain valuable audience insights

Across all the paid advertising platforms, you can set up multiple versions of an advertisement and optimize based on audience interaction.

This data collected will help you refine your messaging and help you build a holistic understanding of your audience and their interests.

The iteration process for paid ads is far quicker than the process of organic social and organic search optimization.

In addition, the data the paid ad platforms give you is as deep as you want to go. You'll have current and historical data on hand. Don't miss the opportunity to **improve your reach and conversion rate by interrogating the data.**

5. Broadcast your message across multiple, but select channels

There is a plethora of channels to broadcast your brand and unique messaging across. You can make use of display banners on the Google Display Network or simply have text ads (search ads) appear above people's searches on Google.

Today, all social media platforms have paid advertising channels available. They include:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- Reddit
- TikTok

There are so many options for you to choose from and a variety of different platforms to suit your paid advertising requirements. However, don't spread yourself too thin across the channels.

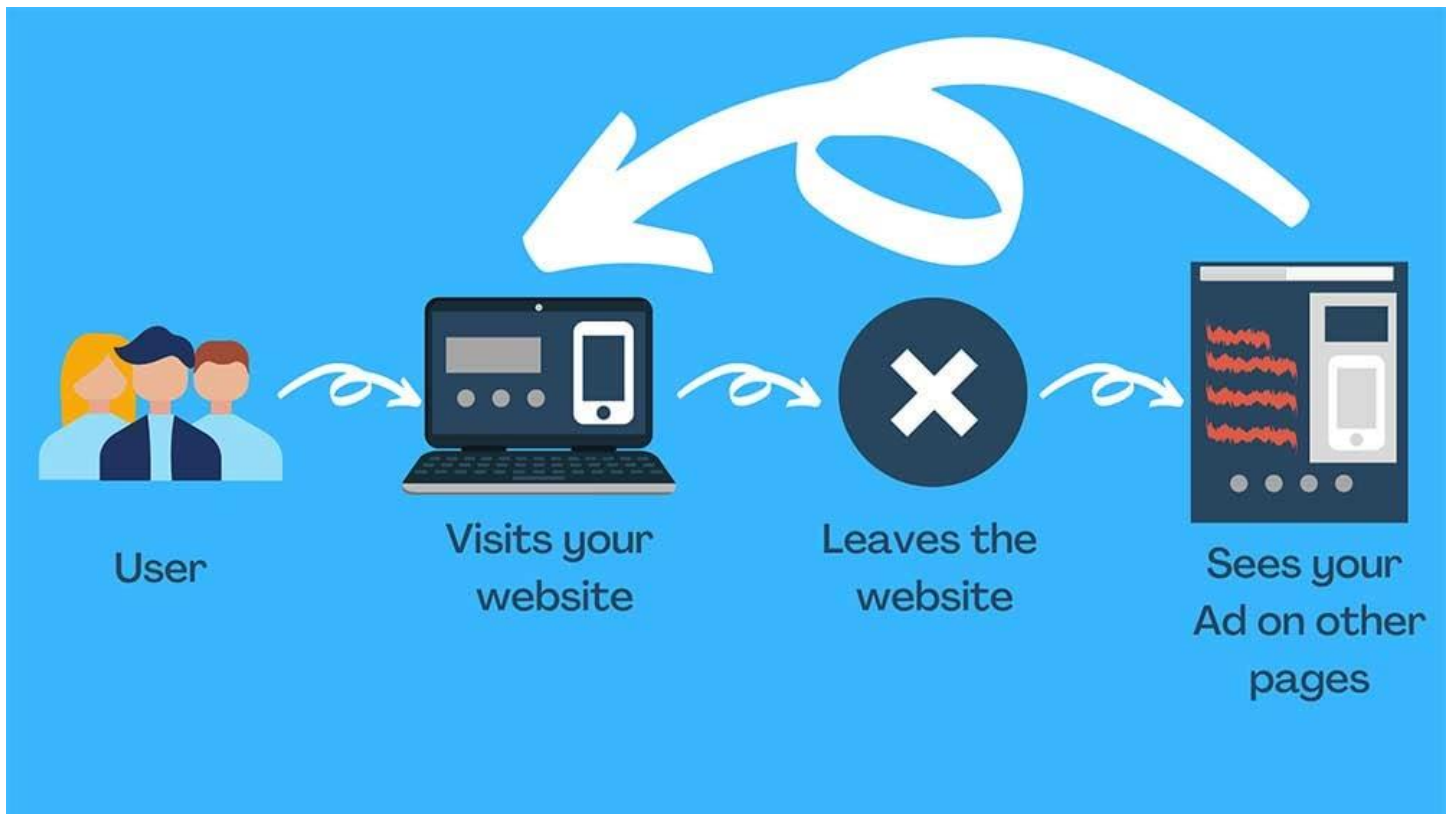
When conducting audience research, find out what digital platforms your primary target audience is using. **Choose one or two channels to focus on.**

6. Retargeting and retention

Once a visitor has viewed your website, clicked through an ad or engaged with your business, you can run a retargeting campaign.

Retargeted ads will show them highly relevant ads to continuously engage your prospects who have shown an interest in your product or service that otherwise could have slipped away.

This is how it works:



By doing so, you are constantly in the back of the mind of your potential customers and therefore increasing your ROI.

You are also top of mind with existing clients that are due for a visit to your business, be it a haircut, fast food meal, or even a new motor vehicle!

Remember, you can get a visitor to your website with a Google Ad, and then you can retarget them on Facebook with Facebook Ads. This is something a lot of people don't know.

7. Rank now while you build your organic rankings

Do you have a new business? Or a new website? Or even an old website that just doesn't rank organically on Google?

If your website isn't ranking on the first page of Google results, then paid advertising enables you to place ads for keywords and bring in high-quality traffic to your website.

Organic search rankings take time and investment, but they do bring in high-quality traffic.

While you are building your bank of content and working on your Google reviews for your Google My Business profile - use paid ads to fill that gap.

Just make sure you don't rely on paid ads only. Organic search rankings take time to build. You need to be building that capability while you run your paid ads. **Don't leave your website addicted to a permanent spend on paid ads.**

Final thoughts

Paid advertising is a non-negotiable piece of your sales and marketing funnel. There are many possibilities, platforms, types of paid ads and campaign types to choose from. But make a call and focus on one or two. Don't dilute your message too much.

With paid ads, you can tailor your brand and message in any way you see fit and consistently test to see what works and what does not.

With hard work and consistent optimization, you will strike gold and find yourself with more quality leads and conversions as a result.