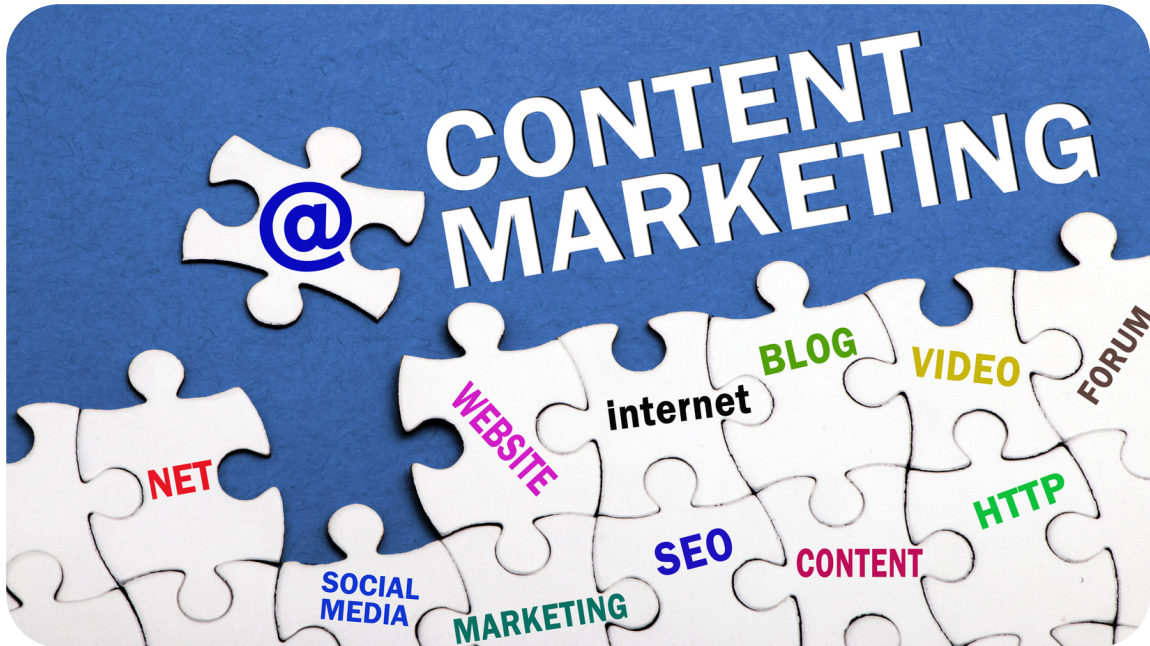




CONTENT MARKETING GUIDE

HOW TO CREATE AND IMPLEMENT A CONTENT
MARKETING STRATEGY

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Content is the glue that holds all of your digital marketing together. Whether you post videos, articles, social posts or tutorials, it all requires careful planning. This guide will walk you through content marketing so you can have a strong content strategy to raise brand awareness and reach more people. By the end of this guide, you should be able to:

- Understand the importance of a content strategy
- Plan your content step by step
- Recognise the role of the content funnel
- Identify how you can use a business blog



ELEVATE CREATIVE CO.

WHO ARE WE?

For more than a decade, the team at Elevate Creative Co. have been helping businesses with their marketing. We have written, planned, implemented and reviewed thousands of projects for clients across all industries.

We recognise that not every business has thousands of pounds to spend every month on outsourcing their marketing. This guide is designed to give you the knowledge and tools you need to create and implement a strong marketing strategy.



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Why blogs are such a powerful tool for businesses and how to create one that will keep visitors returning to consume more.

C H A P T E R

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INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

It's no secret that a well executed content strategy can do wonders for your business. People like to consume content if it teaches them something, solves a problem, or provides a source of entertainment. Internet users will happily spend hours scrolling through interesting content they love to consume. You might be right in thinking that there is already a huge amount of content in the online world and one more piece you publish isn't really going to make that much of a difference.

While there's some truth to this, you just need to learn how to be strategic to position your content in a different way. It's all about publishing the right content – something that hasn't been read, watched or listened to before. This doesn't mean you've got to reinvent the wheel and come up with something entirely new. You can take existing ideas from different sources and put your own spin on them – your experience, a lesson you have learned or a story. It is these things that make content engaging and keep people coming back for more.

Content marketing is so beneficial because it can build relationships, increase brand awareness and drive targeted traffic to your website. All of which can lead to increased leads, sales and profitability. A successful content strategy has three core components:

Value – Content will serve an unmet need. It provides important information that people search for to make their lives easier, happier or more successful.

Relevance – The information readers find most useful is relevant to their search. It appeals directly to their interests and needs at the time of reading.

User intent – When web visitors click through to a page on your website, it should answer their search query exactly.

A content strategy will piece together what content you intend to publish, where and when. Remember, content isn't just written. It can appear as audio, video and images. Purpose underpins everything you publish.



C H A P T E R

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CONTENT STRATEGY

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STRATEGY AND PLANNING

Lessons, stories and your experience will shape your entire content strategy. Content marketing aims to show who you are, what you do and can position you as a trusted expert in your niche. That said, content marketing is so much more than posting something and hoping it will be found by the masses. The first step is to plan, the second to publish and the third to promote. These three areas are covered by two things: A content strategy and a content plan.

Content strategy – A roadmap of how you will create and publish content

Content plan – A schedule of what you will publish and when

A content strategy consists of:

Defining your goals – What do you want to achieve with your content? Consider the marketing funnel – awareness, interest, decision, action, retention, loyalty.

Identifying KPI's – How will you know that your goals have been reached? What does success look like?

Content channels – Where will you publish your content? – Your blog, social media, podcast platforms? Will you use one channel or multiple?

Content types – Based on the channels you have chosen, what types of content do you want to publish? Images, video, long form articles, ebooks?

Budget – What resources (including financial) do you have to allocate to content creation. Factor in your time if creating the content yourself or the cost of outsourcing to a freelancer.

Creation – How will you create the content? Do you need any special skills or software?

Analysis – When will you review the performance of your content?

Content Pillars

A strong content strategy will be based around core content pillars. A pillar is a topic or theme that you talk about often. Ideally, you should have between 3 and 5 pillars. Research the market to identify questions your audience ask often and identify any common themes. Places to research include:

Google – Enter seed keywords into Google and see what comes up. Look at 'People Also Asked' and 'Related Searches'

Amazon Books – Search for popular books in your industry to see what chapters they cover

Udemy – Review popular courses in your industry and explore topics

Reddit and Quora – What questions are people asking?

Social Media – What are the top posts for keywords in your industry? What things are people talking about and engaging with?

Blogs – Identify authoritative blogs in your industry and find top posts

Make notes as you go along. With the research complete you can analyse your findings to pull out anything that keeps coming up. Use these as your content pillars.

This method ensures that your content strategy is based on topics that have been proven to work.

C H A P T E R

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CONTENT STRATEGY – STEP BY STEP

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CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

Next, it's time to start piecing together your overall content strategy. This will act as a guide to help you publish consistent, value driven content that addresses the direct needs and problems of your audience. A content strategy can be divided into 7 steps.

Step 1 Goal Setting

What do you want the content to do? Define at least one goal for each piece of content. Some common goals for content marketing include:

- Improve brand awareness
- Boost brand loyalty
- Attract leads and customers
- Drive traffic to your website

Step 2 Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

Key Performance Indicators will determine how close you are to reaching your goals. For example:

Brand awareness – Site traffic, social media followers, sign-ups to your mailing list

Step 3 Content Channel and Type

This stage is about identifying content types and channels. The choices you make should be based on solid customer and industry research.

If you have developed a customer profile, much of this research is already complete.

Consider the problems your prospects have and the solution they want (not what you think they want).

Based on the answer to this question, you can then identify what content types will help them and where to post and promote your content.



CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

There are five main content types:

Video – Short form video and long form, live events, tutorials and webinars
PDFs – White paper, ebook, manual, tutorial, checklist or template
Text – News, interviews, research studies, educational information
Visual – Slide decks, sketches, diagrams and infographics
Audio – Podcasts, interviews and audio books

Content channels are the places where you publish content:

Post as much content as you can to media you own such as your blog
Other channels include:

Social media – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, TikTok, Instagram
Video sites – YouTube, Vimeo
Podcast Platforms – Spotify or iTunes
Forums – Quora and Reddit are the most popular but there are many more
Industry specific websites and blogs
Guest blogs
Public Relations

Step 4 Budget and Resources

Unless you are already generating a significant turnover, your content marketing budget is not infinite. Factor in the resources you will need including your own time if creating yourself. Your time is not free. If you prefer to outsource the content, you will need to find a good freelancer or agency to handle the content creation. As well as content production, you will also need to consider software you may need such as Grammarly, Copyscape, graphic design, readability, SEO and keyword research tools. Costs for all of these tools can quickly add up.

Step 5 Creation

Content creation is the longest process. It will involve drafting, editing and proofing before the content is posted. Never aim for perfection. It's always better to publish something that's imperfect than publish nothing at all. How much time will you need to allocate to content creation.



CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

The time you allocate will need to be divided between writing, editing and design. Map out your content in a calendar which will keep you on track. Batching is helpful if you want to create high volume content in a short period of time. You may want to allocate a particular day or block of time in the day to create all of your content for the coming week or month.

Step 6 Promotion

You can't expect to publish content and receive tonnes of engagement. There's so much published, your content will not be found unless you actively promote it. How can you get more eyes on your content? Cross promote across platforms, share new posts with your email subscribers or undertake outreach. If you have the budget, you can also run paid ads.

Step 7 Analysis

The final stage in the process is to analyse performance. Audit your content often. Monthly or quarterly is best.

You can see how well your content is performing and make any changes as needed. Use analytics tools on Google for website content analysis and insights on social platforms. Review your content in relation to KPIs and goals. Analysis should focus on:

User behaviour – Page views and visits to your website. Time spent on page, new vs. returning visitors, bounce rate, traffic sources and top performing pages

Engagement – Comments, shares, likes, mentions, invitations for collaborations or shares

SEO – Organic traffic, dwell time, keyword rankings, backlinks and bounce rate

Revenue – Conversions, leads, cost per acquisition, content marketing ROI

Metrics are just as important as the actual content creation process. The metrics you measure will depend on the goals you set at the beginning of your content strategy.



C H A P T E R

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THE CONTENT FUNNEL

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CUSTOMER JOURNEY

A good content strategy will cover the entire customer lifecycle – taking someone from not knowing who you are to knowing, liking and trusting you and then becoming a loyal fan and brand advocate. Content is needed for each stage. Many businesses make the mistake of creating content just for prospects. Your existing customers are just as important. As you develop your content strategy, make sure you have a good mix of content that covers all stages of the customer journey:

Awareness – Content should cover questions that prospects have as they become problem aware. Educate, entertain and tell your story. The goal of awareness content is to get people to know you.

Consideration – By the time the prospect has reached this stage they are often a follower, subscriber or regular reader of your blog. The prospect wants to know how you can help them. Share content such as case studies, testimonials and help them understand why they need to solve the problem.

Decision – This phase is where the follower decides to buy from you. They may want further information on your product or service.

Retention – By this stage, the focus is on delivering the best possible customer experience to retain the customer as long as possible and ascend them to additional products and services. To do this, think about how you can make their experience really special. Provide helpful knowledge base content, user guides on products and services and give them information on what they can do next. Often, when one problem is solve, the customer will have others. Start to solve them.

Advocacy – The focus of advocacy content is to encourage customers to refer others to you. Use social platforms, create referral programmes. Give customers free content that will help them further in their journey.



C H A P T E R

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**BLOGGING FOR
BUSINESS**

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BUSINESS BLOGS

The blog that sits on your website is a massively underused resource. It should be at the centre of your content marketing efforts. Everything you do on social platforms or third party websites should drive traffic directly to your blog or website. Content hubs are a great resource to create. They act as a one stop shop for anything a web visitor wants to know about the problem you can solve for them. Some of the most successful content types that sit in the content hub include:

- How to guides
- Tutorials
- Industry insights and news
- Checklists
- Case studies
- Expert advice
- List posts
- Interviews

A business blog should be built around a solid SEO strategy which goes hand in hand with content marketing. Use proven content frameworks such as The Skyscraper Technique or list posts for maximum engagement and social shares.

If well planned, a content hub can become a valuable tool for your business because it can generate a constant stream of traffic, long after your posts go live. Even more so if you focus on publishing evergreen content.

Evergreen Content

A piece of evergreen content is essentially a post that doesn't date. It is filled with super actionable information, but it remains as relevant in five years as it is today. It also saves you time as you don't need to keep updating it to keep the content relevant.

Actionable Content

With any type of content you publish, make sure it is actionable. Give the reader something practical they can take away and implement. If they action what you say and achieve something, even if it's only small, they are more likely to return to consume more and share your content with friends, family and colleagues.





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