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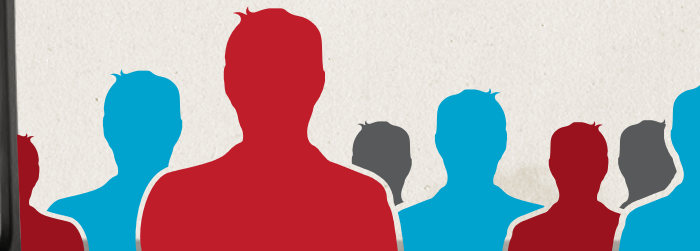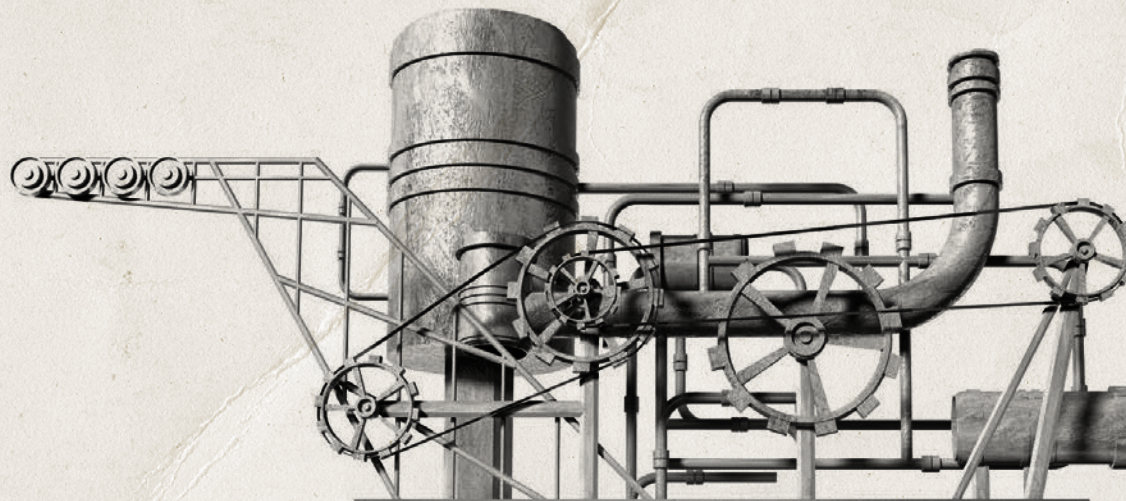# CONTENT FACTORY!

A Guide to Creating and Delivering the Content Your Company Needs to Attract and Retain Great Customers

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AT A GLANCE
11 STEPS TO BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL CONTENT FACTORY

1. **Get sharply focused.** Establish a content strategy by zeroing in on just one customer segment to start and doing everything you can to understand your target buyers in that segment and the buyer journey they are on. Doing so will give you a framework for designing the content your buyers need to help them through their journey.

➡ *Find out more in Chapter 2.*

2. **Hire a managing editor.** You need a full-time resource dedicated to building your content factory with the skills and experience necessary to develop your strategy and manage your content creation and delivery processes. Content marketing cannot be an add-on responsibility to someone's existing role.

➡ *Find out more in Chapter 3.*

3. **Build a content creation community.** Your content factory should extend far beyond the marketing team. Create a real-life community of freelancers, industry influencers, and co-workers to support your efforts and a virtual community of fans, followers, and subscribers, all of whom will help your content factory succeed.

➡ *Find out more in Chapter 6.*

4. **Create high-impact content.** Every piece of content you create presents an opportunity to make meaningful contact with your target buyers and to get them to move through their buying journey. Take full advantage of that opportunity by creating high-impact content that is optimized for search, reflects a deep understanding of your buyers, provides value, demonstrates your brand aspirations, drives conversions, and promotes engagement and virality.

➡ *Find out more in Chapter 4.*

5. **Repurpose, repackage, and recycle.** Find ways to re-use every piece of content you create so that you are maximizing your return on investment. Make sure that daily content gets recycled into larger assets (e.g., eBooks, webinars, and reports) and conversely that any large assets are broken down into daily content.

➡ *Find out more in Chapter 2.*

6. **Focus on conversions.** Make sure that every piece of content you create has a clear call to action that directs your target audience to take an action designed to help move them through the sales funnel. Remember that every sale will be the result of many much smaller conversions throughout the buying process.

➡ *Find out more in Chapter 6.*

7. **Amplify your content through multiple points of contact.** Create a plan for delivering every piece of content to your buyers through all of the best distribution channels available for reaching them. This includes your website and other sites that you can control, social media, direct marketing, influencer marketing, campaigns, and more.

➥ *Find out more in Chapter 5.*

8. **Establish a content rhythm.** It's impossible to build any momentum if your content comes out in dribs and drabs. Avoid this problem by getting into a regular and consistent content publication schedule to ensure that your content factory drives real results.

➥ *Find out more in Chapter 7.*

9. **Institutionalize your content factory.** Experiment to find the best processes for creating and delivering your content, refining them over time. Document best practices so that they can easily be replicated and transferred on to others.

➥ *Find out more in Chapter 7.*

10. **Measure what you do.** The only way to understand what's working and what's not is to track and analyze key metrics. If your content factory isn't underpinned by a robust analytics dashboard, it will be impossible to glean the insights you need to make improvements.

➥ *Find out more in Chapter 7.*

11. **Hold frequent retrospectives.** Your content team needs to meet on a daily, weekly, quarterly, and annual basis to set strategic goals and priorities, assess the progress you are making toward meeting those goals, and to analyze your results and adjust your strategy as needed for every piece of content you create.

➥ *Find out more in Chapter 7.*

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FOREWORD

Years ago, B2B marketing was primarily a paper-based or in-person activity. Companies would devote large portions of their marketing budgets to placing ads in industry publications or sending company delegates to trade shows, all with the hope of promoting and growing their customer rosters and bottom-line revenues. That strategy worked, largely because those tactics were the best options available and the most effective way to interact with large groups of prospects and buyers.

Today B2B marketing is a different animal. With the advent of the Internet, e-mail, and social media, it's now easier than ever to find and engage customers and prospects, whose appetite for online content is growing by the day. At the same time, the digital evolution has also created a unique challenge for marketers — while buyers are digesting more content, they have also become far more discerning about what they consume and from whom they consume it.

Ultimately, those changes have paved the way for a new B2B marketing approach: content marketing.

At its most basic, content marketing is about creating highly relevant content that appeals to your buyers' biggest needs and moves them down the path to purchase. In that way, it's not just a marketing best practice, but also the veritable backbone of a successful go-to-market strategy. After all, the more you are able to produce content that contextually addresses each step in a buyer's journey, the easier it will be to drive conversions and to help your buyers actually buy, or stay longer as customers, or even buy more than they normally would.

In order to be successful and rise above the clutter, B2B companies need laser focus on buyers' pain points. They need to approach their marketing much like a publishing entity — developing a strategy and building a team that can optimize and deliver content to the right contacts at the right time in ways that have the greatest impact. Ultimately, that is the core argument for building a content factory to support your B2B business.

In "It Takes a Content Factory! A Guide to Creating and Delivering the Content Your Company Needs to Attract and Retain Great Customers," OpenView lays out an easy-to-follow framework for constructing a content factory from the ground up. It contains a high-level overview of the components necessary to build a content factory and is supported by a rich appendix of additional resources designed to supplement your efforts.

At the end of the day, B2B marketers simply need to ask themselves this question: If content marketing is so critical to your company's ability to go to market, then why would you manage it with reckless abandon? The answer is simple: You shouldn't.

Joe Pulizzi
Founder, Content Marketing Institute
Author, *Epic Content Marketing*
Senior Advisor, OpenView Venture Partners

CHAPTER 1:
WANT MORE CUSTOMERS?
YOU NEED A CONTENT FACTORY!

All companies, whether they are big or small, and whether they sell ice cream cones or industry-leading software, have at least one thing in common: They want more customers. Typically, a lot more customers. And, believe it or not, for some companies accomplishing that goal is pretty easy.

Just look at Apple and Google. Their products are so innovative and compelling that pitching customers on their value proposition is almost unnecessary. Their products truly speak for themselves, so people talk about them, which leads to organic customer acquisition.

Companies like Facebook and LinkedIn have products that sell themselves through distinctive social features. These types of businesses are set up so that existing customers are compelled to sell their product to non-customers, creating a self-perpetuating user attraction machine. Just think about it. Who hasn't asked people to join their networks on these social platforms?

If your company is in the same boat as any of these businesses, congratulations! New customers are probably beating down your door, so sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labor. If, however, your business isn't experiencing that kind of effortless growth, you are left with two choices:

1. Keep iterating your product until it is able to generate tremendous growth on its own, like the companies mentioned above.

2. Focus on selling the product that you already have to more customers.

WHICH OPTION IS BETTER?

You should always be iterating your product and trying to ensure that it addresses your customers' pain points. The problem is that it could take months or even years until you have iterated your way to a product that drives its own sales. How many expansion-stage technology companies do you know with that kind of time?

Which leads us to your second choice: Selling your existing product to more customers. Unfortunately, this option isn't foolproof either. That's because most companies really don't do a very good job of selling their products. Why? Because rather than figure out which sales and marketing tactics are most likely to attract and influence their best customers, most businesses simply implement a variety of individual tactics and hope for the best. It's certainly not the way to take control of a market niche.

To dominate your market, you need a well thought out go-to-market strategy with a holistic approach to winning customers. And, as we will see, for that go-to-market strategy to be effective, it will need a lot of high-quality content at its foundation.

WHY YOU NEED CONTENT TO FUEL YOUR GO-TO-MARKET STRATEGY

A company's go-to-market strategy defines how it makes contact with prospects and customers, shepherding them through the sales funnel to a purchase. The key to creating a successful strategy is focusing on a very specific set of prospective customers and taking the time to fully understand them and their buyer journey, as well as the points within that process where they tend to get stuck.

Once you have that understanding, you can develop a framework to address each sticking point with the right content, turning them into leverage points that actually help drive sales. To accomplish this, however, your content needs to:

» Be tailored to the context of your buyer's specific situation

» Effectively address his or her concerns

» Contain the right conversion mechanisms to help move that person to the next step in the buyer journey

"In today's online world, content marketing is marketing. Without great content to tell your story and support your business, it's crazy-hard to stand out — to differentiate yourself from your competition. OpenView's eBook lays out a clear, accessible framework for building the kind of in-house content team and sustainable plan every business needs to connect with prospects and nurture them through the sales process (and beyond)."

Ann Handley,
Chief Content Officer, Marketing Profs

You also need to figure out how to best make contact with your buyers and deliver your content to them using the right combination of vehicles and programs. In other words, to go to market effectively, your content needs to not only be easily discoverable, but must also reach your prospects and customers even when they aren't necessarily looking for it.

That may sound easy enough, but it's rarely the case.

Let's assume, for example, that there is more than one person involved in the buying process, or that you are targeting multiple customer segments each with multiple buyers. Things suddenly become exponentially more complicated, because to address multiple buyers across multiple segments at every stage of their buyer journeys, you are going to need to create and deliver a considerable amount of content.

Factor in that you may also want to create content targeted at industry influencers, target partners, and indirect sales channels to further influence your buyer, and you will quickly discover that you need to create and distribute a lot more content.

Essentially, the more customers you want to get, the more content you are going to need to create and deliver. Building a finely tuned content factory can help you do exactly that.

BUILD A CONTENT FACTORY, BUILD YOUR BUSINESS

A content factory is the infrastructure of writers and freelancers, editorial calendars and content strategies, content delivery tactics, and content creation processes — among other things — that allows marketers to create and distribute the content they need to support their company's go-to-market strategy. And, as with any factory, a content factory requires the careful orchestration of those people, processes, and tools to operate efficiently.

"Every company needs good content to help generate and nurture leads and ultimately drive sales. This eBook lays out the strategy and framework the OpenView team has spent the past several years developing and sharing with its more than 20 portfolio companies around the country. Businesses that devote the time and resources to implementing the best practices outlined in this eBook will be better positioned to succeed in today's competitive market."

Kevin Cain, Director of Content Strategy,
OpenView Venture Partners

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By building an in-house content factory, even small marketing teams can create the steady stream of high-quality content that companies need to generate leads, nurture them at key points throughout the buying process with targeted messages that address their concerns, and ultimately drive sales.

In the process, a content factory can also be beneficial by:

- » Establishing your company as a thought leader
- » Building brand awareness
- » Driving relevant traffic to your website
- » Enabling sales with relevant information they need
- » Creating a personal connection to your customers
- » Fostering greater engagement with customers
- » Promoting customer retention

"It Takes a Content Factory!" is designed to be a comprehensive guide for content marketers with a wide range of experience. As such, depending on your needs, you may find it most useful to navigate to the particular sections that are most relevant to you. To help get you oriented, below is a high-level overview of what you will find in the rest of this eBook. In the chapters that follow, you will learn how to:

CHAPTER 2

Develop a strategy to align your content with your buyers and drive the array of conversions necessary to reach a sale. That process starts with getting sharply focused on who your target buyers are and developing a deep understanding of them and their buyer journeys. It also entails establishing the right conversion goals, determining how to create content that will drive those conversions, and finding the right points of contact for delivering it.

CHAPTER 3

Assemble the team you need to operate your content factory. That includes the most important role for running a content factory — a managing editor — as well as content creators and distributors. You will also learn how you can leverage freelancers, industry influencers, and even your co-workers to help augment your team.

CHAPTER 4

Produce high-quality content that is optimized to get the greatest return on investment. Every piece of B2B content needs six essential characteristics to be effective. You will find out, for example, how to optimize your content for search engines and to demonstrate your deep understanding of your buyers. You will also learn how to create content that aligns with your company's brand aspirations, triggers conversions, and goes viral.

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CHAPTER 5

Deliver your content using a combination of vehicles and programs to ensure maximum amplification. Every time you deliver a piece of content it is an opportunity to make contact with your buyers. Doing so effectively requires a well-orchestrated and systematic approach that takes a variety of delivery vehicles and programs into consideration.

CHAPTER 6

Maximize conversions. The point of building a content factory is to create content that will drive a series of conversions that ultimately result in a sale. That's no small feat and takes careful consideration. You will learn some of the best practices you can start using to begin getting more conversions.

CHAPTER 7

Manage, measure, and continuously improve your content factory. Running a successful content factory hinges on your ability to establish a consistent content rhythm, having the right tools in place, carefully measuring your performance, and taking the time for regular retrospective meetings to analyze your results so that you can make meaningful adjustments.

CHAPTER 8

Get started right away. Find out how to implement a quick and easy five-day plan to start bringing your content factory to life by creating, delivering, and measuring the impact of your first piece of content.

APPENDIX

Take your content marketing to the next level. Already have your own content factory in place? Then check out the Appendix for tips and best practices for experienced content marketers. Throughout the eBook you will also find numerous references to the Appendix like this. Simply click on them to be taken to the corresponding section in the Appendix.

To find out more, go to the Appendix

FEELING OVERWHELMED? DON'T PANIC.

Yes, building and operating a content factory is a significant undertaking that requires time, money, and resources. However, if you are serious about attracting and retaining more customers and driving sales, establishing an in-house content factory is one of the best ways to do so.

CHAPTER 2:
DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE CONTENT STRATEGY

In Chapter 1 we noted the important role that content plays in helping your company go to market effectively, and how building your own content factory will allow you to create and deliver the content your company needs to generate and nurture leads more efficiently. The rest of this eBook will focus on helping you create and optimize your content factory, starting with its strategic framework.

Your company's strategic framework is essentially the blueprint you will follow to build your content factory and it should be constructed around six key elements:

1. Well-defined targets
2. Deep contextual understanding
3. Clear conversion goals
4. Appropriate points of contact
5. A process for creating campaigns that align your content to your buyers' context, your conversion goals, and your points of contact
6. The ability to scale your operations

Let's take a closer look at each of those elements.

1. IDENTIFYING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

To succeed in any form of marketing — particularly content marketing — you need sharp focus. It is impossible to market effectively to everyone, so concentrate your efforts where you think you will have the most success. That means focusing on just one customer segment.

There are many techniques for segmenting your potential customers. One useful approach is to look at all of your customers and then zero in on the best one. That customer could be a solid model for your target buyer.

Many B2B companies have multiple people involved in their buying process, so make sure that you understand all of the major roles. Then, once you have identified your target buyer(s), do everything you can to understand that person so that you can find other buyers just like them. For this eBook, we are simplifying the targets down to a single buyer, but make sure that you run through this approach for each of your important buying roles.

START WITH ONE SEGMENT
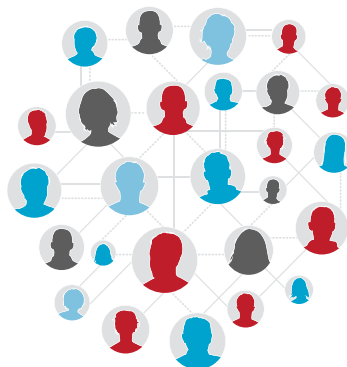
LOOK FOR YOUR BEST CUSTOMER IN THAT SEGMENT
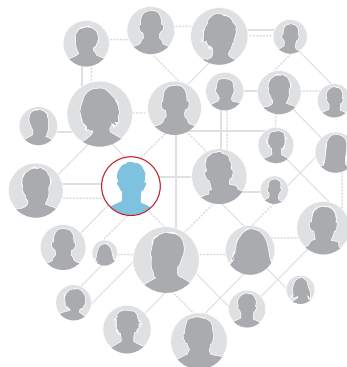
MAKE YOUR BEST CURRENT CUSTOMER YOUR TARGET

2. UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT: BUYER PERSONAS AND BUYER JOURNEYS

Regardless of who your target is, it is going to be virtually impossible to create successful content until you understand the context of that buyer's situation. That means that in addition to knowing who your buyer is, you also need to understand what that person cares about and what their journey to making a purchase looks like. You will also need to understand which points throughout their buyer journey you need to influence in order to drive conversions and move the buyer through the sales funnel.

To create that kind of content, you will need to understand three things about your buyers:

» Their motivations, pain points, and role in the buying process

» Where along their buyer journey they are most likely to get stuck

» How to get them unstuck and propel them forward by resolving their concerns

The way to develop that understanding is by creating buyer personas and taking the time to analyze and understand the buyer journey.

Buyer personas are simply detailed descriptions of the decision-makers involved in a purchase. Creating them formalizes your understanding of your buyers and what motivates them, which is essential for creating content that will resonate. Underscoring that point is a 2013 case study from Marketing Sherpa, which found that companies that incorporated buyer personas into their content marketing strategies increased their B2B leads by 124 percent.[1]

To create a buyer persona, start by gathering some basic information from customer-facing colleagues and, if possible, interviewing your actual customers. You can also mine your company's databases for valuable information.

Your objective is to identify some of your customers' most important characteristics and to collect a variety of information, including:

» **The buyer's title and role in the buying process**
Are you targeting the CEO, a senior software engineer, or a member of the marketing team? Is that person a gatekeeper, influencer, or champion? Is he a technical or economic decision-maker?

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[1] "Content Marketing: Targeted Persona Strategy Lifts Sales Leads 124%," Marketing Sherpa, January 23, 2013.

» Behavioral information

What's motivating the buyer? Is there a specific problem she faces that you can solve? What are her concerns and pain points? What are her expectations? Which of her needs have to be met to ensure a purchase?

» Company information

How big is the company? What's the industry? Where is it located?

» Demographic information about the buyer

What department does the buyer sit in? What budget does he have? What are his primary responsibilities?

To learn more about buyer personas, see page 61 in the Appendix.

Once you have gathered as much information as you can, synthesize the most pertinent details into a short description like this:

Jane Doe is the VP of operations at a company with more than $10 million in annual revenue that needs a better e-mail archiving solution. She finds her existing service frustrating because it is too slow and unreliable. She will generally get involved in the research phase of the buying process and is the final decision-maker. She is aware of our solution and that her pain points directly align with our product's core value proposition. While price is an important motivating factor when making a purchase, she's most concerned with whether the solution offers the functionality and ease of use she's looking for.

Completing this exercise for each of your target buyers will give you a much clearer understanding of them, resulting in valuable insights into how to tailor your content to ensure that it resonates. The more human you make your personas, the better your chance of creating content that will truly speak to them.

In addition to developing a buyer persona, you need to analyze the corresponding buyer journey or process that the buyer goes through when deciding whether or not to make a purchase. To do so, map out the key stages within the process and try to anticipate what will need to happen at each point to move the buyer to the next stage. It is also important to identify the points throughout the journey where your buyers are likely to get stuck, and to figure out what messages you need to communicate to address their concerns and get them unstuck. Doing so will allow you to turn those sticking points into leverage points.
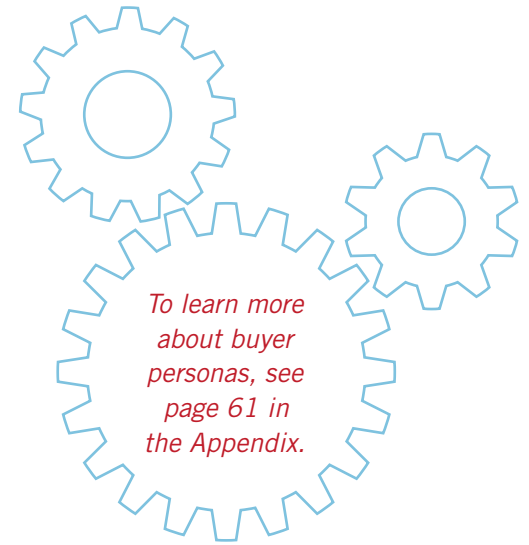
A very simplified five-stage buying process might look like this:

UNAWARE ⟩ AWARE ⟩ INTEREST ⟩ RESEARCH ⟩ PURCHASE

↖ LEVERAGE POINTS ↗

For expansion-stage companies, the leverage points are usually at the awareness and research stages. These are crucial junctures where you should look to focus your efforts most to help improve sales. Many potential buyers may not be aware of your company or your solution, while those doing research may be ready to make a purchase. By understanding the buyer journey as well as where your buyers are likely to get stuck — and why — you can create the content necessary to address their concerns and propel them through the buyer journey.

3. SETTING CLEAR CONVERSION GOALS

Once you understand who your targets are, what they care about, and the steps along their buying journey, you need to decide what actions you want them to take as a result of consuming your content. Ultimately you want to convert your target buyers into paying customers, and the way to make that happen is by getting them to take a series of much smaller actions that will collectively help propel them through the buyer journey. Each of those actions is a conversion, and you should set a series of conversion goals for your target buyers based on the content you have delivered to them.

For example, your goal might be to get your target buyers to:

» Open one of your e-mails

» Spend a certain amount of time on your website

» Visit a specific number of pages on your website

» Share your content with others

» Watch one of your videos

» Fill out a contact form

» Sign up for your e-mail list or newsletter

» Download your latest eBook or case study

» Engage in a live chat with one of your customer service reps

» Sign up for a free trial

For a comprehensive list of potential conversion goals, see page 62 in the Appendix.

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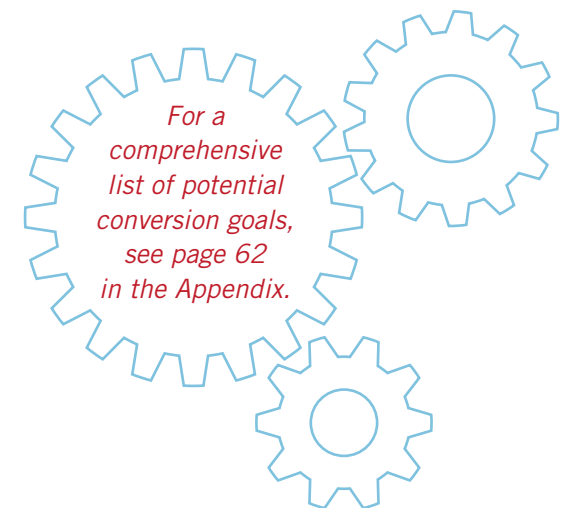
Although none of these conversions will necessarily result directly in a sale, they are all touch points with your targets that will collectively help move them through the sales funnel over time. By establishing clear conversion goals, you not only map out the series of actions that your target buyers might take before making a purchase, but you also create a framework for evaluating how effective your content is by measuring those conversions.

Later in this eBook, we will look at how to create content that drives conversions, the importance of tracking and analyzing conversion metrics, and how incentives can be used to foster conversions.

4. DELIVERING YOUR CONTENT THROUGH THE RIGHT POINTS OF CONTACT

Another important aspect of your content strategy is deciding how you are going to make contact with your target buyers to deliver your content. There are several ways this can happen:

» You can contact them through e-mails, phone calls, text messages, tweets, etc.

» They can contact you after finding you through search engines, online forums, advertisements, retargeting, etc.

» Contact can be made through others, including other buyers, friends, colleagues, industry analysts, etc.

The numerous vehicles and programs that you can use to make contact — from your website to social media, to influencers and relationship marketing — are outlined in detail in Chapter 5. At this stage, keep these key points in mind about how you contact your targets:

» Always consider your buyer and their context when selecting a method of contact

» Your method of contact must be effective enough to drive the desired conversion

» Less expensive forms of contact are often better than more expensive ones

» Plan on needing multiple points of contact with your buyers using multiple contact vehicles and programs

» The less work you have to do to make contact the better

As we will see, finding the right ways to make contact with your target buyers is just as important as creating content that reflects your understanding of them.

5. ALIGNING YOUR CONTENT, CONVERSION GOALS, AND POINTS OF CONTACT WITH YOUR BUYERS

The next step in developing your content strategy is to figure out how to design campaigns by aligning your contextual understanding of your buyers and their journey with your conversion goals, the content you are going to create, and the points of contact you are going to use to deliver your content. The best way to do this is by creating a matrix.

Here's how to do so:

CREATE A TEMPLATE FOR YOUR MATRIX

In a spreadsheet, create separate tabs for each of the buyer personas you are targeting and list the stages of each buyer's journey across the x-axis of each tab. In the process, make note of the stages of the buying process where you think there are leverage points that you want to focus on.

HIGHLIGHT THE CONTEXT

Below the stages of the buyer's journey, list the context for each of your buyers that you identified while creating your buyer personas. This is a good opportunity to remind yourself about your buyer's pain points, needs, concerns, and motivations, all of which will dictate your content strategy.

PICK YOUR POINTS OF CONTACT

Determine how you are going to deliver your content to your target buyers. Remember that you are likely going to need multiple points of contact for every piece of content and that you need to select your method of contact based on the buyer's context and its effectiveness at driving the desired conversion.
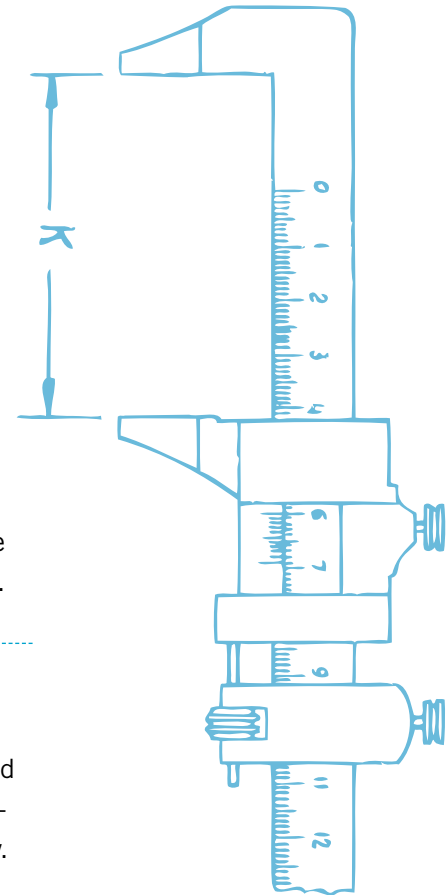
IDENTIFY YOUR CONVERSION GOALS (AND INCENTIVES)

Next, determine what conversion goal you want to set at each stage of the buying process. You may also want to list the calls to action you intend to use to drive the conversion as well as any incentives you may be using, such as giveaways. When you look across your matrix, you should see a logical flow of conversion goals that, if completed, will guide your target buyers through the buying process.

SELECT THE KEY MESSAGING AND FORMAT FOR YOUR CONTENT

Decide which messages you need to communicate to address any sticking points that could be preventing your target buyer from moving on to the next stage in the buying process. A one- or two-line summary of the key points you need to communicate, along with a hook that speaks to the value proposition of what you are selling and how it will help buyers solve a problem, will give you great direction. Make sure that you also think about which content formats are appropriate to use at each stage of the buyer journey. For example, a short video may be ideal for engaging your target buyer at the awareness stage of the buying process, while a report or case study is probably better at the research stage. Any past experience you have converting your target buyers with content should be used to help inform this process.

For guidelines around which types of content to use at various points in the buyer journey, see page 64.

BUILD CAMPAIGNS

Think of all of the information you have gathered thus far as the building blocks for designing a campaign to drive conversions. You will need to decide which pieces of your top-performing content to utilize, which points of contact to leverage, and which conversion goals you ultimately want to achieve. Other factors to consider include the length of your campaign (will it span a certain time frame or number of steps in the buyer journey?) and how simple or complex you want to make it.
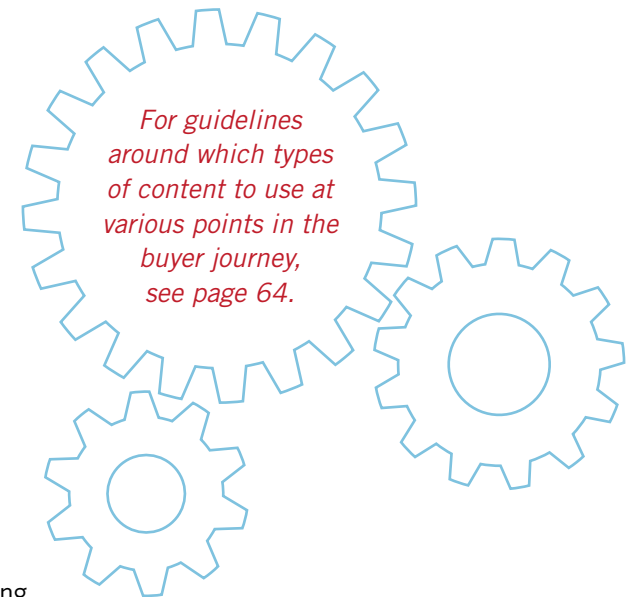
Following these steps will help you set up the organized matrix you need to build and execute campaigns for creating and delivering content that drives conversions. Here's an example of what a matrix looks like:

Buyer Personas and Their Journeys

Buyer 3
UNAWARE | AWARE | INTEREST | RESEARCH | PURCHASE

Buyer 2
UNAWARE | AWARE | INTEREST | RESEARCH | PURCHASE

Buyer 1
UNAWARE | AWARE | INTEREST | RESEARCH | PURCHASE

CONTEXT				
Conversion Goal (and Incentive)	Conversion Goal (and Incentive)	Conversion Goal (and Incentive)	Conversion Goal (and Incentive)	Conversion Goal (and Incentive)
Points of Contact	Points of Contact	Points of Contact	Points of Contact	Points of Contact
Content Format and Key Messages	Content Format and Key Messages	Content Format and Key Messages	Content Format and Key Messages	Content Format and Key Messages

Campaign Design

Campaign 1	Campaign 2	Campaign 3	Campaign 4	Campaign 5

Campaign Execution

6. SCALING YOUR OPERATIONS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR CONTENT CREATION EFFORTS

The last major point to think about when developing your content strategy is how to tackle one of the biggest challenges many B2B content marketers say they face: producing enough content to satisfy their buyers' appetite.[2] The way to do so is by building a plan for repurposing, repackaging, and recycling your content into your overall strategy. There are three fundamental approaches that veteran content marketer Joe Chernov recommends:

GO FROM BIG TO LITTLE

The true value of a large piece of content is not just the asset itself, but also all of the smaller pieces of content that you can turn it into. For example, if you produce an eBook, its contents should also be used to supply material for a month's worth of tweets, a series of blog posts, a SlideShare upload, and several repurposed articles. Doing so will turn your content into a force multiplier, allowing you to boost your content output without taxing your marketing resources.

GO FROM LITTLE TO BIG

The same principle can be applied in reverse. If your company primarily produces short-form content (e.g., blog posts, articles, and podcasts), take inventory of that content and look for common themes. You will likely find opportunities to repackage those smaller pieces into a larger content resource such as a white paper or eBook that is more substantive and durable. The idea is to identify content that you have already created and re-use or re-imagine it in a way that produces something new and valuable.

BECOME A SERIAL CONTENT MARKETER

When you create something remarkable that your audience truly values and shares, don't stop there. Turn it into a series of evergreen content that can be republished or recycled annually. For instance, imagine publishing a report on an industry trend that elicits a strong response. Serialize that success by publishing other similar reports and updating and re-releasing them annually.

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[2] "B2B Content Marketing: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends — North America," Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs, 2013.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE?

With a framework for thinking about your content factory in place, consider what you want your content factory to achieve. What should your goals be and how will they support your company's overall marketing efforts and business objectives? Which parts of the sales funnel need to be optimized most? Maybe it's getting people into the funnel by raising awareness, or propelling them through the sales process with more efficient lead nurturing. Whatever it may be, clearly articulating your objectives will help give your content marketing program direction.

Now is also a good time to take stock of your existing content marketing and whether it can help you meet your goals. Armed with an understanding of where your content marketing currently stands, as well as a clear picture of where you ultimately want it to be, you can develop specific, actionable goals to help you bridge the gap. What those goals should be — and how to best achieve them — will become increasingly clear throughout the pages that follow.

"Many companies approach content marketing from the publish first, ask 'why' later mentality. This almost always ends up in a frustrating, ineffective, and fragmented mess. The key to success with content marketing is starting with a smart strategy and framework that builds a program focused on specific business value. It's critical that content is aligned with the emotional ebbs and flows of a buyer's journey to making a purchase in your favor. OpenView has provided an extraordinarily well thought out approach to this. Don't just download or share this eBook. Read it. It will help you start your approach on the right foot."

Robert Rose, Chief Strategist,
Content Marketing Institute

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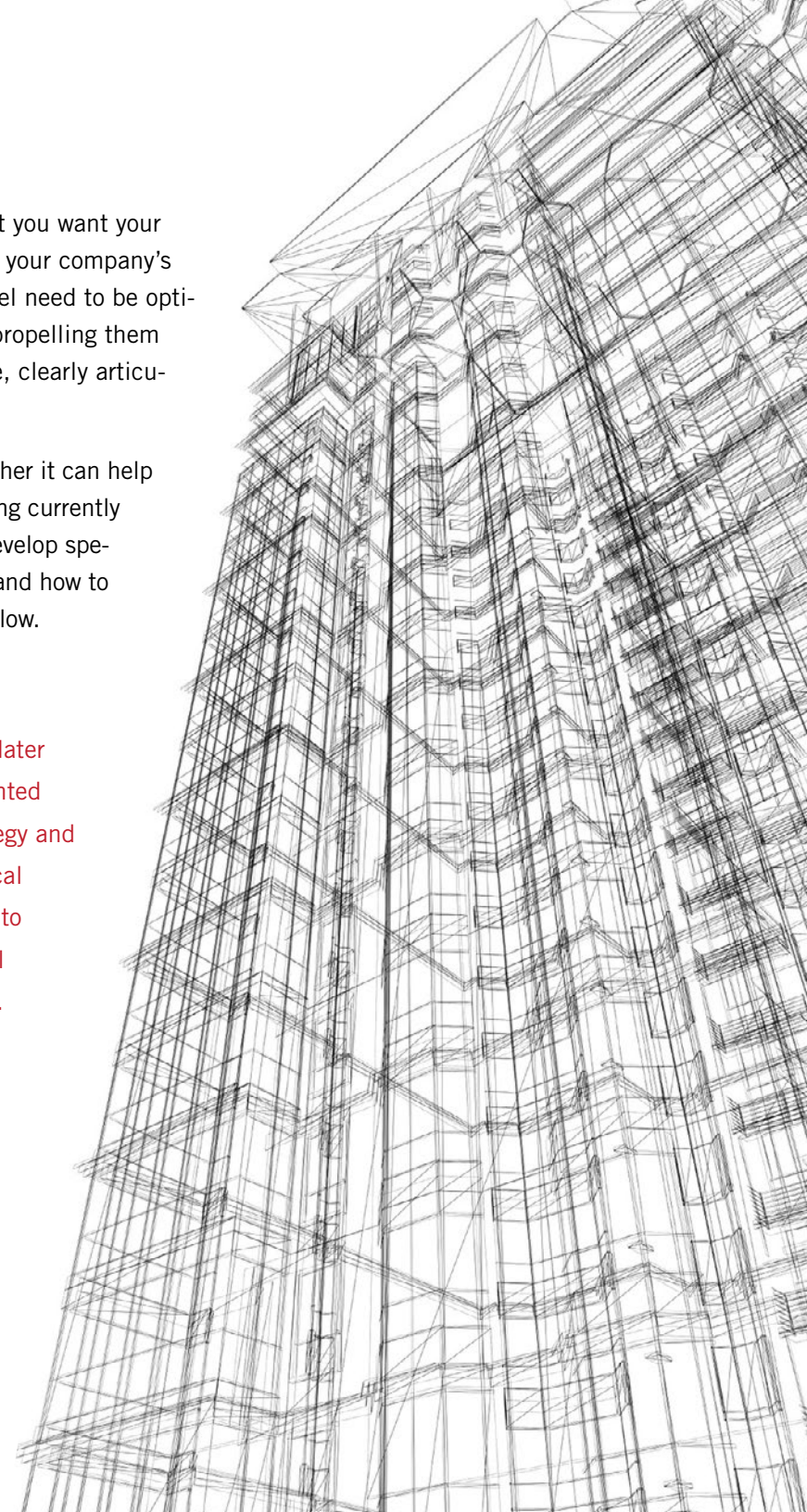
CHAPTER 3:
ASSEMBLING THE RIGHT CONTENT MARKETING TEAM

One of the biggest mistakes many expansion-stage companies make with content marketing is failing to allocate the right resources to develop a successful program. Rather than hire the right people, they add content marketing onto their existing marketing team's list of responsibilities. Doing so may seem pragmatic at first, but it is ultimately a short-sighted and flawed approach. Not only does it greatly reduce your chances of creating a true value-add program, it also distracts existing marketing team members from their other duties, making them less effective overall.

Make no mistake about it, building a content factory is an investment, and that investment starts with hiring a dedicated, full-time team for the job. The good news is that you can keep that team relatively small, provided that you augment it with the support of freelancers and industry influencers, and get other people throughout your company engaged in the effort. To lead that team, you must fill the one role that is absolutely essential for running an effective content factory: a managing editor.

HIRING A MANAGING EDITOR

If you can only hire one person to build your content factory, it needs to be a factory foreman who is capable of not only developing a content strategy, but also marshaling and managing all of the resources necessary to execute it and measure its success. At expansion-stage technology companies, that role is often best filled by a managing editor (other job titles that fill similar roles include director of content marketing and VP of content).

Reporting to the CMO, an experienced managing editor will typically possess a combination of deep editorial and project management expertise as well as a firm grasp of online marketing. He or she should be responsible for overseeing and optimizing your company's content creation and distribution processes, as well as ensuring the quality and timely publication of all of your content.

While impeccable writing and editing skills are essential, it's important to note that the managing editor's time should not be spent creating content. Instead, he or she will be managing a team, setting your editorial agenda, removing any impediments that are preventing your content factory from running smoothly, measuring its performance, and continually striving to improve it.

Some of the managing editor's other responsibilities may include:

- » Creating and managing the company's editorial calendar
- » Overseeing the creation of all content and ensuring that it is error free, optimized, and of the highest quality
- » Managing other content team members
- » Building and managing a stable of freelancers
- » Ensuring that all content is of the highest quality and delivered on time
- » Managing an error free, SEO-optimized corporate blog site and regularly contributing posts to it
- » Tracking and analyzing key metrics to help inform the strategy

Hiring the right managing editor is essential to the success of your content factory, so make sure that you are finding the best person possible for the role.

For a sample job description for a managing editor, see page 67 in the Appendix.

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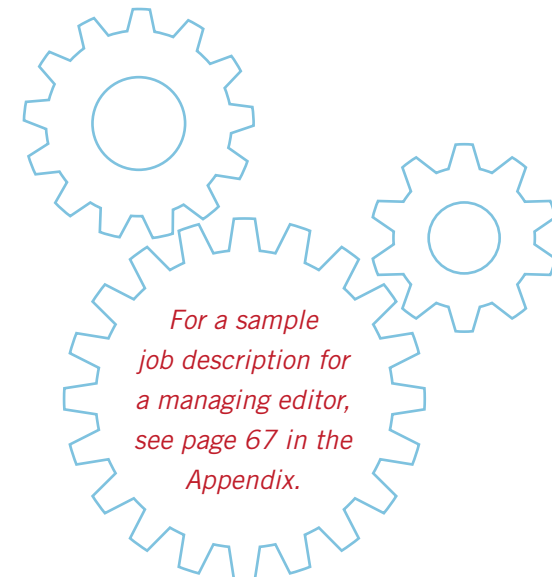
CONTENT CREATORS AND CONTENT DISTRIBUTORS

In addition to a managing editor, you will need some additional factory workers to help with two key areas: content creation and content distribution. While you can outsource these functions to freelancers, ideally they should be added as full-time employees to support your content factory and managing editor.

1. Start by hiring a **writer** who is not only savvy about your industry, but also with online marketing best practices. He or she will be your primary content creator and should have a strong background in journalism or a related field, or have experience writing for another company in your industry. More specifically, you will want to find someone who:

   » Already knows your industry or who can get up to speed quickly

   » Has excellent research and interviewing skills

   » Knows how to create a variety of different types of content that are targeted to resonate with very specific audiences

   » Has proven experience creating content that is optimized for search engines

   » Is familiar with online marketing best practices

   » Understands how to capture a company's voice and tone, and how to accurately represent its brand

Depending on how much content you plan to create, you may find that you need several writers or that you need to supplement the writers you have with freelance resources.

2. In addition to a writer, you will also need **someone who is sharply focused on delivering your content** through a variety of vehicles and programs. This person might be a social media specialist or a community manager and could be responsible for:

   » Managing content distribution through your website and other controlled sites, social media, direct marketing, relationship marketing, and various paid channels

   » Building your company's online community

   » Finding opportunities to partner with other organizations to cross-promote content

   » Creating and distributing your company's e-newsletter

   » Working with industry influencers to help promote content

Ultimately, filling both of these roles will go a long way toward building a team that has the expertise and manpower necessary to succeed. There are of course many other functions that you will need to run your content factory, from copyediting and proof-reading to videography and graphic design. Rather than hire people to do all of those things, you are better off supplementing your team with the help of good freelancers.

SCALING THE TEAM

To create a successful content factory, you will likely need some additional help to support your team's efforts. Here are three great options to start utilizing:

1. LEVERAGING FREELANCERS

Freelancers are a great and often budget-friendly way of scaling your content marketing team. Good freelancers provide on-demand access to the additional resources you need without the full cost and complexity of adding full-time staff. Another advantage of working with freelancers is that it allows you to tap into a much broader range of skill sets and expertise than you may already have in-house, making it easier to produce a rich array of high-quality content.

2. LEVERAGING INDUSTRY INFLUENCERS

Another effective way to expand the scope of your content marketing team is to build relationships with industry influencers, i.e., the journalists, bloggers, consultants, industry analysts, and others who influence your buyers' decisions. The main benefits of influencer marketing are threefold:

» **Get great content for free:** Interview influencers in videos and podcasts, ask them to contribute quotes to your white papers and reports, or even encourage them to contribute original content on their own.

» **Build your brand:** Getting an influencer to contribute to your content effectively puts their seal of approval on it. Such endorsements can go a long way toward building credibility and brand recognition with your target audience.

» **Expand your reach:** Influencers who create content with you are likely to share that content with their own followers, helping you to access a larger audience than you might otherwise not be able to reach on your own.

Ultimately, influencer marketing can be a great way to accelerate and amplify your content marketing efforts. The key is to make sure you are leveraging them correctly.

To learn more about influencer marketing, check out our eBook, "The Value of Influence: The Ultimate Guide to Influence Marketing."

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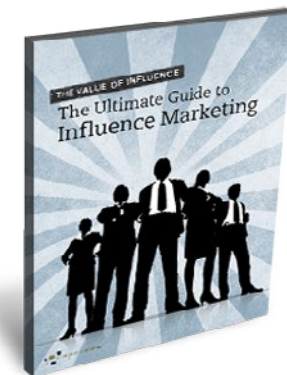
3. LEVERAGING CO-WORKERS

Take a look around and you may discover that you are surrounded by thought leaders who you can interview to create great content, amateur bloggers who you can get to write a post or two, or social media enthusiasts who are happy to help promote your content online.

The point is that successful content marketing teams find allies across their companies to leverage. By taking the time to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your co-workers, determining where their natural affinities lie, and thinking about how to best leverage their time, it will be easier for you to produce and distribute better content. The trick is getting people outside of the marketing team to jump on board the content marketing bandwagon.

BUILDING AND DEPLOYING A ROSTER OF CONTENT TALENT

The key to building and managing a successful content marketing team isn't having dozens of people on the payroll. It's all about making a handful of key hires, leveraging the right people within and outside of your organization, and ultimately putting everyone's individual skills and talents to use.

Doing so — rather than approaching content marketing as an add-on to your existing marketing team's responsibilities — will allow you to create a content factory that's not only efficient, but that also yields true value for your business.

"Always remember that facts tell and stories sell. To convert your readers into buyers, your content not only has to be useful, but also connect brand themes and narratives with the topics your buyers are demanding most. To create high-impact content, make sure that you not only understand your buyers, but also know how to engage them using a visually creative, contrarian, or clever angle. Doing so will allow you to find the right mix of familiarity so that your readers can relate to the problem you are solving, while also helping you to really connect with your audience on an emotional level. Meaningful, not mechanical, content is where real impact happens."

Lee Odden, CEO,
TopRank Online Marketing

CHAPTER 4:
CREATING HIGH-IMPACT CONTENT THAT DRIVES SALES

With a content strategy and team in place, the time has come to start producing some actual content. In order for that content to be effective, it has to be optimized to have maximum impact. That means it has to have all of the right parts and functionality built in to perform at its very best.
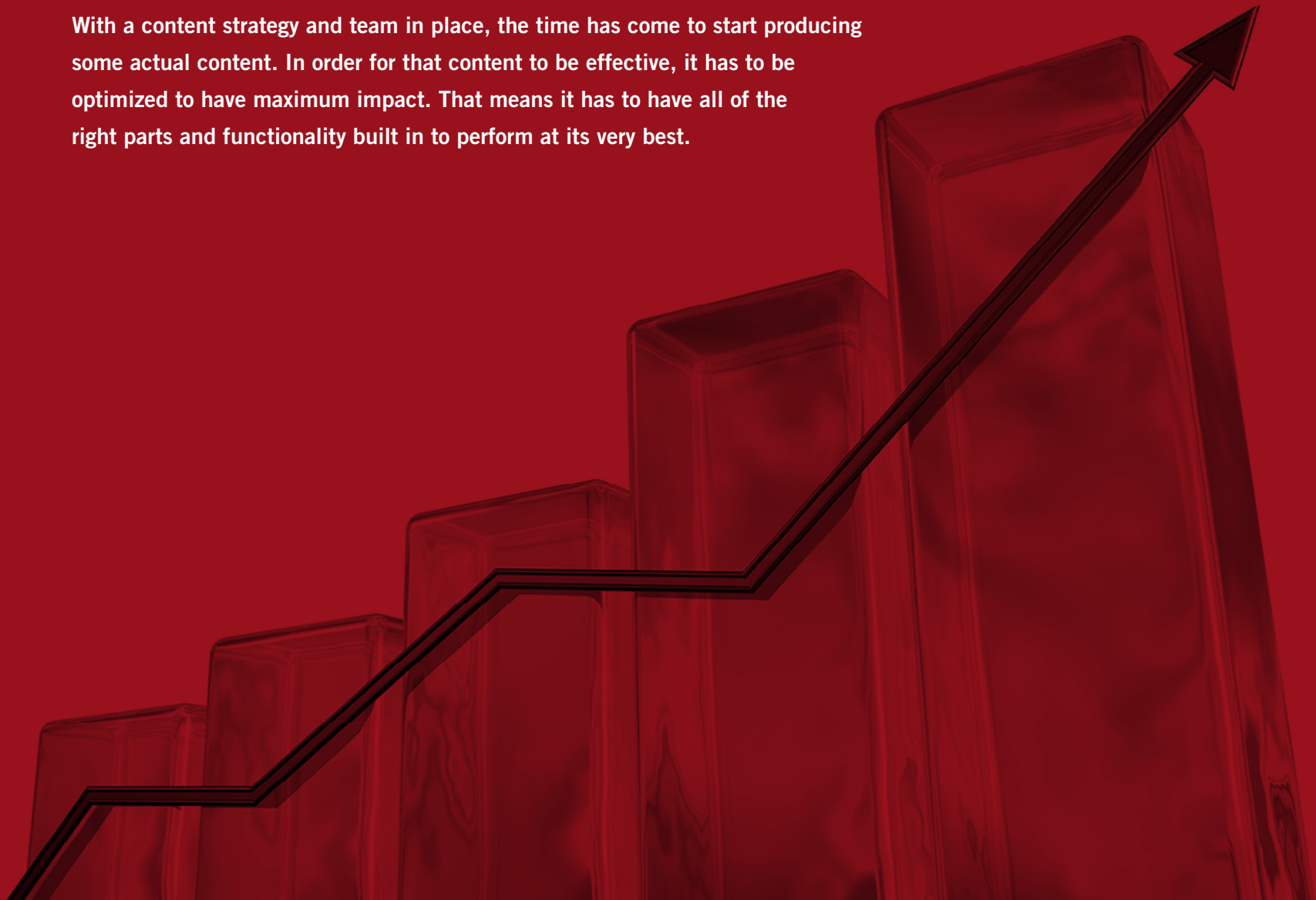
This chapter outlines the six things that your content consistently needs to do to ensure peak performance as an effective B2B marketing tool. Specifically, it must:

» Be optimized for search engines

» Reflect your deep understanding of your buyers

» Provide value to your audience

» Represent your company's brand aspirations

» Drive conversions

» Promote virality and engagement

Let's take a look at each of these points in more detail.
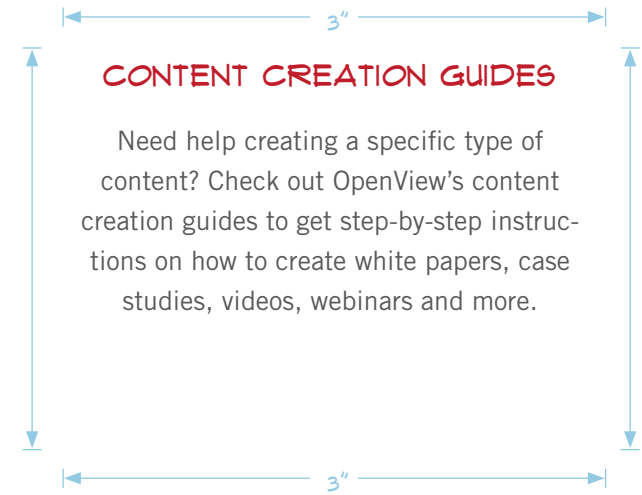
OPTIMIZING YOUR CONTENT FOR SEARCH ENGINES

First and foremost, your content is never going to have the desired impact if people aren't able to find it. As we will see in Chapter 5, one way of making content discovery easier for your target audience is by structuring your website to encourage segmentation, which helps visitors find the content that's relevant for them.

Of course, before any segmentation can occur, you need to get people to your website in the first place. One of the best ways to do that is to optimize all of the content you produce for search engines. Fundamentally, search engine optimization (SEO) is about leveraging best practices for creating and offering your content to search engines like Google or Bing. When you do so, you are making your content readily available to people who are interested in and searching for that content.

When leveraged effectively, SEO is a tactic that can dramatically increase the amount of organic traffic coming to your website. The challenge, however, is that it's as much of an art as it is a science. While there are no silver bullets — and trial and error is an inevitable part of mastering SEO — there are best practices that you can follow to help increase your chances of success.
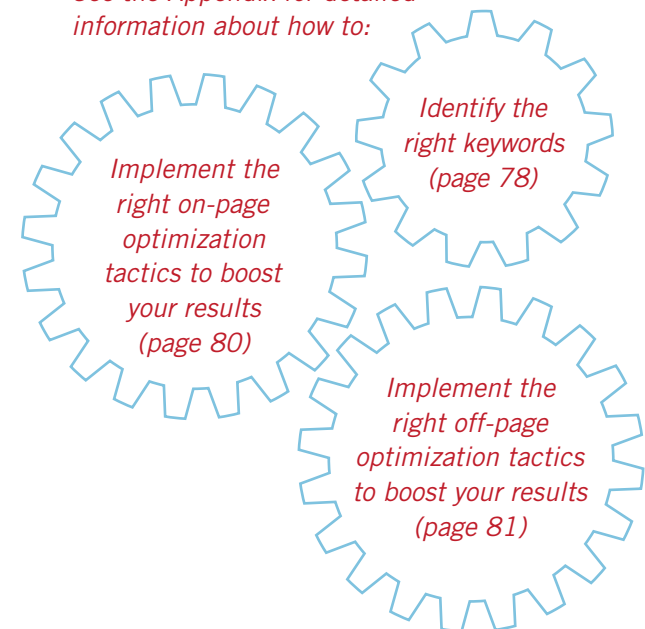
If you think back to English class, you may recall some of the qualities of great content. It needs to be well written, have the appropriate tone and style, and be clear, crisp, and concise. The reality, however, is that this and everything else you learned about content creation are merely table stakes when it comes to creating high-impact B2B content. There are numerous other resources that you can turn to for tips on writing better, including the writer's checklist in the Appendix of this eBook.

DEMONSTRATING THAT YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR BUYER

In Chapter 2, we looked at the importance of understanding your buyers and their buyer journey, and how that and other pertinent information can be mapped into a content matrix. The next step is translating all of those details into content that is carefully crafted to resonate with your target buyers at a particular point in their buyer journey. To help you do that, put yourself in your buyer's shoes and ask yourself questions like these every time you create a piece of content:

» Is the content appropriate given where your buyer is in the buyer journey?

» Does it provide the specific information your buyer needs at that point in the journey?

» Does it address a specific pain point or concern your buyer has right now?

» Does it contain the right kinds of messages given the buyer's role in the buying process?

» Is it at the appropriate level of sophistication given the buyer's background and knowledge?

» Is it in the best format to get the buyer to consume it?

» Does it contain conversion goals that are appropriate for the buyer's stage in the buying process?

Taking a critical look at every piece of content you create across dimensions like these will help you to tailor it for a very specific audience. Doing so takes time, but it will dramatically increase your chances of creating something that resonates with your target buyer and gets them to convert. The bottom line is that content that is on point and reflects that you have done your homework about your buyer is going to be far more effective and will have a much greater chance of driving conversions.

PROVIDING VALUE

High-impact content is useful content. It may solve a particular problem that someone is facing or answer a question that someone has. It may even just package up a bunch of information that people need so that it is all available in one place. Utility is an essential component of high-impact content, and as we will see later on in this eBook, creating useful content will also help ensure that people share it with others.

Below are some basic concepts to keep in mind when creating your content to make sure that it provides real value to your target audience:

» Create how-to content that provides practical advice or step-by-step instructions

» Offer thought leadership about what's going on in your industry rather than just information about your product or company

» Share proprietary research, analysis, and insights that people won't get anywhere else

» Point people to valuable resources, even if they are not your own

» Develop online assessments and other tools that people can use to evaluate something and get feedback to help them improve

Ultimately, the more actionable and utilitarian your content is, the more useful it will be.

REPRESENTING YOUR COMPANY'S BRAND ASPIRATIONS

Your content is a very public reflection of your company that will leave an impression in the minds of the people who consume it. As such, it needs to accurately reflect how you want people to perceive your brand in the market. The more people's impressions align with the one you are trying to create, the more you will be able to use your content to build your company's brand.
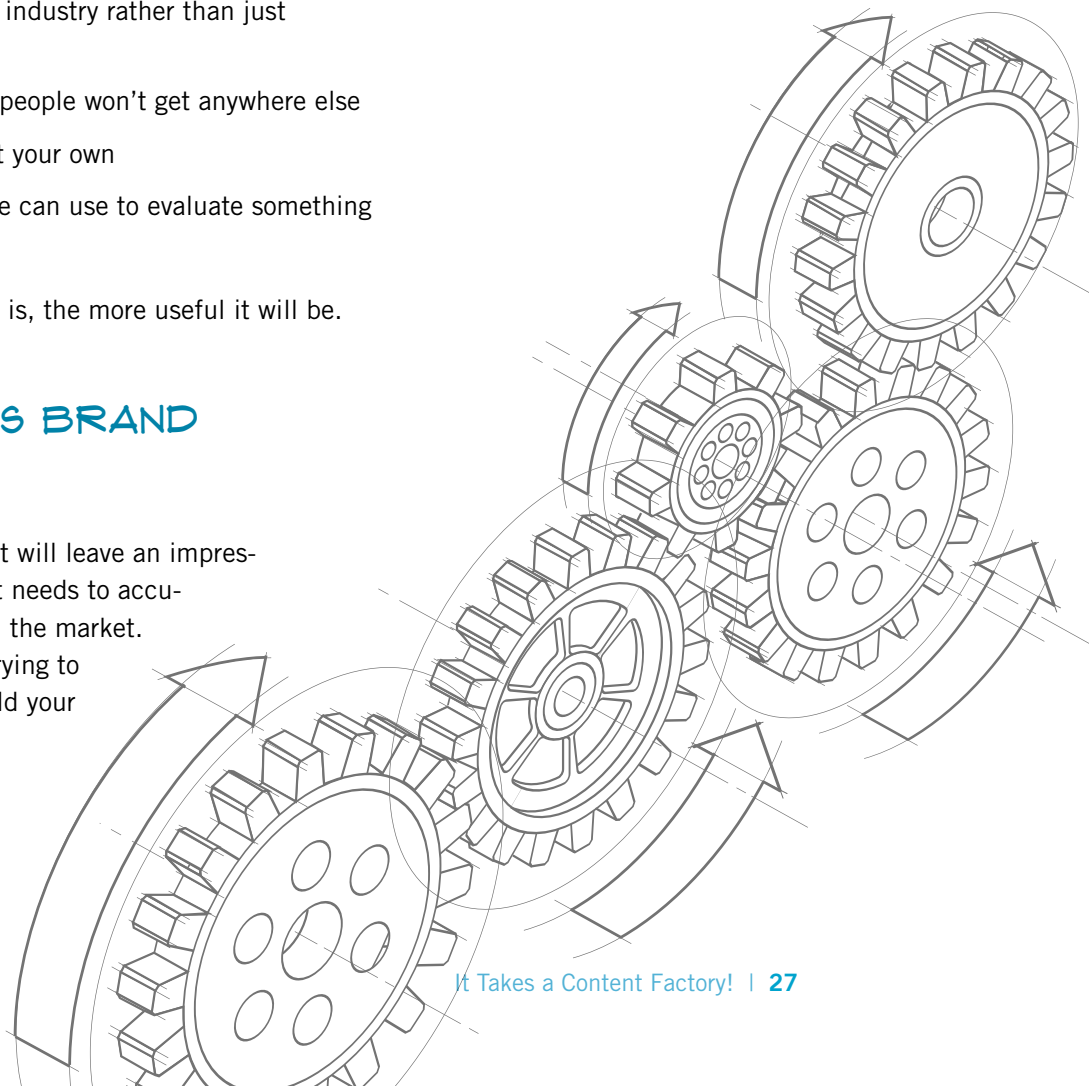
For example, imagine that your company is trying to establish a reputation for being trustworthy, innovative, and secure. You can leverage your content to help reinforce those brand aspirations by:

» Sharing customer testimonials that underscore how the company has gained their trust

» Not only explaining how your products and solutions are innovative, but also finding an innovative way of doing so

» Reiterating in your case studies, fact sheets, and videos key messages around why your products and solutions are so secure

Most expansion-stage marketers fail in this regard, largely because their companies either don't have defined brand aspirations, or because they don't understand what they are. The better you are at articulating your company's brand aspirations, the easier it will be to create content that aligns with those aspirations and leaves your audience with the impression of your brand that you want them to have.

DRIVING CONVERSIONS

In Chapter 2 we noted that just as every content strategy needs to have conversion goals, every piece of content needs a call to action that encourages your target buyers to take some kind of step to move them through the buying process. No matter whether your conversion goal is to get someone to open your e-mail or to sign up for a free trial, for your content to have maximum impact you have to do everything you can to drive those conversions. There are a variety of different tactics that you can use, all of which are outlined in Chapter 6 of this eBook.

PROMOTING VIRALITY AND ENGAGEMENT

With the incredible success of business videos like this one from DollarShaveClub.com, which has garnered more than 11 million views on YouTube since it was created in 2012, many content marketers aspire to going viral. It's almost become the holy grail of content marketing.

The reality is that there's a lot of luck involved in the virality of content and it is impossible to predict what's going to go viral and what isn't. If you are a B2B marketer for an expansion-stage technology company, you may also face the challenge of trying to create viral content about topics that don't inherently lend themselves to virality. When's the last time you saw a viral video about WAN optimization?

While there's no single recipe for creating viral content every time, there are a few strategies and tactics that will help improve your chances for success no matter what you're marketing, including:

» Designing your content to evoke an emotional response

» Delivering content that provides real value

» Incorporating features that facilitate engagement virality
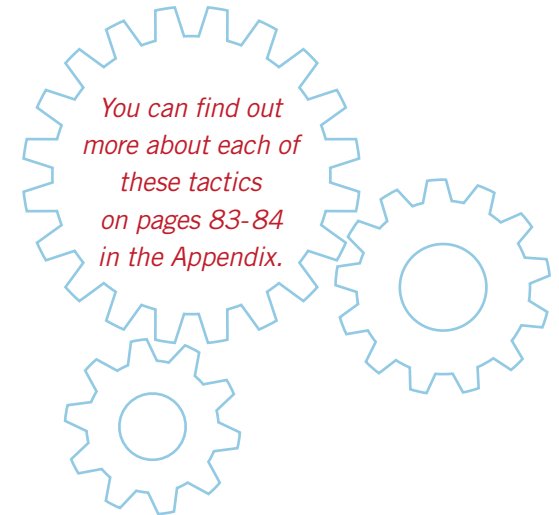
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ARE YOU CREATING HIGH-IMPACT CONTENT THAT EXCITES YOUR AUDIENCE?

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, anyone can create content. But there's a significant difference — in terms of both quality and impact — between general content and content that's created with context, relevance, and performance in mind. Ultimately, the processes, tactics, and tips laid out in this chapter will help you produce the latter.

Now that we have covered the importance of developing high-impact content, the next step is to begin delivering that content.

8"

CHAPTER 5:
MAKING CONTACT THROUGH CONTENT DELIVERY

Having created great content that is optimized for search, resonates with your target audience, fosters engagement and conversions, and aligns with your brand aspirations, your next step is to determine how to best deliver that content to amplify its effect. Your content distribution efforts are just as important as your content creation efforts and require a similarly rigorous, strategic, and systematic approach.

In this chapter, we will look at the combination of content delivery vehicles and programs that you should be using to effectively get your content in front of the right people at the right times. Importantly, you will learn not only what tactics to use, but also how to scale your distribution strategy appropriately based on the particular content you are trying to promote.

CONTENT DELIVERY VEHICLES

There are eight main types of content delivery vehicles that you should be considering to get your content out to your target audience:

1. Your company's website
2. Other websites that you can control
3. Social media channels
4. Your e-newsletter
5. Other direct marketing channels
6. Industry influencers
7. Industry partners
8. Paid channels

Let's take a closer look at each.

YOUR COMPANY'S WEBSITE

Your company's website is one of the most important tools you have for delivering content to your customers, yet many companies fail to optimize their websites for content delivery. As a result, site visitors are often left scratching their heads about what they are supposed to do and wondering where they can find the specific content they need.

Don't fall into that trap. When anyone comes to your site, make it immediately clear what they need to do to quickly get to the information they need. A great way to do this is by designing your homepage to encourage visitors to segment themselves in some way, such as based on their industry, role in the buying process, or a particular challenge they face.

"Marketers need to remember that of all the places their content could live online, their own website probably gets the least amount of traffic. That's why you need to embrace the concept of the digital dandelion. Think of your website as the stalk and your content as those fuzzy seeds. Just like a dandelion, your content starts on the stalk but should also be spread far and wide, and repackaged, repurposed, and redistributed in as many places as possible."

Jay Baer, Social Media and Content Marketing Strategist and *New York Times* Best-Selling Author

Mashery, the world's leading provider of API technology and services, is a great example of this practice in action. Upon arriving at the company's homepage, visitors are immediately encouraged to segment themselves based on their role, in this case business managers, IT managers, and developers.

Encouraging customer segmentation on your website allows you to control each visitor's experience and direct them to the information that they will find most useful and engaging. In Mashery's case, IT managers get directed to a page with content that's relevant to them, while developers get directed to a different page with content designed to appeal to their needs.
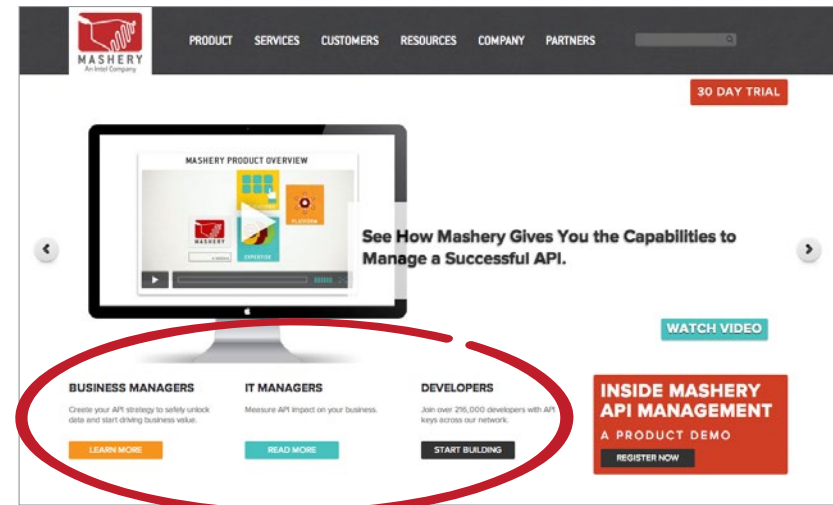
Another advantage of providing an immediate option to self-select is that it solves the issue of cluttered messaging on your homepage. Rather than try to create a single message that delivers all things to all people, clear segmentation options allow you to communicate that your company both understands and serves a visitor's industry and/or pain points, and then provide the appropriate, targeted messaging.

Additional Resources:
For more information on website content segmentation, see "Website Content Segmentation: Five Best Practices to Set You Apart from the Competition."

OTHER WEBSITES YOU CAN CONTROL

While posting content to your company's website is important, it will only take you so far. As an expansion-stage company, even if all of your content is optimized for search engines and your website is set up for segmentation, chances are that your site isn't a destination in its own right and only garners a small fraction of its potential relevant traffic. So, it is important to look for opportunities to post your content on other, more highly trafficked content-hosting sites that allow you to set up your own accounts.

Below are some best content-hosting sites that regularly draw huge numbers of visitors. Whether you set up a free generic account or a paid branded one, you can immediately start posting your eBooks, white papers, podcasts, and other favorite content in places where people have a greater chance of finding them.

SITE	OVERVIEW	BEST FOR POSTING
.docstoc	With over 25 million users, DocStoc is a document and resource-hosting site that allows you to post content in a variety of formats.	Videos, articles, productivity tools
iTunes	As Apple's best-known media player and content library, iTunes is the best place to post audio content.	Podcasts
Scribd.	Described as the world's largest online library, Scribd is a free community content-sharing site that has a monthly audience of approximately 90 million readers.	Text-based content such as white papers, case studies, and reports
slideshare	The world's largest community for sharing presentations, SlideShare garners more than 130 million page views each month.	Visual content such as presentations and eBooks with a landscape format
visual.ly	A platform for creating data visualizations and infographics, Visual.ly also allows you to post the infographics you have created.	Infographics

Posting content to any of these sites, or to the many others that exist, will not only give you access to much larger audiences, but also create an opportunity to drive people back to your site where they can find even more content.

One way to help ensure that this happens is to only include a portion of a large piece of content on a content-hosting site. For example, if you are publishing a 30-page eBook, you might consider posting the first 10 pages to SlideShare, and then including an 11th page with a button that viewers can click that takes them to your website to download the rest of the eBook. Someone who has read the first 10 pages of your eBook may very well take the time to download the rest of it from your site.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

The number of social networking sites has exploded in recent years, bringing hundreds of potential new marketing channels onto the scene. With so many options, it's easy to get distracted and waste time experimenting with new channels that may never provide any real business value.

That's why it is important to be extremely focused and to concentrate your efforts on the smallest number of channels that will have the highest impact with your specific target audience. Typically, that will include some combination of the social networking sites listed below:

Facebook: Although more commonly used by B2C businesses, Facebook can still be a useful channel for B2B marketing, particularly for sharing more personal and visually engaging content such as blog posts, videos, and infographics. Stick to lighter, more entertaining content and leave your white papers, case studies, and reports for other distribution channels.

Find out more: How to Use Facebook for Business

Google+: Although initially slow to take off, Google+ has evolved into a vibrant social network for sharing content. Users can segment themselves into groups called communities based on their interests and needs, facilitating targeted content distribution. In addition, posting your content on Google+ has the added benefit of positively influencing your search results.

Find out more: Google Plus: A Guide for Everyone

LinkedIn: The world's leading business networking site, LinkedIn is the perfect tool for sharing your content with highly targeted audiences. In addition to promoting your content through status updates on your company's page, take advantage of the more than 1 million LinkedIn Groups, which segment users based on their industry, interests, and needs. By joining the groups that are most relevant to your buyers, you gain access to a platform for distributing your content to a targeted audience.

Find out more: LinkedIn Best Practices: Targeted Status Updates

Pinterest: A top destination for visual content, companies like Disney, Starbucks, and Target use Pinterest to build their brands. In addition to posting infographics and photos, consider posting visually engaging eBook covers or slides. If you include images with each of your blog posts or articles (which you should), also post them to Pinterest, creating a board that curates your company's content in a visual fashion.

Find out more: The Pinterest for Business Guide

Twitter: Ideally suited to sharing content, success with Twitter hinges on your ability to be strategic and to maximize the exposure of your tweets. Don't just tweet a new piece of content once, but rather four times spaced eight hours apart to increase visibility across time zones. If the content is evergreen, you should also preschedule up to 10 additional tweets to promote it over the following three months. Lastly, remember the 4-1-1 rule: tweet someone else's content four times and retweet another person once for every time you send a tweet promoting your own content.

Find out more: Twitter Best Practices

YouTube: The world's second largest search engine (after Google) with 800 million visitors a month, YouTube is home to a considerable amount of business-related content. Create a YouTube channel for your company and ensure that every video you create is posted to it. In addition, be sure to create playlists to help organize your videos and include calls to action at the end of each video, beckoning viewers to either watch another video or to visit your website.

Find out more: YouTube for Business: Top 10 Strategies and Best Practices

Ultimately your goal in using all of these sites is to raise brand awareness, foster engagement, develop a community, and drive people to your website where they can consume your content.

YOUR E-NEWSLETTER

An e-newsletter is an essential component to any successful content delivery strategy. It is a simple and effective way to make regular contact with your target audience, promote your content, drive website traffic, develop brand awareness, and encourage engagement.

When developing your newsletter, strive to create one that:

» Is distributed weekly

» Delivers valuable, highly targeted content that's relevant for your target audience

» Contains engaging subject lines designed to ensure an open rate of at least 20 percent

» Includes short, pithy abstracts of your content that are designed to get people to click through to get the full content on your website

» Is widely promoted so that your distribution list grows by at least 100 new subscribers every week

For a complete explanation of how to set up a successful newsletter, see OpenView's "Quick Guide to Launching an E-mail Newsletter" and this video from the Content Marketing Institute's Joe Pulizzi entitled "E-mail Newsletters: Selecting Content and Frequency."

openview weekly

Join more than 25,000 entrepreneurs and senior executives and start receiving OpenView's weekly e-newsletter.

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DIRECT MARKETING CHANNELS

Direct marketing used to take the form of direct mail campaigns, print newsletters, and catalogs. While those tactics are still used to great effect in some cases, many marketers have turned to their online equivalents, including e-mail, text messages, push notifications, and social media. Channels like these allow marketers to engage consumers in real time with personalized messages.

For more information on e-mail marketing, including best practices, see "E-mail Marketing: How to Push Send and Grow Your Business."

INDUSTRY INFLUENCERS

In Chapter 3, we mentioned industry influencers as a possible extension of your content marketing team. Leveraged correctly, they are a valuable resource for content creation and also content distribution. If you have built strong relationships with influencers, you can get them to share your content with their audiences, which has two huge advantages: It creates an opportunity to get your content out to a new and potentially larger pool of relevant prospects, and gives your content the added authority that comes from being shared by an industry influencer.
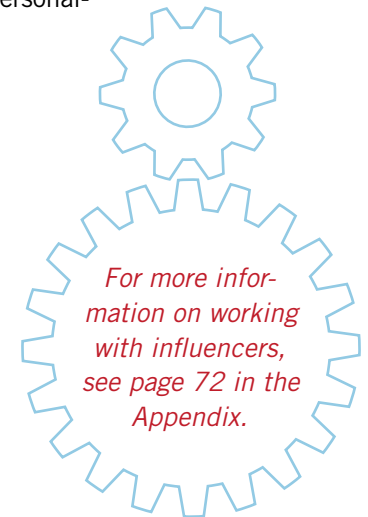
PARTNERS FOR CO-MARKETING

In addition to working with industry influencers, consider looking for other individuals and organizations to partner with in a content delivery exchange. For example, you may find opportunities to share another organization's highly relevant content with your audience, either through an e-mail blast or in your newsletter, in exchange for the other organization doing the same with a piece of your content. Provided that the content is relevant to both sets of audiences and in no way undermines your own sales efforts, this can be a quick and easy way of getting your content out in front of an expanded audience.

PAID CHANNELS

Beyond the many free options listed above for delivering your content — which typically cost you time, not money — there are a variety of paid channels that you can utilize as well. These include various forms of advertising, including:

- » Content discovery platforms such as Outbrain, StumbleUpon, and Zemanta
- » Social media promotions such as LinkedIn and Facebook ads, sponsored YouTube channels, and promoted tweets
- » Display and pay-per-click search ads
- » Sponsorships

The effectiveness of these and other paid channels can vary greatly, so it is important to do your homework before investing in any of them. As noted in Chapter 2, cheaper forms of content delivery are almost always preferable to expensive ones.
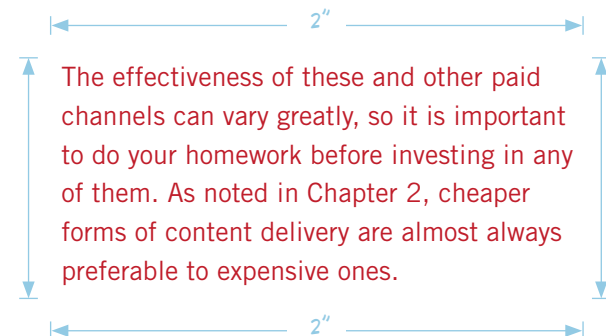
CONTENT DELIVERY PROGRAMS

Whereas the vehicles above represent individual tools for content delivery, it is also possible to create larger content delivery programs. Below are two examples:

CAMPAIGNS

There is a huge array of different types of campaigns that you can run to deliver content designed to meet various objectives, such as raising awareness, acquiring new customers, retaining existing customers, or improving public perception of your products and services. For example, you might run a campaign to generate buzz around your company or your product by creating a promotional video, writing a guest article on an industry influencer's website, or posting banner ads to relevant websites in your industry.

RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

Relationship marketing is a long-term approach to communicating with your prospects that is focused on customer retention rather than customer acquisition. It is about providing your prospects and customers with highly relevant content that is tailored to their interests and needs in an effort to create a more meaningful, personalized, and lasting experience.

By using a marketing automation tool such as Market, Act-On, or Pardot, you can track and nurture individual leads by automatically delivering particular pieces of content based on specific actions they have taken.

For a comprehensive list of types of campaigns, see page 85 in the Appendix.

For more information on relationship marketing, check out "Relationship Marketing: View From the Top and What It Really Takes To Get There."
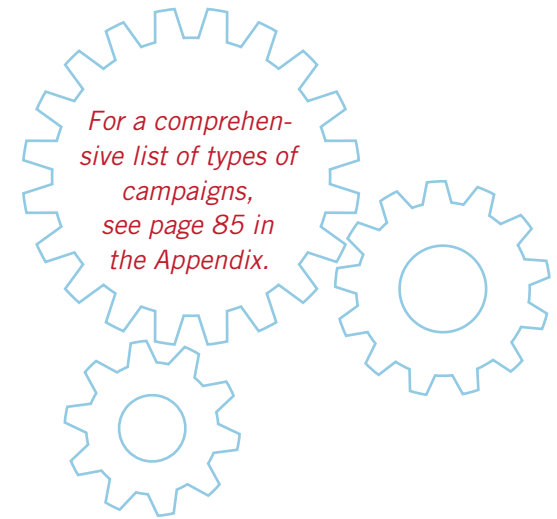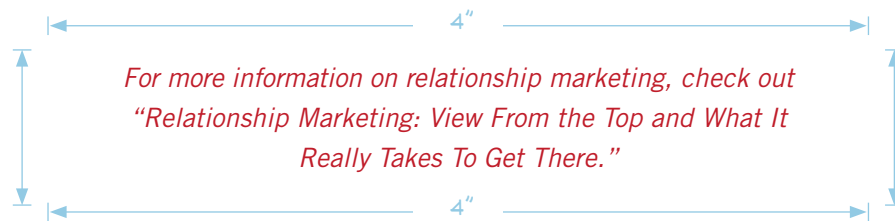
CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE CONTENT DELIVERY STRATEGY

Once you are familiar with all of the different ways that you can deliver your content, create a checklist like the one below that outlines the steps you need to take to promote and distribute your content. Make sure that you can answer yes to each of these questions before considering your work done:

» Have you posted the content to your website?

» Have you posted the content to other applicable websites that you can control?

» Have you included the content in your e-newsletter?

» Have you shared the content socially via:
  - LinkedIn using relevant LinkedIn Groups?
  - Google+?
  - Twitter?
  - Facebook?
  - Pinterest?

» Have you gotten any industry influencers to share the content?

» Have you been able to leverage any partners to cross-promote the content?

» Have you utilized the appropriate paid channels to deliver the content?

» Have you leveraged the content in your campaigns and relationship marketing efforts?

While not every content delivery tactic is going to apply to every piece of content, it is important to have a standard list of procedures to follow as appropriate for every piece of content. Bigger pieces of content will require more robust and strategic content delivery, while smaller pieces won't. The most important thing is that you take the time to properly market your content to get the maximum amplification.

"One of the most important elements of content delivery is to test and iterate. Since there are countless channels to choose from, maintain focus by starting small and always track and analyze your findings before moving on. Just because you're 'doing what works' doesn't mean you've reached your maximum potential. In fact, you've probably only scratched the surface."

Morgan Burke, Content Marketing Specialist, OpenView Venture Partners

CHAPTER 6:
CREATING CONVERSIONS TO MOVE YOUR BUYER THROUGH THE SALES FUNNEL

Throughout this eBook, we have noted how important it is to have conversion goals for your content factory and that every piece of content you create needs to contain a conversion mechanism that is designed to get your buyers to take some kind of action. In this chapter, we will focus on the various tactics you can use to drive those conversions. Ultimately, the best measure of a piece of content's effectiveness is whether or not people take a desired action as a result of consuming it.

It is important to remember that there are all different kinds of conversions. Some will be big (like making a purchase) and others will be very small, such as opening an e-mail or visiting your website. The trick to getting people to make those big conversions is getting them to make a series of much smaller ones along the way. One of the smallest, but most important, conversions is getting them to join your community. Doing so will also help pave the way for bigger conversions further down the road.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF FANS, FOLLOWERS, AND SUBSCRIBERS

Every content factory needs an online community to support it. By converting your target audience into fans, followers, and subscribers, you are effectively earning the right to communicate with your targets directly. For that reason alone, it is important to encourage your target audience to like your Facebook page, follow you on Twitter, join your LinkedIn Group and, perhaps most importantly, sign up to receive your opt-in e-mails and e-newsletter.

Here are some tips and best practices to help get you started building your community:

1. START SMALL

Focus on just one area at first. You will be much more successful concentrating your efforts on building a community on Twitter, for example, than on trying to simultaneously build one on LinkedIn, Google+, Facebook, YouTube, and Pinterest. Build a successful community on one platform before tackling the next, and make sure to leverage your existing community to help build others. Once you have built a good following on LinkedIn, for example, you can convert that community into subscribers for your e-newsletter.

2. PROVIDE VALUE

If you are sharing useful content (even if it isn't your own), people will be far more inclined to join your community than if you are just making noise. Become a trusted resource and over time your community will grow.

3. ACTIVELY ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY

Pose questions, foster discussions, and always respond when people contact you. In addition, try to forge personal connections with people and to bring everyone together so that they feel like they are a part of a real community.

4. SHOW SOME PERSONALITY

It is important to be more than just a logo. Develop a voice for your company that helps personify your business and lets people know that they are dealing with real people, not just a company. Share photos of employees where appropriate and make it easy for your audience to relate back to you.

5. BE PATIENT

Building an online community is a marathon, not a sprint. It is going to take time, so keep your expectations in check. The good news is that once you establish a community, as long as you continue to nurture it, it will continue to grow.

No matter where or how you start, building a community of fans, followers, and subscribers will go a long way toward helping you drive more conversions. Once you are able to directly contact your target audience, getting them to do other things is only one step away. Of course, you are going to have to give them a reason to take that step.

Want to learn more about how to build an online community? Listen to this podcast with Mack Fogelson, the founder and CEO of Mack Web Solutions.

HOW TO GET YOUR AUDIENCE TO CONVERT

There are many different ways to encourage and incentivize your target audience to convert. Below are some of the most common ones that you should be considering:

1. GRAB YOUR AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION WITH ENGAGING HEADLINES AND IMAGES

We live in an information age and are bombarded with content every day. As a result, we have become adept at quickly assessing — often just in the blink of an eye — which pieces of content we are going to consume and which pieces we will ignore.

Your job as a content marketer is to give your target audience plenty of reasons to consume your content, starting with two of the things they use most often to make these rapid decisions: headlines and images. Pay close attention to both and you will dramatically increase the chances of people clicking on your links, opening your e-mails, and downloading your eBooks and reports. Let's start by taking a look at headlines and their e-mail equivalents, subject lines.

To be effective, always make sure that they are:

» **Concise:** Get to the point…fast. Lengthy headlines and subject lines cannot be processed quickly and, as a result, often get overlooked. Many e-mail marketers suggest limiting subject lines to less than 50 characters. Headlines, while a bit more forgiving, should also be kept as short as possible.

» **Timely:** Headlines and subject lines can be particularly effective when they are tied back to news or current events. Be cautious when using this tactic, however, and only select news that cannot in any way be construed as offensive.

» **Informative:** With just a few words you have to convey to your audience what your content is all about. Vague headlines are easy to ignore and, even if they do convert someone, can frustrate audiences who expected to find something different than what your content actually delivers.

» **Compelling:** You have to make your audience want to read your content. Mechanical or uninspired headlines just won't do. Use active verbs, humor, and wit to engage your audience and get their attention.

Many of the same rules apply to the images you use with your content. You want an image that's visually engaging and that directly ties back to your content, thus further reinforcing what the audience can expect after clicking through. Stock photos tend to feel like stock photos, so take care to pick images that are unique, stand out, and that you would respond to if you were the target audience.

Most important, make sure that you are using images wherever you can to help capture people's attention. Include them in your blog posts and on your landing pages, and incorporate them in your reports, case studies, and white papers. **Create attractive covers for your eBooks and use thumbnails of the covers to help advertise them.** A great image can go a long way toward piquing your target audience's interest and getting them to take the time to consume your content.

Want to learn about competitive messaging? Download "Why Us? A Guide to Competitive Messaging."

2. INCENTIVIZE YOUR AUDIENCE

Never underestimate the power of incentivizing your target audience. Small rewards, such as a free trial of your service or a free sample of your product, can go a long way toward motivating people to convert. You can even take things a step further by offering gifts such as a free T-shirt (which can be incredibly effective, particularly if you are targeting a tech community) or a gift card. While there is an expense associated with this approach, smart campaigns can be created that drive conversions and make the investment well worth it. Also consider running contests or raffles, both of which can be extremely effective.

3. CREATE LANDING PAGES THAT PROMOTE SPECIFIC CONVERSIONS

Another important tactic that will help you maximize conversions is developing targeted landing pages that draw people in and get them to convert. The advantage of driving traffic to specific landing pages, rather than just your homepage, is that it allows you to focus visitors' attention on one specific piece of content and corresponding conversion goal, rather than the many that may live on your homepage.

To make your landing pages effective, always make sure that they:

» Have clear and concise headlines

» Align with the messaging you used elsewhere to drive people to the page

» Incorporate testimonials or other validation from third parties

» Have a single call to action that stands out prominently above the fold so people don't have to scroll to find it

» Aren't cluttered with other links or with too much text

» Contain relevant images

» Are highly focused so that the sole objective is to get one conversion

» Ask for the data you are most interested in collecting in exchange for a piece of content

Experiment with different landing pages to see what your target audience responds to and optimize based on your findings. Even small adjustments can make a big difference.
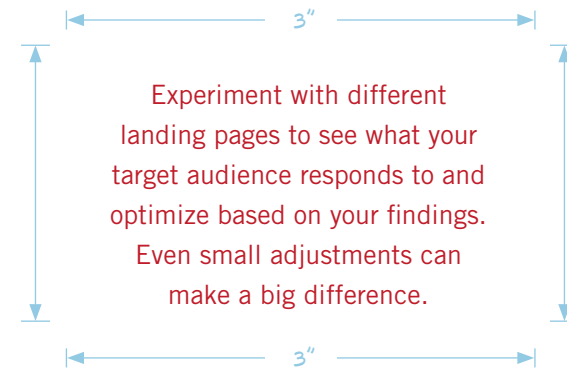
Additional Resources:

For more information about how to optimize your content for conversions, check out these resources:

» E-mail Marketing Tactics: Do Your Messages Measure Up?

» Landing Page Optimization: The Definitive Guide to Testing and Tuning for Conversions

» 20 Critical Do's and Don'ts for Clickable Calls to Action

» The Anatomy of a Perfect Landing Page

4. DEVELOP COMPELLING CALLS TO ACTION THAT GUIDE BUYERS TO A NEXT STEP

Once someone opens your e-mail or clicks on a page of your website, you need to make it clear to them what they are supposed to do next with a compelling, well-placed call to action (CTA). CTAs are the mechanisms that drive conversions, and they will vary depending on the piece of content associated with them and their intended purpose in the buying process.

Top of the funnel content, such as blog posts and videos, for example, might contain simple CTAs directing the audience to additional related content where they can learn more. Content that is intended for a later stage in the buying process, such as a case study, might have a CTA encouraging the user to download a free trial. It's important to make sure that your CTAs (and conversion goals) are appropriate for the piece of content and the stage of the buying process they are intended to serve.

When adding CTAs to your content, keep in mind that they need to:

» Clearly and concisely articulate the value the user will get from taking the action

» Be prominently placed within the content and visually compelling so that they stand out and catch people's eye

» Accurately portray what the user will get

» Offer something of value

In addition, avoid crowding pages with multiple CTAs. Have one primary CTA per page and, if needed, a secondary one.

Additional Resources:
For more information on creating effective CTAs, check out "An Introduction to Effective Calls-to-Action."

Conversions are your content factory's ultimate output, and you should be doing everything you can to make sure that your content is optimized for and aligned with campaigns to drive the conversions you need to get a sale.

CHAPTER 7:
MANAGING AND MEASURING YOUR CONTENT FACTORY

By now you should have a firm understanding of how to build a content factory from the ground up. This chapter will provide some guidance to help you successfully manage that content factory and measure its results. It explains the importance of establishing a consistent rhythm for your content factory and outlines some of the essential tools to help make that possible. It also provides a framework that you can use for measuring how well your content factory is working and for analyzing your results on a regular basis so that you can make continuous improvements.

ESTABLISHING A CONTENT RHYTHM

One of the biggest mistakes many companies make when they try to build a content factory is that they fail to get into a regular rhythm for creating and distributing their content. As a result, their content comes out in dribs and drabs, making it impossible to build momentum, scale the program, and establish the consistency and frequency that a content factory needs to produce steady results.

That's why as you are building your content factory, it is important to think about the following points:

» **Be consistent.** Put a stake in the ground and commit to a rhythm that you are confident you can deliver consistently, even if it is just one blog post a week.

» **Accelerate over time.** Once you have mastered that rhythm, increase the tempo by getting to two or three blog posts a week. As soon as that becomes routine, add something else into the mix, such as a monthly report or a quarterly eBook. The idea is to make creating each piece of content so routine that you get better and faster at doing it. Eventually, you will find that you are able to add new things to your rhythm.

» **Focus on the right content types.** As you are finding your rhythm, try to determine what kinds of content you need to deliver at what frequency to get the best result. That will take some experimentation and your rhythm will invariably evolve over time.

» **Define your rhythm.** Ultimately, strive to get into a daily, weekly, and quarterly rhythm so that you have content coming out at each of those intervals.

No matter where you are in the evolution of your content factory, the key is to establish a framework for the types of content you are going to create at defined intervals and then ensure that your content factory is optimized to maintain that rhythm. This will yield much better results than creating and distributing your content on an ad hoc, inconsistent basis. Strive to get to the point where your content factory is producing and delivering one high-impact piece of content every day.

The best way to do this is by establishing very efficient and streamlined processes for developing and distributing your content. The next section contains more information on creating process documents and other tools that you will need to help you institutionalize your content marketing activities.

To access any of OpenView's content, visit our blog and community site.

After getting established, a young content factory's content rhythm might look like this:

DAILY

1 article or blog post

WEEKLY

1 podcast or video
2 pieces of curated content

QUARTERLY

1 eBook
1 report
1 case study

As you get more experience, you will be able to take on more. At OpenView, for example, our content rhythm looks like this:

1 article
2-3 blog posts

1 podcast
3 videos
5 pieces of curated content

2 eBooks
2 reports
1 case study
1 infographic
5 webinars

BUILDING THE TOOLS YOU NEED TO RUN YOUR CONTENT FACTORY

There are several tools that you can use to help you manage your content rhythm and ensure that you are creating great content. These include the following:

1. AN EDITORIAL CALENDAR

By providing a framework for developing and releasing content, an editorial calendar can help you visualize how you are going to execute your content strategy. It will also help you stay focused so that you can both create new content and update existing content on a regular basis for each of your buyers at every point of the buying process. Importantly, your editorial calendar is also your primary tool for communicating your content agenda with the rest of your organization. It provides transparency into what you are doing in a way that everyone will be able to understand.

To find out more about editorial calendars, including how to set one up, see page 90 in the Appendix.

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2. A CONTENT CREATION CALENDAR
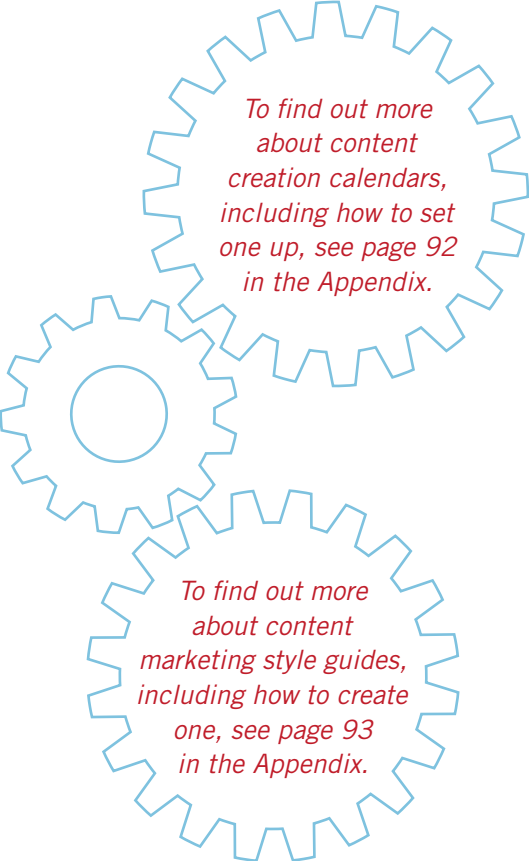
In addition to an editorial calendar, it is helpful to maintain a document that tracks the creation of individual pieces of content. Whereas an editorial calendar gives you a high-level overview of what's being published when, a content creation document will allow you to track the work being done on individual pieces of content so that you stay better organized. For example, in this document you will note when drafts of content are due from your freelancers, whether or not an eBook has been proofread, or who still needs to review your next white paper before it can be published.

To find out more about content creation calendars, including how to set one up, see page 92 in the Appendix.

3. A CONTENT MARKETING STYLE GUIDE

A company's content — including its website, blogs, collateral, thought leadership, and social media — can help create and nurture a strong brand if it is clean, crisp, and consistent. Conversely, if your content lacks these characteristics, it can quickly undermine your brand. That's why every company needs a content marketing style guide. Good style guides document and standardize everything, from the unique terminology a company uses to describe itself to its spelling and punctuation preferences. The style guide becomes a basic road map that everyone can follow to help create consistent, high-quality content.

To find out more about content marketing style guides, including how to create one, see page 93 in the Appendix.

4. PROCESS DOCUMENTS

Every time that you establish a process for your content factory, whether it's how to create a case study or how to promote a big piece of content through social media, it is important to document that process. This not only institutionalizes the process, creating a standard that can easily be replicated over and over, but it also ensures the effective transfer of knowledge so that new employees, freelancers, and interns can all quickly get up to speed on how things are done.

MEASURING YOUR CONTENT FACTORY AND ANALYZING THE RESULTS

Another critical aspect of managing your content factory is tracking and analyzing your results. Your content factory isn't going to be perfect from the moment you build it. At first, you may struggle to consistently maintain your desired content rhythm and to get every piece of content out through all of the possible vehicles and programs that you would like. And, even after you master these things, your results will vary in terms of the impact your content has. The important thing is to hold yourself accountable to your goals, to measure the impact of your efforts, and to make ongoing adjustments along the way based on what you learn so that you are continuously able to improve.

That's where metrics come in. Initially you should track them across four areas:

Content creation   **Content delivery**
Impressions   **Conversions**

Let's break down each of these.

For **content creation**, you are simply tracking whether or not you were able to create all of the content that you have committed to producing as part of your content rhythm for a given period. Tracking this information (which can be as simple as saying "yes, we met our content commitments this week" or "no, we didn't") puts a spotlight on your ability to consistently create all of the content on your editorial calendar. That helps to surface other issues. If you are not consistently meeting your content commitments, it could indicate that:

» You don't have the right resources in place

» Your processes are inefficient

» You are getting distracted by other things

» You are not leveraging freelancers, influencers, or your co-workers effectively

» Your goals are too aggressive

The bottom line is that until you are able to consistently hit your content commitments, you are not going to have a successful content factory.

"As a content marketer, your daily retrospective is the most important part of your day. It offers you the chance to look back on the previous day's content and ask yourself what went well, what didn't go well, and what can you do better. Doing so will ensure you're not just going through the motions, but consistently learning from your efforts and adapting your approach accordingly. That's the only true way to improve and to take your content marketing to the next level."

Jonathan Crowe,
Managing Editor,
OpenView Venture
Partners

Next, start tracking your **content delivery**. By using the checklist provided in Chapter 5, you can assess whether or not you did everything possible to get a piece of content out. If you did, you get credit for it, if not you don't. The goal, of course, is to ensure that you are maximizing the amplification of each piece of content by delivering it to all of the appropriate channels.

After that, begin measuring your total **impressions** for a sense of the reach of your content. Measure how many people were exposed to your tweets, LinkedIn posts, and Facebook advertisements. How many times did people see your content come up in the results of their online searches? There are numerous platforms that you can use to measure your total impressions. Spreadfast, for example, can help you measure your total impressions across social media.

In addition, you will want to measure **conversions.** How often did the people who consumed your content take a desired action as a result? Since every piece of content you create should have a conversion goal associated with it, it can quickly become incredibly complex to measure every conversion. So instead, focus on your biggest conversion goals, such as getting people to sign up for your newsletter, download a free trial, or fill out a form. Conversion rates vary considerably based on industry, but tend to hover between 2 and 3 percent on average. You should aim for a conversion rate of 5 percent or higher if you are creating customized landing pages for specific target audiences.
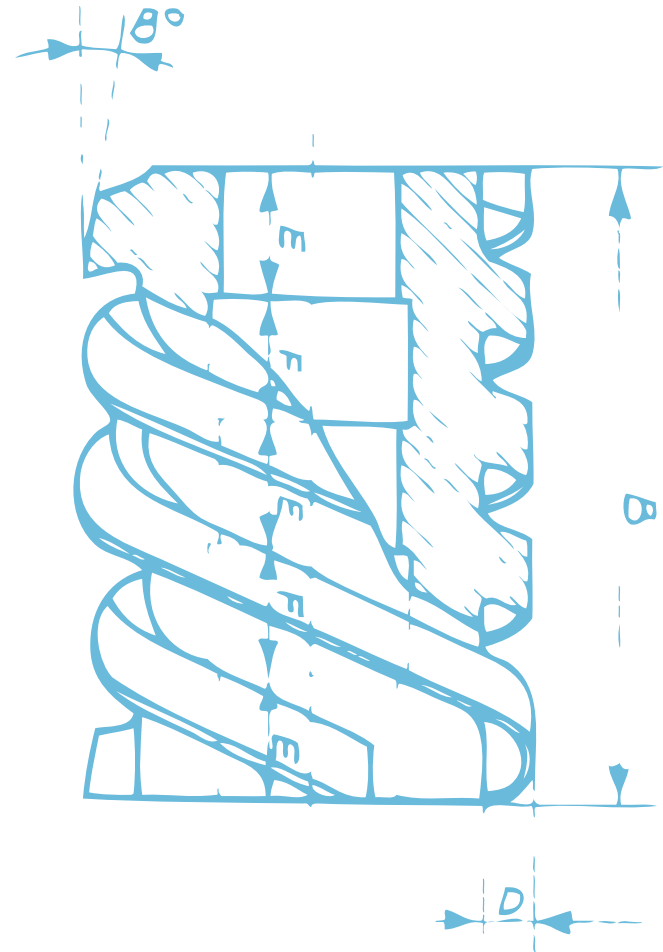
Besides these four categories, you should also pay attention to some other standard metrics that pertain to your website overall, such as:

UNIQUE VISITORS

The best indication of your site's overall traffic, unique visitors refers to the number of individuals who visit your website during a given period, where each visitor is only counted once. This number will vary dramatically depending on the size of your company, industry, and, of course, the amount of content you are producing.

PAGE VIEWS

The total number of individual pages that your visitors click on during a given period. If your page views are higher than your unique visitors, that may indicate that your audience finds your content engaging because individuals are visiting multiple pages.

SEARCH ENGINE TRAFFIC

The amount of traffic being referred to your site by search engines such as Google or Bing. This number will give you a clear indication of how effective you are at optimizing your content for search.

SOCIAL MEDIA TRAFFIC

The amount of traffic being referred to your site through social media, which will give you insights into how effectively you are distributing your content and how popular that content is among your target audience.

BOUNCE RATE

The percentage of visitors who come to your site and then immediately leave before clicking on any other pages. Aim for a bounce rate below 40 percent. If it's higher, it may indicate that visitors to your site don't like what they see and are leaving immediately.

All of this information can be gathered using a Web analytics tool like Google Analytics (see this link for information on how to set up a Google Analytics account for your website). It can then be tracked into a simple weekly dashboard that you create using an Excel spreadsheet like the one on the following page.

No. of Newsletter Subscribers
(Target: add 100 per week)

Bar chart values:
- Week of March 25: 4,816
- Week of March 18: 4,729
- Week of March 11: 4,601
- Week of March 4: 4,526
- Week of Feb 25: 4,481
- Week of Feb 18: 4,364

eBook Downloads
(Target: add 25 per week)

Bar chart values:
- Week of March 25: 163
- Week of March 18: 162
- Week of March 11: 158
- Week of March 4: 149
- Week of Feb 25: 128
- Week of Feb 18: 111
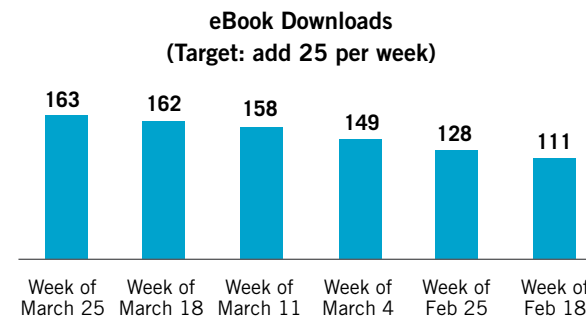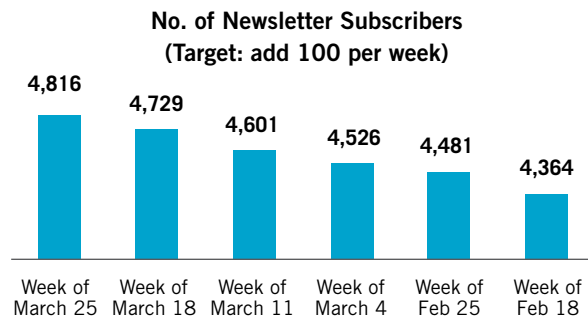
	WEEK OF MARCH 25	WEEK OF MARCH 18	WEEK OF MARCH 11	WEEK OF MARCH 4	WEEK OF FEB 25	WEEK OF FEB 18
Content Creation (Target: 9 pieces created per week)	9/9	9/9	9/9	7/9	9/9	6/9
Content Delivery (Target: 9 pieces optimally distributed per week)	8/9	9/9	9/9	7/9	7/9	6/9
Total Impressions (Target: 185,000 per week)	180,617	182,423	164,339	145,869	188,034	179,112
CONVERSION RATES (TARGET 3%)						
No. of Newsletter Subscribers (Target: add 100 per week)	4,816	4,729	4,601	4,526	4,481	4,364
Conversion Rate (Page views / conversions)	1.84%	2.78%	1.66%	1.00%	2.68%	2.59%
eBook Downloads (Target: add 25 per week)	163	162	158	149	128	111
Conversion Rate (Page views / conversions)	0.62%	2.53%	6.04%	15.50%	15.31%	17.01%
WEBSITE PERFORMANCE						
Unique Visitors (Target: 11,000)	10,288	11,103	11,165	10,208	9,500	10,531
Total Page Views (Target: 22,500)	21,190	23,014	22,260	20,816	19,428	21,216
Total Search Traffic (Target: 5,000)	4,604	4,170	3,385	3,570	3,966	4,027
Total Social Traffic (Target: 1,750)	1,261	1,730	2,135	2,160	1,168	1,669
Average Bounce Rate (Target: <65%)	63.91%	63.35%	64.53%	67.35%	69.35%	67.11%

All of this information can be gathered using a Web analytics tool like Google Analytics (see this link for information on how to set up a Google Analytics account for your website). It can then be tracked into a simple weekly dashboard that you create using an Excel spreadsheet like the one below:

Over time, you can dig deeper into your Web analytics data and expand your dashboard to track a variety of other useful metrics. For example, you may want to measure the:

- » Amount of engagement your content is generating in terms of comments and social shares
- » Open and click-through rates of your e-mails and e-newsletters
- » Amount of traffic you are getting from individual social channels, content-hosting sites, guest blog posts, advertisements, etc.
- » Number of inbound links back to your site

For a sample dashboard to help you track and measure individual pieces of content, see page 95 in the Appendix.

To be really in tune with how your content factory is performing, you need to analyze your key metrics at least once a week and meet as a team to discuss them and how you are going to adjust your strategy as a result.
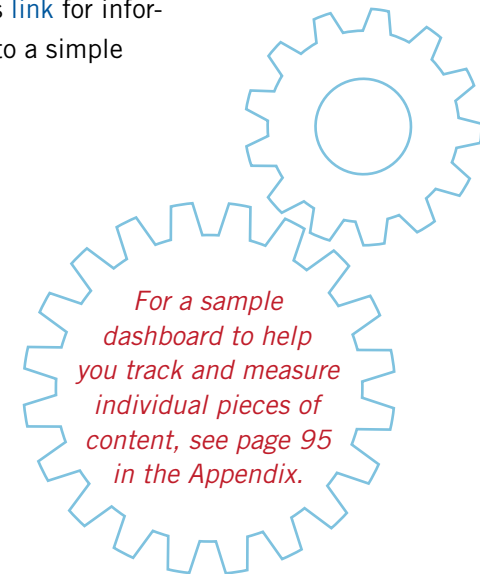
HOLDING FREQUENT RETROSPECTIVES

In addition to tracking key metrics, it's important to discuss them with your team on a regular basis and to look at how your content factory is performing overall. These retrospective meetings should occur on an annual, quarterly, weekly, and daily basis. Below is a framework for approaching each one.

- » **Annual Retrospectives**
  Take a high-level look at your content factory's results for the past 12 months and discuss and set plans for the coming year. This is a time to celebrate your successes, reflect on key learnings, and get reinvigorated to meet a whole new set of goals.

- » **Quarterly Retrospectives**
  Talk with your team about how it performed against its quarterly goals and whether or not it is on track to meet its annual goals. Celebrate successes, identify and talk through learnings, and make any necessary adjustments to start off the next quarter in the best possible position.

» Weekly Retrospectives

Review your metrics dashboard, talk about what worked that week and what didn't, and come up with ideas for how you plan to adjust your approach the following week as a result. Weekly retrospective meetings also present an opportunity to talk about upcoming content that you have planned for the editorial calendar so that you can start preparing a content delivery strategy. You should also use these meetings to gauge progress against your quarterly goals and determine what needs to happen to ensure that you stay on target.

» Daily Retrospectives

As soon as you get into a daily content creation rhythm, make sure that you also get into the habit of holding short, daily retrospectives to talk about it. Lasting no more than 15 minutes, your daily retrospective meeting is an opportunity to review how the previous day's piece of content performed and to discuss how to most effectively deliver today's piece of content to your target audience. Meeting daily will make a tremendous difference in the impact you get with each piece of content, from the amount of engagement it receives, to the conversions it drives.

To learn about retrospectives, see "Get Better Faster: The Ultimate Guide to Retrospective Meetings."

Establishing and sticking to a content rhythm, developing the right tools and processes, and holding frequent retrospectives to look at how your content factory is performing will all make a huge difference in the success of your content factory. While doing all of this takes tremendous discipline, the payoff will be clear in the results that you begin seeing.

CHAPTER 8:
START HAVING IMPACT
IN JUST ONE WEEK

By now, your head should be overflowing with ideas about how to build your own content factory. And while there are many factors that you will need to consider to ensure its success, there really is just one golden rule to follow: Start doing something right away!

All too often, people get hung up on details and spend weeks or even months trying to come up with a comprehensive plan and approach. It's much better to just start doing something so that you can evaluate its impact and make adjustments as a result.

With that in mind, what follows is a plan to help you bring your content factory to life in just one week. Will it be perfect? Absolutely not. But it will be a starting point, and from there you can use the resources provided throughout this eBook to make improvements.

DAY 1: PICK A TARGET

Consider all of your potential buyers and pick just one to be your initial target. It may not be the best one (yet), but that's OK. Remember, the idea is just to start doing something to help you set up a very simplified content factory.

Once you have a target buyer, learn as much as you can about the person in a couple of hours by talking to your colleagues in sales or mining your CRM tools. Your job for the day will be done when you understand any pain points your target is facing.

DAY 2: CREATE A SIMPLE PIECE OF CONTENT

Since you are trying to make an immediate impact, stick to creating a fairly basic piece of content such as a blog post or an article that can be created in just one day. Brainstorm some ideas about what information you might include to address one of your target's pain points.

Do whatever research is necessary, including talking to in-house subject matter experts, and start working on a draft. By the end of the day, your goal is to have a solid first draft that is written specifically for your target and speaks to one of his or her concerns. Make sure to include a simple conversion goal in the draft, such as getting your target to click through to another relevant page on your website.

DAY 3: GET FEEDBACK AND ITERATE

On the third day, share your draft with others — ideally your in-house subject matter experts and customer-facing colleagues — to get some feedback. Find out if they think it is going to resonate with your target audience and make adjustments as needed. Now is also the time to make sure that your content has been optimized to have maximum impact (see Chapter 4).

DAY 4: PUBLISH AND DISTRIBUTE THE CONTENT

As soon as you arrive at work, get your content published on your website and then do everything you can to push it out. Promote it on your social accounts, try to engage an industry influencer in an online discussion about it, encourage comments, and look for reposting opportunities. If the content is really good, you may also want to e-mail it to everyone in your customer and/or prospect database.

DAY 5: MEASURE RESULTS AND LOOK FOR INSIGHTS

On the last day of the week, start measuring the impact of your efforts. Use Google Analytics to find out how many people viewed the content and how many performed the desired conversion. Look to see how many comments your content received, how many times it was shared socially, or if anyone linked to it on their site. Your overall results might be minimal, but that's OK. You have successfully produced and distributed a thoughtful piece of content in just one week, which is a great accomplishment and gives you a baseline from which to measure all of your future efforts. Take what you learned and apply it when you do this all over the following week.

REMEMBER, THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO DO IS GET STARTED!
SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

END NOTE

Executing a content marketing initiative is one thing. Executing a content marketing initiative that's backed by a high-performing content factory is quite another. The latter will ensure that you not only produce the right content in the right context at the right time, but also that you're able to deliver that content to the right people in exactly the right places to support your go-to-market strategy.

Unfortunately, far too few B2B marketers approach content marketing that way. Maybe they develop a corporate blog, publish a few case studies, or create an eBook, but they do it all independently and without considering the specific impact that they hope to create with each piece of content. That's a very haphazard way to manage a very critical component of your go-to-market strategy.

By contrast, a content factory brings much-needed structure to a B2B company's content marketing operation.

By creating an internal assembly line that works with factory-like precision, you will be better equipped to create content that drives conversions. That will make it easier for your B2B company to market and sell to its best prospects, attack the segments that are most likely to fuel growth, and fly past the competition to dominate your market.

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR
DEVELOPING A CONTENT STRATEGY

TIPS FOR CREATING BUYER PERSONAS

As your knowledge of your buyers deepens, add color to the personas by including additional details, such as what you understand about their goals and daily activities, the current solutions to their problems, whether there is room for improvement with those solutions, and what types of media they consume. You should also try to understand where they spend time online so that you get a sense of the best channels for reaching them.

Some of the questions your buyer personas should answer include:

- » What is the person's job title and responsibilities?

- » What type of company does he or she work for?

- » What industry does the person work in?

- » What is his or her budget?

- » What problem does the person need to solve?

How urgently does the person need to resolve the problem?

- » What is the person's role in the buying process?

- » What are the person's goals?

- » Is he or she the ultimate decision-maker?

- » What criteria are most important to the person when looking for a solution?

- » What factors will motivate him or her to make a purchase?

In addition, keep these tips in mind when creating your buyer personas:

» Think in terms of archetypes: Your buyers are individuals, but they will share certain characteristics based on their roles.

» Rank personas by influence in the buying process: You will want to narrow down your target personas to a manageable number.

» Flesh out your profiles and focus on sticking points: Uncover what keeps each persona from buying your product or service. The deeper your understanding of this key point, the more effective your insight into each buyer persona will be.

61 CONVERSION GOALS TO CONSIDER

Below is a list of potential conversion goals that you might want to design your content to achieve at various stages throughout the buyer journey:

AWARENESS STAGE

1. Accepting a cold call or telephone call
2. Clicking an online ad
3. Clicking on the result from a search engine
4. Clicking on a specific link on a website
5. Hearing about a company in person
6. Leaving a comment
7. Replying positively to an e-mail
8. Submitting data
9. Seeing an advertisement

INTEREST STAGE

10. Accepting a Web chat invitation
11. Adding a site to your RSS feed reader
12. Agreeing to follow up in the future

13. Agreeing to listen to a cold call in its entirety and hearing the reason for it
14. Attending an event (in person or virtually)
15. Attending a user group meeting
16. Bookmarking a webpage
17. Clicking a call to action in an e-mail
18. Downloading an app
19. Downloading a piece of content
20. Following on social media
21. Following up on a referral
22. Initiating a Web chat
23. Joining a group on social media
24. Navigating to a product/solution/about page
25. Opting in for an e-newsletter
26. Opting in for future contact

INTEREST STAGE, CONT.

27. Opting in for marketing e-mails
28. Opting in for mobile updates
29. Replying to a tweet
30. Reviewing a specific piece of content
31. Responding to a poll
32. RSVPing for an event
33. Scanning a QR code
34. Sending a message via a website
35. Submitting information
36. Visiting a specific page on a website
37. Watching a video

RESEARCH STAGE

38. Agreeing to a follow-up conversation
39. Agreeing to a sales call or demo
40. Conducting a technical product evaluation
41. Conducting vendor research with analysts
42. Completing a technical product evaluation
43. Creating a budget
44. Demoing an application
45. Getting a free assessment
46. Getting a free quote
47. Participating in user forums
48. Requesting a contract
49. Requesting an RFP/RFQ
50. Using an interactive tool (ROI calculator, etc.)

51. Consuming product content extensively
52. Seeking expert views
53. Scheduling a meeting
54. Signing up for a beta version
55. Signing up for or starting a trial
56. Submitting a "contact me" form

PURCHASE STAGE

57. Agreeing to provide a testimonial or case study
58. Completing an online checkout
59. Signing a contract
60. Switching from freemium to paid usage
61. Using a coupon

openview

TYPES OF CONTENT TO USE AT EACH STAGE OF THE BUYER JOURNEY

Virtually all of your content will need to focus on educating your buyers in some way, either about a problem they face, possible solutions to that problem, or why your solution is the best option. Consequently, not all of your content should be about your company or your solution. You also need to produce thought leadership about the issues your buyers are facing within your industry.

AT THIS STAGE...	YOUR GOAL IS TO...	SO TRY TO...
Unaware	Raise awareness	Educate your target audience about the problem they are facing and that there is a better way of doing things. Try using shorter pieces of content that can quickly and easily be digested and that are as entertaining as they are educational.
Aware	Demonstrate the value of solving the problem	

Some types of content to consider include:

- » Blog posts
- » Infographics
- » Viral videos
- » Articles
- » Industry data
- » Podcasts

As you move into the aware stage, these types of content also work; however, your goal becomes demonstrating the value of solving the problem by educating your target audience about the existing solutions.

At both of these stages of the buying process, your content shouldn't be about your company or your products and services. Instead, focus on the problem your target buyer faces and the fact that there are solutions. This is your opportunity to become an industry thought leader.

AT THIS STAGE...	YOUR GOAL IS TO...	SO TRY TO...
Interest	Promote interest in finding the right solution	Encourage exploration of the right solution by explaining what factors your target audience should be considering when looking at solutions to their problem. Utilize more substantial pieces of content that explain the different solutions that are available, such as: » Webinars » Landing pages » eBooks » White papers » Reports By this point in the buying process, you can begin to talk about your company and your products and services, but they are still not yet the main focus as you should be describing solutions in more general terms.
Research	Foster comparisons	Explain how the solutions to your target audience's problem differ and why yours is the best. Employ content that clearly articulates the value that your company and its solution can bring, such as: » Case studies » Testimonials » Product and feature guides » Fact sheets » Product demos » ROI calculators Now your content is exclusively focused on how your company and its solution can solve the target buyer's problem better than anyone else's.

AT THIS STAGE...	YOUR GOAL IS TO...	SO TRY TO...
Purchase	Encourage a sale	Provide your target audience with everything necessary to evaluate your solution and ensure that it's right for them. Leverage content that will help your buyers determine whether or not your solution is right for them, such as: » How-to videos » Tutorials Again, your content is exclusively focused on your company and how its solution can solve the target buyer's problem better than anyone else's.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU
ASSEMBLE A CONTENT MARKETING TEAM

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION FOR A MANAGING EDITOR

Reporting to the [insert title], the Managing Editor will be responsible for setting and executing The ABC Company's content marketing strategy. That includes overseeing the creation and distribution of high-quality, targeted content, and managing the team and external resources associated with those efforts. Leveraging deep online marketing, project management, and editorial experience, he or she will play a crucial role in helping the company generate and nurture leads with compelling content.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

» Developing a comprehensive content strategy that is aligned with The ABC Company's target buyers and focused on driving conversions

» Creating the company's editorial calendar and ensuring that all content is published on time and within budget

» Managing a team of in-house and freelance resources, including writers and graphic designers

» Overseeing the creation of articles, blog posts, eBooks, reports, case studies, videos, webinars, and other types of content

» Overseeing the delivery of all content through the company's website, social media, direct and paid marketing channels, and other campaigns

» Establishing and continually optimizing the processes necessary for efficient content creation and distribution

» Managing the company's error free, SEO-optimized website

» Enhancing the company's brand by working with influencers, creating a strong online community, and finding opportunities to place content for maximum visibility

» Measuring and reporting on the impact of the company's content marketing efforts using Google Analytics and other Web analytics tools

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE:

» A bachelor's degree in English, journalism, public relations, or a related communications field

» 7-10 years of content management experience, at least 3-4 of which have been spent working as a managing editor for a media company (magazine, newspaper), a professional services company, or a corporate brand, or working as an editor or journalist

» Proven experience managing people and processes

» Online marketing expertise, including experience with SEO, social media, direct marketing, paid marketing, etc.

» Familiarity with WordPress or a similar CMS platform

» Fluency in all major business software applications (Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, etc.)

» Experience with Google Analytics or other Web analytics tools

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES WILL HAVE THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

» Ability to effectively manage multiple projects at one time

» Excellent writing and editing skills

» Highly organized and detail oriented

» Creative thinker and problem solver

» Process oriented

» Focused on reporting and measurement

» Ability to thrive in a fast-paced environment

HOW TO FIND AND MANAGE FREELANCERS

While there is no shortage of great freelancers available, it can be challenging to find ones who are available when you need them, easy to work with, and who have the experience and expertise to consistently deliver the quality services you need. Before looking for freelancers, make sure that you have a good understanding not only of any specific projects that you need them to work on, but also of how they might complement your team. While freelancers certainly can be used as a source of manpower, they can also be leveraged to fill any gaps in your team's skill sets, knowledge, and expertise. Think about how you can utilize freelancers strategically to expand your content factory's scope and capabilities.

There are numerous resources that you can tap into to find freelancers, including vendor-matching sites such Elance and Freelancer.com, as well as national agencies such as Creative Circle and Aquent. The advantage of using any of these resources is that they have a roster of vetted freelancers at their disposal, which makes finding the talent you need a quick and pain-less process. The trade-off, however, is that you will pay a premium for the freelancers in the form of fees and other add-on expenses. You may also find that agencies and vendor matching sites don't always have candidates with the deep industry expertise you may require.

That is why you should also always be sure to tap into your own network. Ask your peers at other companies about freelancers they have worked with and if they would be willing to refer you to any of them. Likewise, once you have found freelancers you like, ask them to refer you to any others they know. Referrals are far and away the best method for finding freelancers who are trustworthy and capable of producing the high-quality content that you need.

Once you find great freelancers, use the three tips on the following page to help you onboard and manage them successfully.

1. GET ORGANIZED

Use a spreadsheet like the one on the following page to keep track of important logistical details, such as your freelancers' contact information and rates, and to catalog their expertise and the types of projects that they are best used for. Also note their strengths and weaknesses and rate their performance using a simple grading system. This will help you keep track of your growing stable of freelancers so that you can make informed decisions about which ones to use for specific projects.

Name	Background	Subject Matter Expertise	Best Used For	Contact Info	Signed NDA	Rate	Grade
Steve Smith	Former reporter with 10 years of experience writing about the tech industry	Cloud computing, WAN optimization	White papers and reports	ssmith@gmail.com	Y	$75 per hour	B+
Laura Williams	Headed up content marketing at a competitor for several years; currently freelancing	Data archiving, open data	Blog posts, articles, or anything needing a quick turnaround	laura@laurawilliams.com	Y	$100 per hour	B-
Amy Anderson	Referral from a colleague; has been freelancing for large and small tech companies for 15 years	General knowledge of SaaS	Any long-form or high-profile content	amyand@gmail.com	Y	Project-based	A
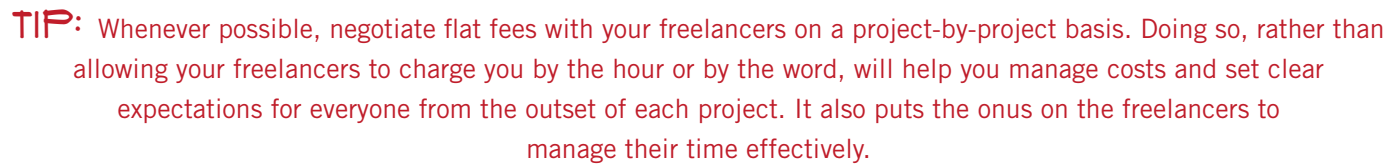
2. PROVIDE STRUCTURE AND GUIDANCE

Freelancers are not mind readers who can magically produce what you want without detailed instructions. Make sure to set clear expectations from the outset of every project and ensure that your freelancers have access to all of the information and resources they will need to complete a project successfully. You also need to make yourself available to talk through ideas and answer any questions they have throughout the process. While it is never a good idea to micromanage freelancers, you do need to invest the time necessary to ensure that they are set up for success.

3. ACT LIKE THE BOSS YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE

Ultimately, it is up to the managing editor to enforce deadlines and standards, to provide honest and constructive feedback so that freelancers can make any adjustments needed for future projects, and to take action when a freelancer is not meeting expectations. One of the best ways to build great relationships with your freelancers is by always providing strong leadership and direction.

Finally, just because freelancers are typically a virtual part of your team doesn't mean that you should only have virtual contact with them. Build strong relationships with all of your freelancers by ensuring you have regular touch points by phone and, if possible, in person. Bring them into the fold — both of your team and your company — and you will find that they are more engaged, feel a greater sense of accountability, and produce better content.

TIP: Whenever possible, negotiate flat fees with your freelancers on a project-by-project basis. Doing so, rather than allowing your freelancers to charge you by the hour or by the word, will help you manage costs and set clear expectations for everyone from the outset of each project. It also puts the onus on the freelancers to manage their time effectively.

HOW TO FIND, ENGAGE, AND WORK WITH INFLUENCERS

Integrating influencer marketing into your content strategy is a great way to accelerate your content marketing efforts. The six steps below describe how to successfully identify and build relationships with the influencers who have the greatest impact on your buyers and how to incorporate them into your content marketing efforts:

1. DETERMINE WHO INFLUENCES YOUR BUYERS AND WHICH OF THOSE INFLUENCERS YOU WANT TO TARGET

In addition to talking to your sales teams and, if possible, your actual buyers, there is a lot of detective work that you can do online. For example, using a simple list of relevant keywords in a Google search can help you identify a broad list of influencers. Likewise, you can search on Twitter and LinkedIn, and use PR tools such as Vocus and Cision to find influencers. If you are looking for bloggers specifically, Google Blog Search and Technorati can be valuable resources.

2. PRIORITIZE YOUR LIST OF INFLUENCERS

Focus on the influencers who you believe will make the biggest impact and influence your target audience most. That means looking beyond their credentials to examine factors such as the quality of the content they produce, the reach of their social networks, and how active they are at relevant industry conferences. Better yet, ask your customers who influences them directly.

3. ENGAGE YOUR TOP INFLUENCERS GRADUALLY

Next, start forging relationships with the influencers at the top of your list. Start with some very basic touch points to help subtly draw their attention to you over several weeks. That might entail following them socially, leaving thoughtful comments on their blog, or proactively sharing their content with your network.

4. INTRODUCE YOURSELF FORMALLY

Eventually you will need to reach out to the influencers directly by e-mail or phone to introduce yourself and your business, and to explain your value proposition. The idea is to give them your best elevator pitch that quickly explains who you are, why you are contacting them, and what's in it for them.

At OpenView, our pitch to influencers goes something like this:

OpenView is a Boston-based venture capital firm that produces a lot of content for entrepreneurs. We know that you're a respected expert in [insert expertise] and would love to collaborate with you on an article about [insert topic]. We think our audience would really enjoy hearing from you about it.

In addition to posting the article to our sites, which garner more than 100,000 unique visitors a month, we will publicize it through our social networks and include it in our newsletter that goes out to more than 20 portfolio companies nationwide and over 25,000 entrepreneurs around the world. As you can see, it's a great opportunity to get exposure to a sizable and relevant audience.

Our pitch centers on the opportunity for exposure that the influencer will get. Yours might have a different selling point, such as a free trial of your product or service, access to a particular niche market, or the opportunity for co-sponsorships.

5. MAKE IT EASY TO WORK WITH YOU

True influencers are busy people without a lot of time. You may have more success if you simplify things for them. For example, if you are looking for an influencer to contribute a blog post to your site, write out the main points that you think it should cover, so that all that person has to do is fill in the blanks rather than come up with an idea. In some cases, you may even want to schedule a quick call and draft a write-up for the influencer to simply edit and personalize. While this approach doesn't save you time or resources, it will help you to engage higher-profile influencers who otherwise may be out of your reach.

6. THANK THE INFLUENCER AND ASK THEM TO SHARE THE CONTENT

As soon as you post any piece of content that an influencer has contributed to, be sure to notify the person. It is a great opportunity to not only thank them for working with you, but also to gently suggest that they share the content with their audience. In addition, always follow up with influencers with positive feedback if their content performs particularly well, or if comments come in that they should respond to.

ENGAGING YOUR CO-WORKERS IN CONTENT MARKETING

It is very important that you recruit your co-workers to become a part of your content marketing efforts, even if only on a small level. Serving as a subject matter expert or a guest blogger, or simply helping to share your content socially can make a big difference. Below are four tips to help you get your co-workers excited to help out:

1. SELL THEM ON THE VALUE OF CONTENT MARKETING

Content marketing is a proven method for generating qualified leads and shepherding those leads down the path to purchase. It is one of the most effective ways of driving sales and therefore essential to your company's success. This message needs to be communicated from the top down and regularly reinforced. If possible, ask your CEO to include content creation in the executive team's annual goals, or to lead by example by blogging on a regular basis, offering ideas for content, or sharing content socially.

2. HELP THEM BUILD THEIR PERSONAL BRAND IN THE PROCESS

One of the great things about content marketing is that it not only helps you build your company's brand, but it can also give individuals within your company a way to build their personal brands. By creating blog posts or being featured as subject matter experts in videos and podcasts, for example, individuals can establish themselves (and their companies) as thought leaders. It's a win-win.

3. MAKE IT EASY FOR THEM

If you are not a member of the content marketing team, creating and distributing content probably isn't part of your job. For that reason, it is important to know how to leverage your colleagues' time efficiently. For example, many CEOs don't have time to write a blog post every week, but can commit to a half-hour interview once a month with a writer who will ghostwrite a post (or, better yet, a series of posts) on their behalf. You still get the benefit of publishing your CEO's thought leadership, but you do it in a way that works within his or her constraints.

4. MOTIVATE THEM ANY WAY YOU CAN

Many people have a competitive streak that you can use to motivate them. Try running regular contests where employees compete to see who can drive the most traffic with their blog posts or who can get the most engagement with a piece of content across their social networks. Share the results and declare the winners on a regular basis. Consider offering a small prize for the winner or just giving them bragging rights. It's a fun and yet surprisingly effective tactic for getting people engaged.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU
OPTIMIZE YOUR CONTENT

WRITER'S CHECKLIST

Always remember to read your writing out loud and ask yourself: Is it easy to read? Do you stumble anywhere? Is it hard to follow? While doing so, remember to check the following:

OVERALL EFFECT

○ What is the main message being communicated?

○ Is it interesting to read?

○ How does it look? Are the paragraphs divided into easily digestible lengths?

○ Read your first sentence or two. Is the purpose of your writing clear? Have you hooked your reader into wanting to read more?

○ Does the story progress naturally and logically? Would any paragraphs make better sense elsewhere?

TONE

○ Are your point of view and tone consistent?

○ Have you chosen words that are appropriate for your audience?

○ Will your writing offend anyone who is reading it?

STYLE

○ Is each sentence complete? Does each focus on a simple point? Is each clear and explicit?

○ If all sentences are about the same length, can you find ways to vary their lengths?

○ Are your transitions between sentences and paragraphs smooth and logical?

○ Are you writing in active (not passive) voice?

○ Have you used verb tenses consistently?

○ Are adverbs and adjectives used excessively?

○ Are any words overused?

○ Do any parts of your writing sound wordy, choppy, or repetitive?

○ Do any of your sentences start with and, but, or so? Can you eliminate these words without changing your meaning?
If not, can you combine these sentences with others without making them excessively long?

GRAMMAR AND SPELLING

○ Do all your subjects and verbs agree?

○ Do all your pronouns agree with the subjects to which they refer?

○ Have you spell-checked?

○ Are all names and titles accurate and spelled correctly?

While a checklist like this will never take the place of a content marketing style guide, following it will at least make you think more about your writing before you share it with the rest of the world. Doing so will almost always lead to a better final product.

61 TYPES OF CONTENT TO CONSIDER

Below is a list of the different types of content you may want to consider creating for your target buyers. Even the best content factories are limited to publishing a finite amount of content, so take care to choose the types that you think are most likely to resonate with your target audience.

1. Analyst reports
2. Articles
3. Audio books
4. Blog posts
5. Books
6. Branded content tools/applications
7. Brochures
8. Call scripts
9. Case studies
10. Cartoons
11. Company/educational video
12. Comparison with a competitor
13. Compliance/certification
14. Custom print/digital magazine
15. Custom social network
16. Customer quotes
17. Customer testimonials
18. Demo/product videos
19. Directory listings
20. Discussion forums
21. Display ad copy
22. e-Learning Series
23. eBooks/playbooks
24. e-mails
25. e-newsletters
26. Executive roundtables
27. Fact sheets
28. GIFs
29. Graphic/comic books
30. Industry rankings
31. Infographics
32. Journal/media article
33. Keyword ad copy
34. Microblogs
35. Mobile applications
36. Online games
37. Online news releases
38. Online surveys
39. Podcasts
40. Presentations
41. Press releases
42. Price sheets
43. Print newsletter
44. Product screenshots/tours
45. Product specification sheets
46. Quizzes
47. Reference checklists
48. Road shows
49. ROI calculators
50. Sales presentation templates
51. Screencasts
52. Social media applications
53. Social media pages
54. Teleseminars
55. Trend reports
56. Video blogs
57. Virtual trade shows
58. Webinars
59. White papers
60. Web/mobile widget
61. Trial/trial support content

HOW TO FIND GOOD KEYWORDS IN 7 STEPS

There are a variety of tools that you can use to help you select your keywords. The Google AdWords Keyword Planner, for example, is a great, free option that provides valuable insights into how often keywords are being searched for and how difficult it is to rank for each. Below are seven basic steps you can follow using the Keyword Planner to help you find great keywords.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE MAIN FOCUS OF YOUR CONTENT

Imagine that you are writing an article for other marketers offering five critical tips to help small businesses improve their content marketing efforts. Start by writing down the main point of the article, which will help you focus on the words and phrases that are most relevant to the main messages.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL KEYWORDS AND PHRASES

Examine your topic and generate a list of potential keywords that get to the root of what you are trying to communicate. For example, some potential keywords for the article in this example might be "content marketing," "marketing tips," or "small business marketing." In addition, try to come up with some long-tail keywords (up to five words) that are even more specific, such as "small business content marketing tips."

STEP 3: LOG IN TO THE GOOGLE ADWORDS KEYWORD PLANNER TOOL (OR ANOTHER SIMILAR TOOL) AND SELECT THE RIGHT SETTINGS

Since your article is focused on content marketing for marketers, use the category selector to choose the appropriate industry category. In this case, it would be:

Business & Industrial > Business Management > Advertising & Marketing > All

Then set the location to the United States and the language to English. Select desktops and laptops for the device or, if your target audience primarily uses mobile devices, adjust accordingly. Under Match Types, select "exact" and "phrase" to help ensure that the results you get are as close as possible to the seed (original) keyword that you enter while still reflecting trending search queries.

STEP 4: ENTER YOUR KEYWORDS INTO THE GOOGLE ADWORDS KEYWORD PLANNER TOOL

Take the keywords you identified in Step 2 and enter them into the Google AdWords Keyword Planner one at a time to get data on the competition and monthly search traffic for each. For our example, let's start with "content marketing."

STEP 5: EXPLORE OTHER KEYWORD OPTIONS

Seeing that the competition and monthly searches for "content marketing" are high, we can assume that we are going to have a difficult time ranking for it. Fortunately, the tool suggests a variety of other related keywords that we can consider using instead.

Not all of the suggested keywords are relevant, so focus on the ones that align with your content and that have both low competition and moderate monthly search traffic. While it may be tempting to go after keywords with high traffic, you will be better off ranking first for terms that get searched less than ranking 51st for more popular keywords.

Take note of your best options and experiment with the other keywords you initially came up with. "Small business content marketing tips" looks like a good option.

STEP 6: VALIDATE YOUR SEARCH TERMS

Once you find a good keyword, enter it into Google to see what results it yields. Pay close attention to both the first and second search results in the sponsored links as well as the first four positions in the organic search results. Make sure that the content that comes up for your search aligns thematically with the content you have created.

The results for the search "small business content marketing tips" are highly relevant to our article, which means the intent of the keyword is a match for our article.

STEP 7: ANALYZE THE KEYWORD COMPETITION

Take note of the first five search results for your keyword in Google and use a search tool such as Moz to analyze their page/domain authority and incoming links. By comparing those metrics with your company's, you can further evaluate how likely you are to rank well for that keyword. If your chances of ranking high for that keyword are low, you may want to look for a different option.

For our purposes, "small business content marketing tips" is a great choice.
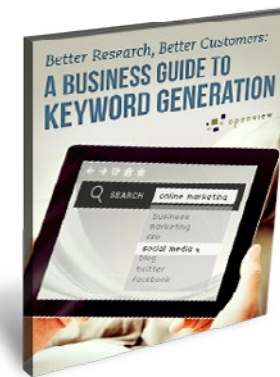
For more keyword research tips and strategies download our free eBook, "Better Research, Better Customers: A Business Guide to Keyword Generation."

ON-PAGE SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION BEST PRACTICES

Once you have selected a keyword, there are a variety of on-page optimization tactics that you can use to optimize your content for that keyword. For example, always include your keyword phrase in:

- » The title of your content
- » The first sentence of your first paragraph
- » At least one heading within the content
- » The page's URL
- » The page's meta description
- » The title and alternate text field of any images you have included

In addition to using your keyword in these specific places, be sure to use it often enough throughout your copy to help search engines understand how your content relates to the keyword. But don't go overboard — overusing keywords or saturating your content with them (a practice known as keyword stuf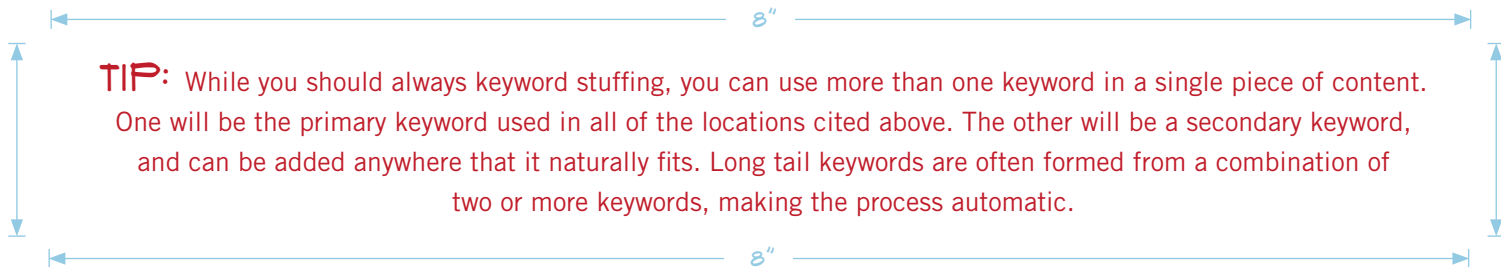fing) will negatively impact your search results. Strive for a keyword density — the percentage of times the keyword phrase appears in your content versus the total number of words — of between 1 and 3 percent.

TIP: While you should always keyword stuffing, you can use more than one keyword in a single piece of content. One will be the primary keyword used in all of the locations cited above. The other will be a secondary keyword, and can be added anywhere that it naturally fits. Long tail keywords are often formed from a combination of two or more keywords, making the process automatic.

In addition to strategically using keywords throughout your content, another valuable tactic that will help boost your rankings is linking to other relevant and authoritative content. Google and other search engines look favorably upon webpages that point visitors to content on other sites or even your own. The key is to make sure that the content you link to is highly relevant.

If you are linking to external content, choose great sources. A link to *The New York Times*, for example, is far more valuable than one to a small, poorly trafficked blog. An added benefit of linking to external content is that the webmaster will be notified, which could incentivize him or her to include a link back to your content on their page.

If you are creating links within your own site for a particular keyword, try creating a seminal post that talks about that specific topic exclusively. Then, any time you use the keyword elsewhere on your site, include a link back to that seminal article. Over time, this will boost that seminal page's overall ranking in Google.

TIP: If you are using WordPress, the free SEO plugin by Yoast is an incredibly easy-to-use tool that allows you to monitor and improve your on-page optimization using a third-party service called Linkdex that analyzes your content and suggests improvements.
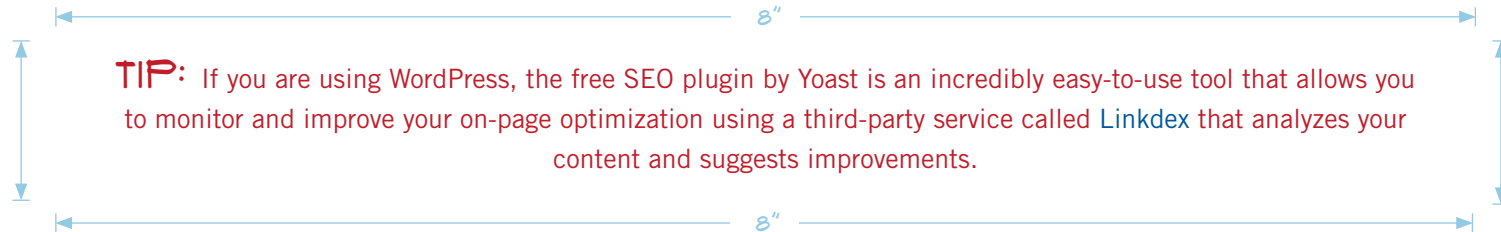
OFF-PAGE SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION BEST PRACTICES

Beyond on-page SEO tactics, search engines also factor in how much your content is linked to and shared, and thus how many backlinks it generates, which is an indication of how popular it is and with whom.

One of the best ways to boost that popularity is to drive as many inbound links to your content as possible from credible sites with related content. That means not just posting content to your own site, but also to content-sharing sites such as SlideShare and Scribd, and sharing it socially on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Google+. The more credible the site that generates the inbound link, the more positive impact it will have on your search ranking for that piece of content.

TIP: Sharing content through Google+ and, in particular, through Google+ Communities, is a must. Since this is Google's social platform, its search engine looks favorably upon content shared through it.
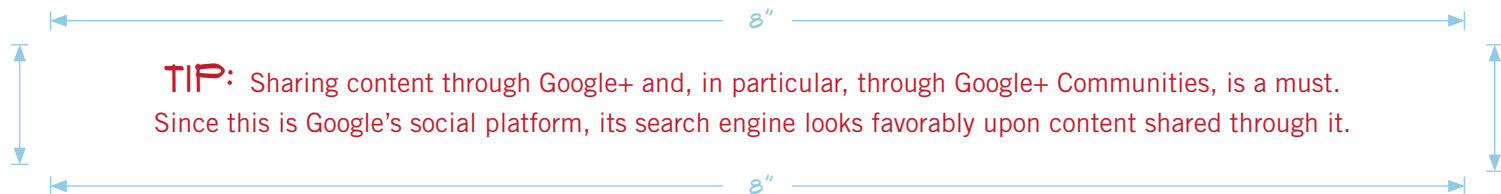
Another off-page optimization tactic is to actively engage in link building on other sites. Find external blog posts and articles that are relevant to whatever content you are trying to optimize and leave a comment with a link back to your content. Just like the example above, if the comment is left on a well-regarded site that has a high domain authority, having an inbound link from it to your content can help to boost your search ranking.

TIP: Make sure that the comments you leave are thoughtful and add value to the discussion. Comments with little more than a URL to another page often get deleted. To make it less obvious that you are trying to promote your own content, you can embed a URL into the text using this simple HTML: **insert text that you want to appear**
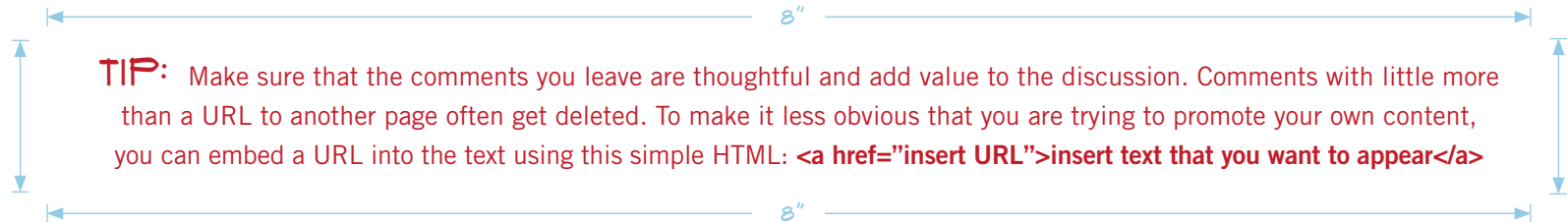
Note that the information above provides only the fundamentals of selecting a keyword and effectively using on-page and off-page tactics to optimize your content for it. To find out more, see the resources cited below.

Additional Resources:

There are a variety of great resources you can consult to learn about SEO, covering the basics, advanced SEO, and everything in between. Some of the ones you may want to check out include:

» The Beginner's Guide to SEO

» SEO Made Simple

» The Art of SEO

» What Is SEO / Search Engine Optimization?

» Optimize: How to Attract and Engage More Customers by Integrating SEO, Social Media, and Content Marketing

» The Advanced Guide to SEO

TIPS FOR CREATING CONTENT THAT GOES VIRAL

EVOKE AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

Whether it's a sense of amusement, affection, interest, or surprise, content that engages our emotions (preferably positively) is more likely to get shared. To elicit an emotional response, focus on these three points:

1. Make your content visual. We are visual creatures who respond to images. They grab our attention, captivate us, and increase our sense of connection to a piece of content. If you always make sure that your content is visually engaging, you will find that people share it more. For some tips on how to do so, check out this guide to visual content marketing.

2. Make your content entertaining. Most of us have exceedingly short attention spans. If you want to make your content stand out, try entertaining your audience. Take a humorous, witty, or novel approach to presenting your messages. Your audience will thank you and be much more likely to encourage others to check out your content.

3. Make your content personal. Be more than just a company to your audience. Put a face to your content by attributing it to people within your organization who have bios and photos on your website. You could also tie your blog posts back to your personal experiences. The point is that it is often more interesting to read about people than about companies, so bring your people into your content.

DELIVER CONTENT THAT PROVIDES REAL VALUE

The second major factor influencing content virality is how valuable people find it. Are you solving a particular problem for them? Have you answered one of their questions? Have you gathered and conveniently packaged a bunch of information that they need?

As this post about creating useful content explains, there are several ways in which your content can become a valuable asset for your readers:

» Create how-to content that provides practical advice or step-by-step instructions

» Offer thought leadership about what's going on in your industry rather than just information about your product or company

» Share proprietary research, analysis, and insights that people won't get anywhere else

» Point people to valuable resources, even if they are not your own

» Develop online assessments and other tools that people can use to evaluate something and get feedback to help them improve

ULTIMATELY, THE MORE ACTIONABLE AND UTILITARIAN YOUR CONTENT IS, THE HIGHER THE DIVIDENDS IT WILL PAY FOR YOUR CONTENT MARKETING PROGRAM.

INCORPORATE ENGAGING, INTERACTIVE FEATURES

The last factor to consider when trying to create viral content is whether or not you have all of the mechanisms in place to make that happen. You need to build interactive features into your content, foster engagement with it, and actively promote your content to generate interest.

Try doing the following to help set the stage for your content to create engagement and go viral:

» **Make sharing your content easy**

Embed social sharing tools throughout your site so that it only takes one click of the mouse to share any of your blog posts, articles, eBooks, or reports. If you are using WordPress, there are hundreds of different plugins available to automate this process, some of the best of which include:

- Socialize
- GetSocial
- ShareThis
- AddThis
- AddtoAny

» **Encourage comments**

Make sure that your blog is set up so that people can leave comments and that your website also allows comments on any content that you deem appropriate. Getting comments is a sign of engagement, and content that gets lots of engagement is more likely to go viral. While enabling comments is relatively straightforward (check out DISQUS, a plugin that provides a great user experience, and is easy to quickly set up), you have to actively work at getting people to actually leave them. For tips on how to do so, click here.

» **Give people the chance to interact**

Interactivity is another key element of helping your content to go viral. For example, try including a simple poll in a piece of content that asks your audience to vote on a particular issue. It's a great way to boost engagement and can sometimes help lead people to share your content. PollDaddy has a plugin in WordPress that makes adding a poll very easy.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU
DELIVER YOUR CONTENT

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF CAMPAIGNS

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	OBJECTIVE
Buzz Creation	Focuses on creating public buzz/interest about the company or the product	Increase corporate and/or product awareness
Corporate Branding	Increases the target prospects' awareness of the company	Increase corporate awareness
Product/Brand Awareness	Increases the target prospects' awareness of a specific product	Increase product awareness
Viral Distribution	Focuses on creating mass awareness or positive perception by way of catchy content/message that becomes massively shared Internet memes (viral content)	Increase corporate and/or product awareness, new customer acquisition
Credibility Assertion	Focuses on building or reinforcing credibility in terms of quality, safety, and service level of product	Acquire new customers, retain existing customers
Comparison	Focuses on side-by-side comparison of competing brands to highlight the differences	Acquire new customers, acquire competitors' customers, improve product perception
Competitive Advantage	Focuses on showing a product's specific differentiating features/distinction relative to competing products	Acquire new customers, acquire competitors' customers, improve product perception

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	OBJECTIVE
Competitive Matching/ Reaction	Stimulates demand or improves perception by offering price/feature matching against specific competitor's products or offering	Acquire new customers, retain existing customers
Increase Freemium Conversion	Stimulates free users to sign up as paid customers	Acquire new customers
Increase Trial Conversion	Stimulates trial users to sign up as paid customers	Acquire new customers
Increase User Adoption	Stimulates users' adoption of product	Increase customer spending, retain existing customers
Opt-in Database Building	Focuses on expanding the company's relationship database (the lead database) by encouraging opt-in from new prospects	Increase corporate and/or product awareness, develop customer relationships
Progressive Profiling	Helps augment the information the company holds on its prospects by encouraging them to submit more information or getting additional information through public sources	Acquire new customers, develop customer relationships
Prospect Engagement	Focuses on increasing the interaction between a new prospect with the company's points of contacts to move them farther along the buyer journey	Acquire new customers
Giveaway	Focuses on getting specific giveaway (free product, free content, free mobile apps, special editions) into the hands of target prospects	Increase product awareness
Trial/Freemium Signup	Encourages prospects to sign up for beta/trial/free version of the product to demonstrate the product's benefits to those clients	Increase product awareness, acquire new customers

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	OBJECTIVE
Charitable Cause	Promotes the company's involvement with a charitable cause or public benefit cause	Increase corporate awareness, improve corporate perception
Public Advocacy	Promotes a company's position on a public issue	Increase corporate awareness
Public Engagement	Stimulates engagement of the general public to generate buzz or awareness of the company, its product, or a specific message	Increase corporate and product awareness, acquire new customers
Public Relations	Utilizes public relations channels to deliver, broadcast, or sustain a specific message/perception about the company or its product	Increase corporate awareness, product awareness, and corporate perception
Reinforcement	Strengthens the positive impression/preference of the target prospects for the product	Improve product perception
Reminder	Reminds prospects about an established product's uses, characteristics, benefits, and differentiation	Improve product perception
Emphasize Value Add	Focuses on proving value to enhance perception and evaluation of benefits of products	Acquire new customers, retain existing customers
Testimonials/ Social Proof Generation	Generates and disseminates evidence of customer success or benefits by encouraging or seeking satisfied customers to give publicly available testimonials or social proofs	Increase corporate and/or product awareness, acquire new customers
Add-on Product Launch	Highlights the launch of a new add-on to an existing product to stimulate the demand for both the product and the add-on	Acquire new customers, increase customer spending
First Mover	Stimulates demand for the whole product category/market segment rather than a specific brand by informing the potential buyers about the benefits of the product	Acquire new customers, improve corporate perception

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	OBJECTIVE
Promote a New Release of Existing Product	Highlights the release of a new version of the product to stimulate its demand and strengthen perception of product	Acquire new customers, increase customer spending, improve product perception
Promote Current Product	Stimulates the demand for an existing product or bundle of products via promotion such as discount, bundling, or special payment terms or services	Acquire new customers, increase customer spending
Promote Feature Awareness	Increases the target prospects' awareness of a specific product feature or differentiating factor	Improve product perception
Promote New Product Launch	Highlights the launch of a new product to stimulate its initial demand	Acquire new customers, increase customer spending
Prospect Re-engagement	Re-ignites interest or engagement of formerly engaged prospects to move them farther along the buyer journey	Develop customer relationships, acquire new customers
Renewal of Existing Customer	Ensures renewal of existing customers	Retain existing customers
Upselling of Existing Customer	Gets existing customers to buy/use more products	Increase customer spending
Ecosystem Land Grab	Focuses on generating demand among customers in the product's adjacent ecosystems	Increase product awareness, acquire new customers
Event Follow-up	Capitalizes on awareness and interest of prospects who attended a recent event	Acquire new customers, develop customer relationships
Opportunity Engagement	Focuses on increasing the interaction between an interested prospect with the company's points of contacts	Acquire new customers

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	OBJECTIVE
Referral	Stimulates referral activities from customers, employees, partners, prospects	Increase product awareness, acquire new customers
Special Occasion Land Grab	Focuses on generating demand of a specific set of prospects affected by a specific event/occasion (for example, healthcare meaningful use attestation)	Acquire new customers
Information/ Content Distribution	Proactively delivers target prospects useful information relevant to the product and its benefits to move them farther along the buyer journey	Improve product perception
Need Discovery	Focuses on getting prospects to become aware of their needs/pain points that are relevant to the product	Increase product awareness, acquire new customers
Thought Leadership	Promotes a company's thought leadership on a relevant issue	Increase corporate awareness
Competitive End of Life Land Grab	Focuses on acquiring customers of a competitive product that are nearing end of life or having product/services disruption	Acquire new customers, increase product awareness

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU
MANAGE AND MEASURE YOUR CONTENT FACTORY

SAMPLE EDITORIAL CALENDAR

On the following page is a simple template for an editorial calendar that you can use to track the development and release of content. It shows your buyer personas and, through color-coding, the steps in the buying process individual pieces of content are targeting. You can also include details such as the type of content, specific topic or messaging, and the call to action. Tracking your content marketing program in an editorial calendar like this makes it easy to not only stay organized, but also to see at a glance whether or not you are producing the right mix of content that your buyers need.

You can customize your editorial calendar in many ways, so it's really a matter of finding the layout that works for you and allows you to capture the most important details for your needs. Although the example above only shows one month's worth of content, you should try to plan out larger pieces of content farther in advance so that you know what's coming one or even two quarters down the road. That way you can start developing smaller pieces of content that can get published now, then ultimately recycled into the large pieces later (see Chapter 4 for more information on content recycling).

	Buyer Persona 1	Buyer Persona 2	Buyer Persona 3

	BLOG POSTS	VIDEOS	REPORTS	CASE STUDIES	EBOOKS
WEEK OF DECEMBER 10					
Monday		Interview with CEO on how the company can help buyer persona 1			
Tuesday	From VP of Sales focusing on industry trends to raise awareness				
Wednesday		Featuring VP of Product to promote product features and increase interest			
Thursday	Top 10 reasons to use our product				An overview of XYZ industry trend
Friday		Featuring VP of Marketing (topic TBD)			
WEEK OF DECEMBER 17					
Monday		Interview with CEO on how the company can help buyer persona 2			
Tuesday	From VP of Marketing on company participation at trade show				
Wednesday		Featuring VP of Product to promote product features and increase interest			
Thursday	From CTO on new product updates			Covers ABC Company's success using our solution to help with research	
Friday		Featuring key industry influencer on why our product is useful			
WEEK OF DECEMBER 24					
Monday		Interview with CEO on how the company can help buyer persona 3			
Tuesday	5 strategies for succeeding in our industry				
Wednesday		Featuring VP of Product to promote product features and increase interest			
Thursday	From industry influencer (TBD)		Results of industry survey on XYZ issues		
Friday		Featuring key industry influencer on why our product is useful			
WEEK OF DECEMBER 31					
Monday		Covers ABC Company's success using our solution to help with research			

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SAMPLE CONTENT CREATION CALENDAR

In addition to an editorial calendar, it is helpful to maintain a document that tracks the creation of individual pieces of content. Whereas an editorial calendar gives you a high-level overview of what's being published when, a content creation document will allow you to track the work being done on individual pieces of content so that you stay organized. For example, this is the document where you note when drafts of content are due from your freelancers, whether or not an eBook has been proofread, or who still needs to review your next white paper before it can be published.

Here's an example of what your content creation calendar might look like:

	Topic	Notes	Status/Next Steps	Writer/ Freelancer	Target Completion Date	Status
Blog Posts	From VP of Sales focusing on industry trends to raise awareness	Should really resonate with audience, so need to give it a real push	Post complete, just need final approval from VP of Sales	Josh	Week of 12/10	Final approval
	Top 10 reasons to use our product	Idea came from Jill and she will need to approve this	Need to be proofed by 12/10 so that it can go to Jill for approval	Jonathan	Week of 12/10	Proofing
	From VP of Marketing on company participation at trade show	n/a	Scott to provide final edits by 12/11	Scott	Week of 12/10	Editing
	From CTO on new product updates	Featuring info on the most recent product launch	Megan to complete draft by 12/13	Megan	Week of 12/17	Drafting
Videos	Interview with CEO on how the company can help buyer persona 1	CEO video needs to go through extra reviews / approvals	Final video due 12/10 from video editor	Jenn	Week of 12/10	Editing
	Featuring key industry influencer on why our product is useful	n/a	Coming for video shoot on 12/10; need quick turnaround on editing	Jenn	Week of 12/10	Scheduled
Reports	Results of industry survey on XYZ issues	Josh expressed concerns with outline; will see how draft is	First draft due 12/10	Josh	Week of 12/24	Drafting
Case Studies	Covers ABC Company's success using our solution	Need to be sure to get testimonials approved before publishing this	Proofer's edits due back 12/13	Josh	Week of 12/17	Proofing
eBooks	An overview of XYZ industry trend	Great influencers in this piece, be sure to leverage for promo	Ready to go once we get Tom's approval	Kevin	Week of 12/10	Final approval

Your content creation calendar should contain any information and details you need to stay organized that you wouldn't necessarily want to get bogged down with in an editorial calendar. Think of it as a project management tool, while your editorial calendar is more for documenting and presenting your content plan.

Ultimately, maintaining both documents will allow you to keep track of the material that your content factory is producing, and ensure that no details or projects slip through the cracks. While it takes time to do so, it's time well spent. Not only will these documents help you stay on task, but they will also ensure that everyone is on the same page and that content is being delivered when and where it needs to be.

It is important to note that effective content marketing doesn't just mean having a single piece of content for each stage of the buying process for each of your buyers. You are going to need multiple pieces of content for each buyer at each stage of the buying process so that you are getting your message out on a regular basis in a variety of formats. Unless you are creating evergreen content, your content is also going to need to be updated regularly. Plus, to maximize your chances of filling your sales funnel with inbound leads, you will need to create a perpetual stream of new content.

HOW TO CREATE A CONTENT MARKETING STYLE GUIDE

1. CLEARLY DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVES AND AUDIENCE

Your company's style guide is never going to be a substitute for "The Chicago Manual of Style" or the AP Stylebook, nor should it. Instead, focus on addressing a finite number of common issues or pitfalls that will help improve the overall quality of your content. In the process, remember who your end users are. Style guides aren't just for the marketing team or freelance writers, they're for everyone in your organization. Craft your style guide to account for people with a wide range of writing skills.

2. CREATE A STRUCTURE THAT'S WELL ORGANIZED AND EASY TO NAVIGATE

Once you've assessed your objectives and audience, you'll need to build a logical framework to organize your style guide.

Starting with broad categories or buckets like these can help:

» A writer's checklist: A cheat sheet with the key reminders every writer needs

» Style A to Z: A catch-all list of stylistic do's and don'ts

» Company-specific issues: A repository of the unique words, phrases, and spellings your company uses to describe itself

» Punctuation: A place to educate writers about when to use colons versus semicolons, hyphens versus dashes, etc.

» Problem words: A section to help ensure that your content creators will know the difference between commonly confused words

» Spelling: A helpful time-saver to promote consistent spellings

In addition to categorizing your content into buckets like these, organize the relevant points in each group alphabetically to make them easier to find. Lastly, provide a detailed table of contents and index. All of this will make your style guide more user-friendly.

3. BASE YOUR GUIDE OFF OF STRONG SOURCES

While company style guides often reflect unique nuances (or exceptions to rules) that are specific to that company, they should primarily align with those of widely recognized sources. For example, you might choose the AP Stylebook as your definitive source for grammar, punctuation, and style issues, and "Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary" as the basis for your spelling preferences. Limit the number of sources you leverage to avoid confusion and don't hesitate to direct your readers to them for more information.

4. PERSONALIZE IT

A little creativity and humor can go a long way toward making dry subject matter more fun and engaging. Try incorporating pop culture or, better yet, corporate culture, into your style guide. Illustrate key points with made-up examples about well-known public — or even company — personalities to make them more memorable. Consider also breaking up your style guide with famous quotes about writing, or other personal touches.

5. PROMOTE AND ENFORCE

Launch your style guide internally with the same enthusiasm that you'd have in launching a new product with clients. Create a mini-campaign to ensure that copies get into everyone's hands, as well as to let them know why adhering to a style guide is important. After all, a style guide can only be effective if everyone, including you, is held accountable for the standards it sets.

6. MAKE IT A LIVING DOCUMENT

A good style guide will evolve over time. Be prepared to incorporate feedback, add in new content, and make other tweaks as needed. Each new version will be that much stronger.

SAMPLE DAILY CONTENT TRACKING DASHBOARDS

Creating and filling in a simple tracking document like the one below will help you to become more focused on each piece of content that you create. It will force you to look at how each piece of content performs that day in terms of the amount of traffic it garnered, etc.

Date	Type of Content	Title	Pageviews (Target: 100)	Bounce Rate (Target: <50%)	Comments (Target 4)	Social Pageviews (Target 80)	What Went Well /Didn't Go Well	Actions We Will Take Based on Learning	How This Content Will Be Recycled

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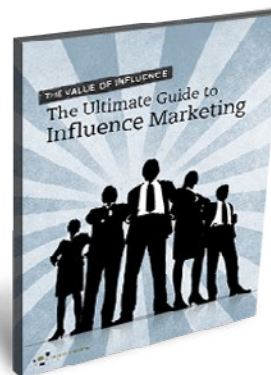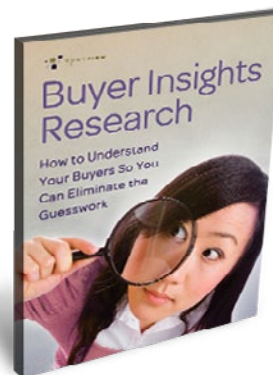
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About This eBook

"It Takes a Content Factory! A Guide to Creating and Delivering the Content Your Company Needs to Attract and Retain Great Customers" lays out an easy-to-follow framework for constructing a content factory from the ground up. It contains a high-level overview of the components necessary to build a content factory as well as a rich appendix of additional resources designed to supplement content marketers' efforts.

About OpenView Labs

OpenView Labs is the strategic and operational consulting arm of OpenView Venture Partners, a global Venture Capital fund that invests in expansion-stage technology companies.

More Information

Visit the OpenView Labs website for more ideas and inspiration for senior managers of technology companies.

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