

CONTENT 101

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER



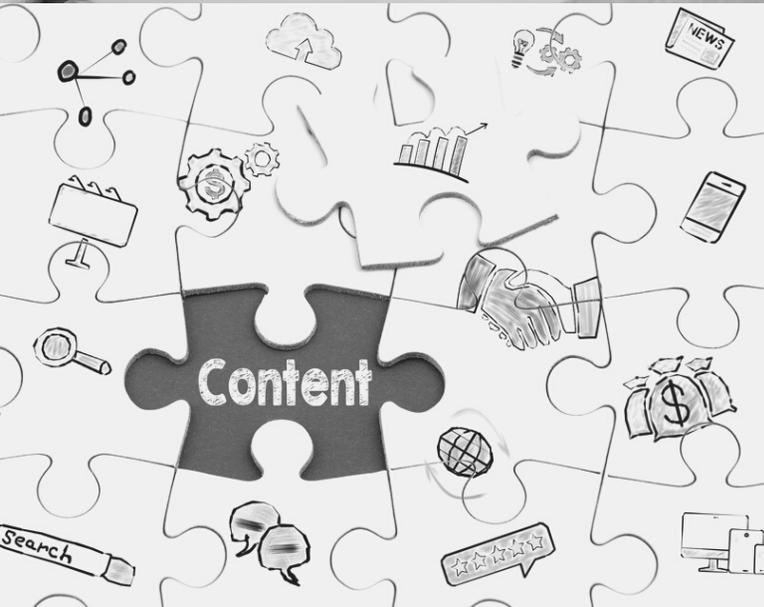
AMMIT
CREATIVE
brand content with heart

CONTENT MARKETING IS ...



WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?

Content marketing is the art of creating, curating, and distributing content combined with the science of measuring its impact on awareness, lead generation, customer acquisition, and stakeholder satisfaction. It employs tactics such as visual storytelling to build and strengthen relationships with target audiences by giving them relevant, informative, and useful content tuned to audience, platform, and medium.

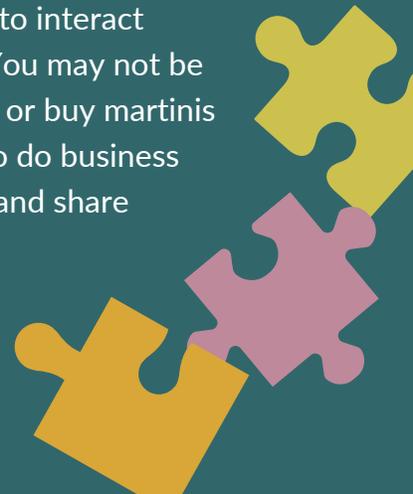
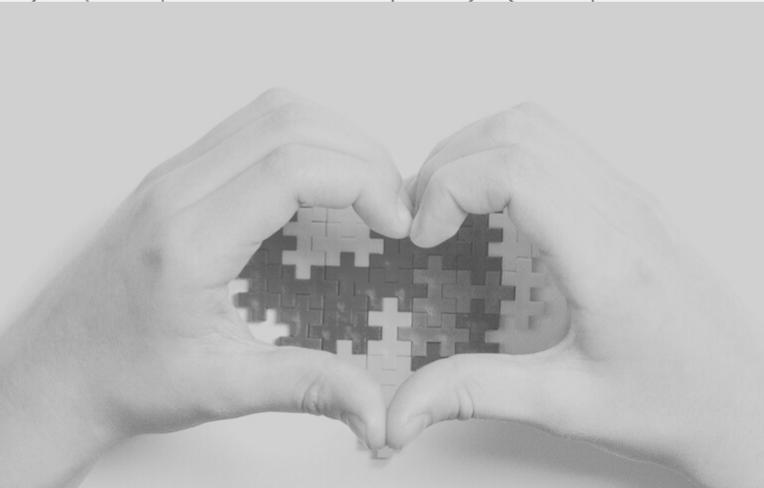


WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

Content marketing works.

Content drives engagement, brand lift, ROI, and even budget shares. People are increasingly turning away from traditional, interruptive advertising and turning into content as one-to-many marketing tactics are enhanced and eclipsed by more engaging many-to-many tactics.

This shift enables brands to interact directly with audiences. You may not be able to shake hands with, or buy martinis for, everyone you want to do business with. But you can create and share useful content that aligns your brand's solution with you audiences' needs, challenges, and problems.



PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

WHAT ARE THE PIECES TO THIS PUZZLE?

Building a good content strategy is a bit like putting a spinning 3D puzzle together. It's about designing and executing a plan to build an audience by publishing, maintaining, and amplifying content at a consistent cadence to educate and inspire, turning strangers into fans, fans into new customers, and new customers into loyal followers.

With so many pieces to the puzzle, how do you do content right? Whether you're just getting started or an old content pro, it's useful to...

“
I've learned that people will forget
what you said, people will forget
what you did, but people will never
forget how you made them feel.

- Maya Angelou
”

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCES

CLARIFY YOUR GOALS

EMBRACE YOUR AUTHORITY

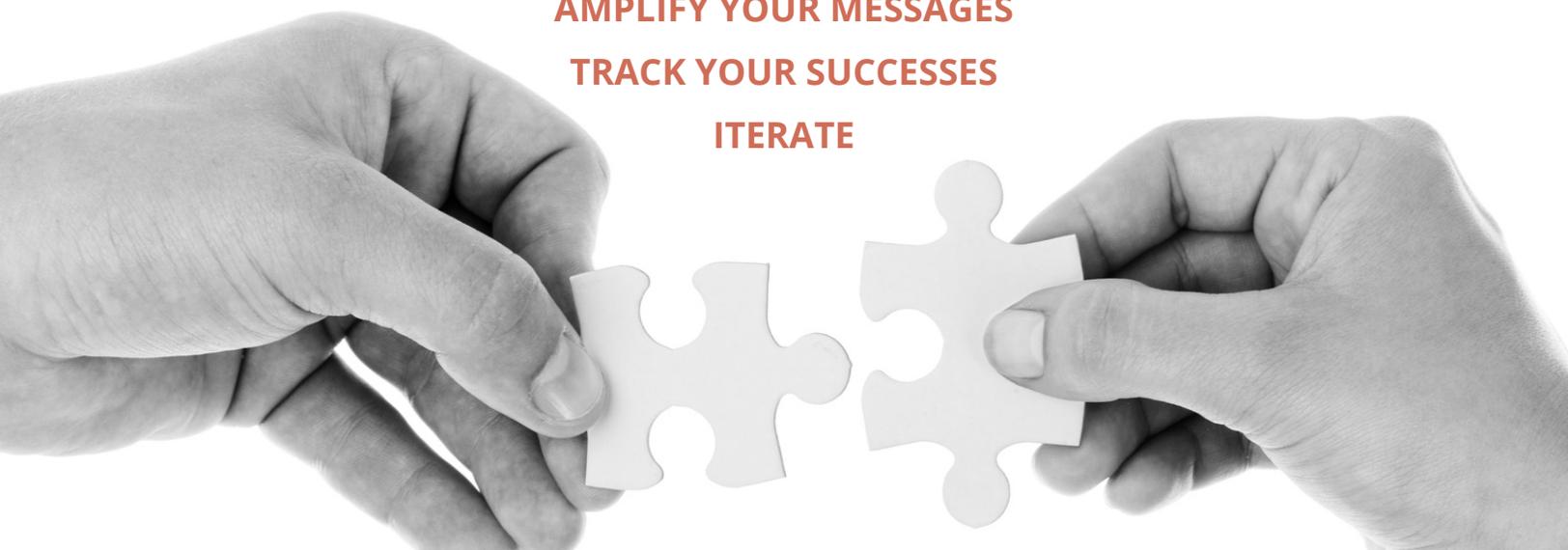
UNDERSTAND YOUR FUNNEL

CRAFT YOUR CONTENT

AMPLIFY YOUR MESSAGES

TRACK YOUR SUCCESSES

ITERATE



KNOW YOUR AUDIENCES

WHO'S PROBLEMS ARE YOU SOLVING?

Content marketing works best if you're audience-centric. Digital tools and platforms have transformed how people research, make buying decisions, choose services, stay in touch with brands, and even fall in love. This puts more power in your audiences' hands. Shouldn't your content be in their hands too?

Getting to audience-centric starts with identifying audience needs. Tools like personas, customer journey maps, and empathy maps are a good start. But if you're looking for a shortcut, it's useful to simply ask . . .

WHO are your **PRIMARY AUDIENCES**?

WHO are your **SECONDARY AUDIENCES**?

WHERE are they in the **SALES FUNNEL**?

WHAT **OPPORTUNITIES** can you help them capture?

WHAT keeps your audience members **UP AT NIGHT**?

WHAT **PROBLEMS** do they have you can solve?

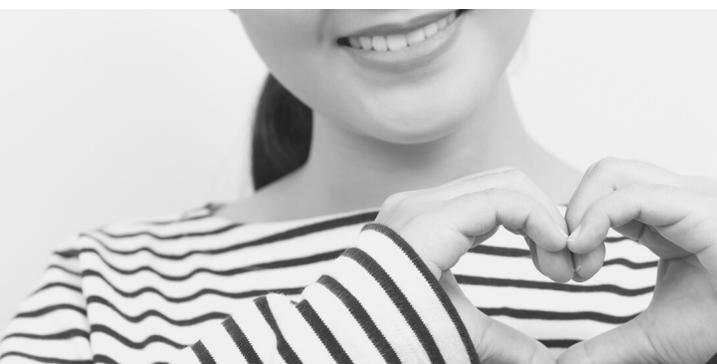
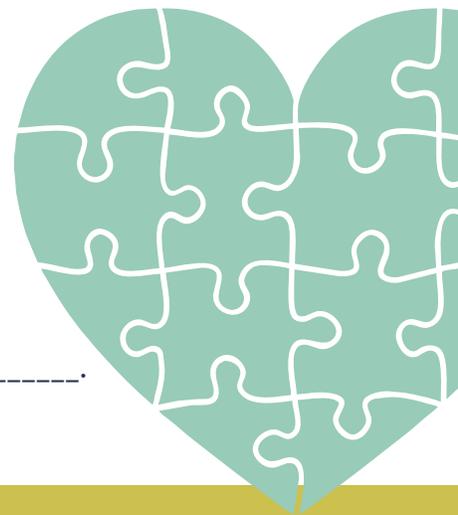
WHICH **CHANNELS** and **MEDIUMS** do they touch as they look for solutions?

WHAT **EMOTIONS** do members of your audience experience as they move from awareness to action?

Here's a framing statement we find useful in our day-to-day work:

_____ needs a good way to _____.

Unexpectedly, in their world, _____.



*WHAT YOUR AUDIENCE
WANTS TO LEARN ABOUT
IS MORE IMPORTANT
THAN WHAT YOUR BRAND
WANTS TO TALK ABOUT.*

CLARIFY YOUR GOALS

WHAT ARE YOUR OBJECTIVES?

Most great content marketing strategies aim to do more than drive buzz. They aim to drive engagement, ROI, and even audience satisfaction. Clarify what you want to accomplish, and make sure to focus on reasonable, achievable goals.

Content can help you...

Build brand **AWARENESS** and grow brand lift

Establish your brand's **CREDIBILITY** and
AUTHENTICITY

EDUCATE members, clients, buyers,
consumers, or other **STAKEHOLDERS**.

ENGAGE with influencers, the media, and
other stakeholders.

Take better **CARE** of current **CUSTOMERS**.

NURTURE leads through the sales **FUNNEL**.

Create new sales **LEADS** and upsell
OPPORTUNITIES.



EMBRACE YOUR AUTHORITY

WHAT'S YOUR THING?

You're probably great at many, many things. But to craft great content, you should be clear about your brand's main lane—the zone where you have the greatest authority, where no brand can surpass your expertise. Most of your content should be in your main lane, but secondary topics your audience is interested in—topics you can address authoritatively, deeply, and usefully—can yield wins as well.

Like relationships in real life, growing relationships online is easier if you share your knowledge generously and are sincere in your effort to educate, inform, and entertain.



UNDERSTAND YOUR FUNNEL

HOW DO YOU TAKE RELATIONSHIPS DEEPER?

Think about the buying stages your audiences go through. What needs and emotions do they experience as they move from awareness to consideration to action. How can you capture their attention? What questions can you answer? And what calls-to-action can usefully lead them deeper into the funnel. It's about turning strangers into clients, customers, members, and loyal fans.

TOFU

Top of the funnel content is designed to make your target audiences aware of your products or services. With TOFU content, you want to draw their attention.

AWARENESS

blog posts . social media posts
stat and quote cards . infographics
quizzes . podcasts . one sheeter
web videos . lists . landing pages

MOFU

Middle of the funnel content is about evolving the relationship, giving your interested audiences useful info so they understand how your product or service will help them and get their questions answered. This content should facilitate evaluation.

CONSIDERATION

whitepapers . surveys . myth busters
discounts . ebooks . emails . articles
microsites . expert and customer videos
flowcharts . storified case studies

BOFU

Bottom of the funnel content facilitates conversion. It's about transitioning them from interested to customer. BOFU content features stronger calls-to-action.

ACTION

demos . customer stories . webinars
events . FAQ sheets . e-newsletters
timelines . how-to videos . magazine articles
cheat sheets . printables . insider guides

CRAFT YOUR CONTENT



WHAT DOES GREAT CONTENT LOOK LIKE?

You know where you want to go. You know your audiences. You know your main lane topics. And you even know what mediums you'll use and how you'll get your content to target audiences. You're ready to craft those videos, infographics, and whitepapers. It helps to know the attributes of stand out, superstar content as you dig in. Here are 5 attributes of great content worth knowing . . .

GREAT CONTENT TRIGGERS EMOTION

Emotions trigger dopamine in the brain, which makes people process and retain information better, and, importantly, take action. That's why marketing has always chased emotions like happiness. And for good reason: awe-inspiring and funny stories get more shares and drive people to act. Content that triggers fear and anxiety is also highly successful, as is content that triggers other emotions—anticipation, anger, sadness, and hope.

As you craft each piece of content, keep in mind the emotions you want your audience to experience. Use words, phrases, and imagery designed to trigger those emotions.

GREAT CONTENT TELLS BRAND STORIES . . . AS STORIES

One sure fire way to trigger emotions is to craft brand narratives that tell stories—stories that feature protagonists who overcome challenges, stories that have a beginning, middle and end. Stories should tie to your brand. Ideally your brand will play the role of superhero, solving the protagonist's problem. But content that ties more loosely to the brand can perform well too, especially for top of the funnel messages.

Before crafting content, consider writing it as a narrative and think about where your protagonist would be in the beginning, middle and end of the story as well as your brand's role in helping the protagonist overcome obstacles.

GREAT CONTENT MAKES USE OF VISUALS

We humans are truly visual creatures—we understand, process, and retain visual information much faster than textual info. That's because 99% of all sensory information is filtered out by the brain immediately, which means only 1% of information actually gets through. Of all the info successfully transmitted to the brain, 90% is visual.

Select attention-grabbing visuals that surprise or appeal to the senses. Consider taking some risks with the visuals you use. And making use of visuals doesn't mean just adding images. Consider videos, infographics, GIFs, illustrations, charts, quote cards, and more--your brand doesn't need to be visual to tell a visual story.

GREAT CONTENT IS HUMAN-CENTRIC

To appeal to humans, write like a human. Don't be scared to let your brand's personality shine through in the content you create. A conversational writing style is more engaging. No one wants to read/watch/listen to boring, grey, corp speak. But we love engaging with content that tackles real ideas, in a real voice, with a dash of passion and humor. Authentic and real trumps perfect and predictable every day!

Make sure your writers, designers, and vendors are aware of you tone, story, and style guidelines. (If you don't have these, get them!) Read your content out loud to make sure it flows smoothly and sounds personable.

GREAT CONTENT IS NONPROMOTIONAL

We could have chosen many adjectives to highlight here: timely, relevant, informative, entertaining, useful, to name just a few. Indeed, virtually every great piece of content you'll ever see either entertains or educates . . . or both! But if we had to choose one attribute that differentiates content marketing from traditional marketing, that attribute would be nonpromotional.

Make sure your content isn't just a sales sheet in disguise. No one likes people, or brands, who drone on about themselves. Ensuring your content isn't too self-promotional is especially key for top of the funnel content.



AMPLIFY YOUR CONTENT

HOW WILL YOU SHARE IT?

So you've built it. But will they come? Not without a plan. To successfully amplify your content you need to maximize your paid, earned, and owned channels to promote and amplify platform-friendly content.

An editorial calendar that outlines publication expectations (how often, and where, you plan to share) and creates a framework for who owns the content (who is responsible for producing, approving, and distributing content) is a must. Keep it flexible enough to adapt to topical stories and unexpected inspirations. Remember it's okay to repurpose, reuse and reshare content as long as it's audience-friendly and platform appropriate. And don't forget to enable social sharing and interaction across channels to drive more engagement.

Finally, keep in mind that these paid, earned, and owned channels are no longer siloed. Now they converge, flowing into one another so that the paid promotion of owned media can lead to earned media wins, for example. Consistency and branding are both converged (or merged) media keys, so keep them in mind as you build and amplify content pieces.



TRACK YOUR SUCCESSES

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S WORKING?

It's important to measure your content strategy so you know if it's working. Above all, metrics must align with your content strategy's goals. For example, if your goal is simply to increase engagement, then feedback, follows and interactions are a perfectly fine way to measure this. But if your goal is to drive real ROI, then business metrics that quantify the number of new leads and conversions are more appropriate.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself as you consider the successes, and failures, of your strategy.

Is your content driving **ENGAGEMENT**?

Is your content driving web and social **TRAFFIC**?

Is your content driving sales leads through the sales **FUNNEL**?

Is your content driving **HAPPIER** and/or more **LOYAL** employees, customers, members, and **STAKEHOLDERS**?

Is your content driving cost **SAVINGS**?

Is your content driving greater customer **RETENTION**?

Metrics make it easier to learn lessons so you can quickly dust yourself off, adjust your content, and try again. Chances are, you'll learn something new in the process.

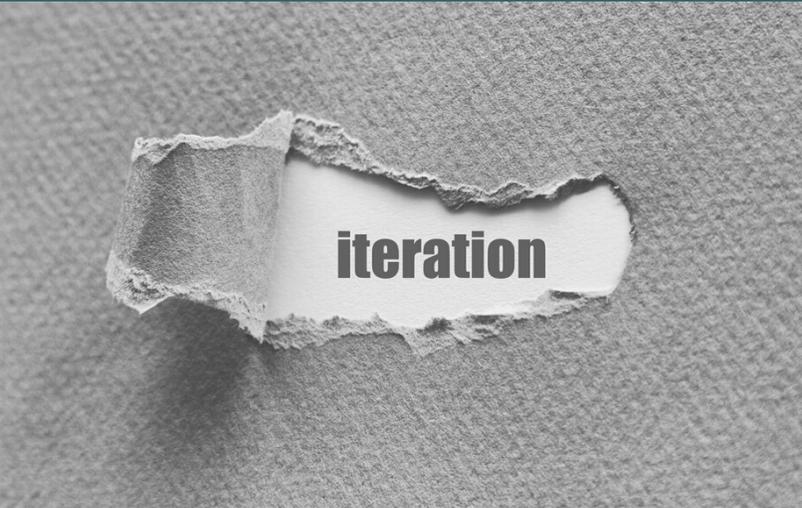


*CONTENT MARKETING CREATES
THREE TIMES AS MANY LEADS AS
TRADITIONAL MARKETING AND
COSTS 64% LESS.*

- Showpad



ITERATE



HOW DO YOU KEEP GETTING BETTER?

Crafting and sharing content just for the sake of content itself won't get you where you want to go. Every piece of content should have a purpose. And the purpose should align with business goals and be tailored to audience and channel. Even if you do it all perfectly, it doesn't mean everything you do will be a metrics win. It helps if you look up and check the forrest on a regular basis and don't focus only on the trees. Then learn from your failure and do better next time.

BE BRAVE. BE PATIENT. BE PERSISTENT.

(And if you need some back up, [poke us.](#))

