

CONTENT STRATEGY CHECKLIST:

10 Steps to Organizing a Content Strategy for Your Business



Content marketing has long been proven to be one of the most effective marketing tools for businesses. It builds trust, generates leads, and develops your brand.

However, without a content strategy checklist, your content marketing results will likely suffer, and you risk your content being drowned out by more engaging and effective media.

A checklist helps you intentionally go through each step of your content marketing strategy to ensure you don't miss any critical steps.

Follow along as we walk you through our recommended content strategy checklist. Then implement some or all of these steps to help you get the results you need.

The Importance of a Content Strategy

The goal of your content strategy should be to align your brand voice with your customers' needs. Good content adds value to your brand and solves a problem for your target audience. This, in turn, generates leads and sales.

Without a defined strategy, you may not understand what you are trying to achieve. It will also be difficult to measure the success of your content.

Following a content strategy checklist will help if your brand experiences inconsistent content results.

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- ✓ 1. SET SMART GOALS
 - ✓ 2. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE
 - ✓ 3. CONSIDER YOUR COMPETITION
 - ✓ 4. PERFORM A CONTENT AUDIT
 - ✓ 5. OPTIMIZE YOUR CONTENT WITH KEYWORDS
 - ✓ 6. CHOOSE YOUR FORMATS AND CHANNELS
 - ✓ 7. CREATE A CONTENT CALENDAR
 - ✓ 8. PROMOTE YOUR CONTENT
 - ✓ 9. USE CONTENT MARKETING TOOLS
 - ✓ 10. MEASURE YOUR SUCCESS

Content Strategy Checklist

Below you'll find our 10 steps to content marketing success.

1. Set SMART Goals

Setting SMART goals can help you create more meaningful content to engage your audience and attract new fans and customers.

SMART goals need to be:

- **Specific:** What do you want to achieve with your overall content strategy and each piece of content?
- **Measurable:** How will you know if your content is effective? What metrics can you monitor?
- **Attainable:** Is your goal something you can achieve with your current team and resources?
- **Relevant:** Does your content strategy align with your business model and goals?
- **Time-bound:** When do you want to achieve your content goal?

An example of a SMART content goal is:

By the end of the quarter, we will publish 12 blogs that attract a new audience and generate 20% more leads.

2. Know Your Audience

While you can push your content into the ever-expanding sea of the internet, without a focused audience, it's far more likely to get lost.

When you thoroughly understand who you want to reach, you can customize your content so it appeals to your target audience.

Consider the following questions:

- **Who is your target audience?** Have your marketing team create buyer personas that represent various customer segments. Share these with your content creators so they can focus content toward these personas.
- **What problem does our audience have?** Talk to your current customers and find out why they chose you. Their answers may align with what you already know. However, there could be a few answers that reveal surprising solutions you didn't know your products and services could solve. Use your content to highlight those solutions.
- **Where is our target audience?** You need to know where your audience spends their time online, and, depending on your business, where they are physically located. Go where your audience is. Do they spend more time on Facebook or TikTok? You can use Google Analytics to analyze data about your organic traffic sources.
- **What questions do our customer service and sales team frequently get?** If your customer service or sales teams spend a lot of time answering the same questions over and over, this is a good sign you need a knowledge database. Have your content team create FAQ pages, product demonstration videos, and anything else that will answer these common questions.

3. Consider Your Competition

One content strategy that some businesses overlook is checking out the competition. You should have a good understanding of what types of content your competition publishes and dig into any gaps. This will help keep you on track with trending content and give you a chance to create content that takes a different stance than your competitors.

Consider the variations in your products and services when compared to your competitors. Then highlight your innovations in your content.

Finding your competitors' content gaps is another great tactic. Perhaps they are struggling to reach a younger audience because they haven't capitalized on TikTok. Find a way for your brand to fill that void.

4. Perform a Content Audit

If you have some existing content, you can do a [content audit](#) to evaluate what you have.

Ask the following questions:

- Does the existing content still fit your brand's goals and voice?
- Is the information up to date?
- Does your content still apply to your current products and services?

Even if your existing content is still relevant, it might be a good idea to update it if it is a few years old. You might find better keywords or more up-to-date data that would add more value to your content.

5. Optimize Your Content with Keywords

How does your target audience find your content? If the content is posted on your website, it will most likely be through an organic or paid search. Google and other search engines rank the most relevant websites based on the keywords someone searches. So, if your [content is optimized](#) for those keywords, it is more likely to rank near the top of the results.

Most SEO experts agree that there are [four types](#) of search intent keywords:

- **Informational:** People want to learn something. For example, "how to grow tomatoes."
- **Commercial:** People looking for more information on a brand or service. For example, "best CRM software."
- **Navigational:** People looking for a specific website. For example, "Dayton, Ohio news site."
- **Transactional:** People want to buy something or complete an action. For example, someone looking to buy jeans could type "women's jeans."

Decide which category each content idea fits into and which keywords you think are the most relevant. Do a search yourself using those keywords and explore your results. You'll find most of results on the first page have a similar format. Sticking to that format can help your content rank better. For example, if most of the results are videos, you should probably make a video. Whereas, if most of the results are listicles, write a list.

The most important step, however, is creating content that is unique and delivers more value than what currently appears in the search engine results pages (SERPs).

6. Choose Your Formats and Channels

According to the 2022 State of Inbound Marketing report, videos are the [most popular content marketing format](#). Blogs, images, infographics, and case studies follow closely behind.

While your brand does not have to create every type of content, offering a diverse selection will appeal to more of your target audience. There are also a ton of ways to combine them. For example, you can [write a blog](#) that includes relevant images, a video, and even an infographic. Combining these types of content is great because visual media can take your written content to the next level. Your audience is more likely to retain your content if they have a visual to accompany it.

Another thing you can do is share content on multiple channels. One popular choice is sharing content on social media. This allows you to pick the most popular platforms with your target audience.

Additionally, the 2022 State of Inbound Marketing report also revealed the most popular social media marketing channels include Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook. Because TikTok has steadily gained popularity, marketers are looking to invest more in creating content for TikTok. This is worth monitoring if you don't utilize much short video content.

In addition to social media, you can create a blog on your website while publishing other content like case studies, webinars, podcasts, and ebooks. These content types are standards and rarely go out of style.

7. Create a Content Calendar

Once you understand why you are creating content and the keywords you want to optimize for, it's time to start creating a concrete plan. You'll do this with a content calendar.

A content calendar is a detailed list of every piece of content you want to publish within a specific timeframe. It should include dates for creating, editing, and publishing the content, in addition to the topics you plan to cover.

Having a content calendar is an important part of a content strategy. With it, you can:

- Set deadlines
- Prioritize content
- Diversify your content
- Target your content to various audiences
- Keep a record of your work

8. Promote Your Content

Even well-written, optimized content still needs to be promoted. This promotion improves the chances someone will read, watch, and act on your content. There are numerous methods you can use, some free and some paid:

- Send links to your latest content in an email newsletter
- Share your content on social media
- Strategically link to other websites (backlinks)
- Use paid advertising
- Partner with social media influencers
- Add internal links to your content

9. Use Content Marketing Tools

With an in-depth content strategy, you may need help monitoring and managing your content. Don't take for granted the numerous content marketing tools available online. These help you keep up with your data and ensure quality. Some popular options include:

- **Google Analytics:** Used for monitoring content performance.
- **SEMRUSH:** Used for content creation, keyword research, and content auditing.
- **Google Trends:** Used for topic research.
- **Grammarly:** Used for improving spelling and grammar in content.
- **Ahrefs:** Similar features to SEMRUSH.

10. Measure Your Success

You need to know if your content strategy is working. The best way to do this is to monitor key metrics. The most common metrics include:

- Page views
- Bounce rate
- Number of leads
- Social media engagements (likes, shares, and comments)
- Unique social media visits
- Video views
- SERPS rankings
- Number of backlinks to your content

Tracking your engagement metrics allows you to dig into the content that does well for you and which strategies you can consider putting aside. Additionally, you will better understand your audience and what does well with search engines.

This kind of knowledge is invaluable to keeping your content strategy on track, so regularly check your metrics.



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