

Content Strategy

The written content of any website is its most essential aspect. **Content strategy** is where all of the decision-making around that content begins.



Content strategy helps organizations provide the right content, to the right people, at the right times, for the right reasons.

Meghan Casey - The Content Strategy Toolkit

When done well, content strategy can:

- Assist companies in delivering the type of content their target audience desires.
- Provide a means for organizations to develop realistic, sustainable, and measurable publishing plans that keep their content on track in the long term.
- Cut costs and increase effectiveness by reducing redundant or extraneous content.
- Align communication across channels (web, print, social media) so that all outlets are working towards the same goals.
- Prevent web projects from being delayed due to underestimating the time needed to produce great content.

List adapted from The Elements of Content Strategy by Erin Kissane.

Building a Content Strategy

Step 1: Content Inventory

Building a content strategy begins with an inventory of the content you have— assuming you're working on an existing site. If you are creating a brand new site, content creation would obviously precede this step. The content inventory typically takes the form of a spreadsheet that lists every webpage, multimedia file, and PDF on the website. For each piece of content, the inventory spreadsheet usually shows:

- Title
- Format (standard text, video, PDF, etc.)
- URL or other location
- Content type (landing page, article, support page, contact page, etc.)
- Owner (person responsible for upkeep)

An example of a content inventory spreadsheet is illustrated below.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		Navigation Title	Page Title	Last Updated	Author	Type
2	0	Home	360 Fitness & Wellness	14-Apr	Chan, Nathan	Landing page
3	1	About Us				
4	1.1	History	History of Our Gym	3-Mar	Chan, Nathan	Multimedia/Video
5	1.2	Mission	Mission Statement	22-Feb	Chan, Nathan	Text Content, Image
6	1.3	FAQ	FAQ	20-Feb	Donovan, Michelle	Text Content
7	1.4	Careers	Careers	20-Apr	Donovan, Michelle	Text Content
8	2	Memberships				
9	2.1	Bronze Membership	Bronze Level	8-Jan	Chan, Nathan	Text Content
10	2.2	Silver Membership	Silver Level	8-Jan	Donovan, Michelle	Text Content
11	2.3	Gold Membership	Gold Level	8-Jan	Chan, Nathan	Text Content
12	3	Community				
13	3.1	Group Glasses	Group Glasses	20-Feb	Chan, Nathan	Text Content, Image
14	3.2	Events	Community Events	20-Apr	Donovan, Michelle	Text Content, Image
15	3.3	Mobile App	Mobile App	3-Mar	Donovan, Michelle	Multimedia/Video

Step 2: Content Audit

Once you have this inventory, the next step is the audit. The purpose of the audit is to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of all the content in order to prioritize future marketing activities.

In order to make those assessments, you have to be able to answer the following questions about your content in the context of whether it supports your key marketing/business objectives and fulfills your site users' needs.

Is the content:

- Appropriate?
- Useful and user-centered?
- Clear, consistent, and concise?
- Has it been properly supported, or is it outdated or inaccurate?

Once you've inventoried and audited your content, the real work of content strategy begins, as you can see in Figure 1 in this document.

Effective Content Strategy

When developing your content strategy, keep these two questions in mind.

1. Who is the target audience?
2. What is your value proposition?



Interactive Game: Web Design Specialties

Drag the following task to the appropriate web design specialty. Watch for feedback.

watch here for feedback

Aligning communication across multiple channels so that all outlets are working towards the same goal.

CONTENT STRATEGY

USER EXPERIENCE (UX)

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

USER INTERFACE (UI)

0/8 Complete!

Reset

Print

Sound on

Review Checkpoint

To test your understanding of the content presented in this assignment, please click on the Questions icon below. If you have trouble answering any of the questions presented here, you are always free to return to this or any assignment to re-read the material.



1. True or False?

An effective content strategy helps an organization develop broad, short-term plans for content.

a. True

Incorrect. Try again.

b. False

Correct. This statement is false. An effective content strategy helps organizations to develop realistic, sustainable, and measurable publishing plans that keep their content on track in the long term.

2. Which piece of information is NOT necessary to include in a content inventory spreadsheet?

a. The total time spent on writing the content

Correct. This information is not necessary to include in a content inventory spreadsheet. The inventory spreadsheet usually includes the title of a webpage, the owner of the webpage, the format, the content type, and the URL or location of a webpage.

b. The content type (video, article, landing page, etc.)

Incorrect. Try again.

c. The owner or person responsible for upkeep

Incorrect. Try again.

d. The URL or location of each page of content

Incorrect. Try again.