

Content Production Master Resource Guide

How To **Grow Your Traffic With**
Content Marketing

WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?

Defining the enigmatic buzzword that every “expert” under the sun keeps using.

In Simple Terms... Content Marketing is a strategy in which businesses/websites create and distribute valuable, relevant, and entertaining content for their target market. (The keyword is “valuable”.)

The goal of the strategy is to educate, win-over, and influence that target market to take specific profitable actions.

Examples of Content Marketing

- Blogs
- Articles
- Infographics
- Videos
- Photographs / Graphics / Art
- Instructional Guides
- Magazines (both digital and print)
- Facebook Posts / Pages
- Micro Sites
- eCourses / Digital Classes
- Slideshare / Powerpoint / Webinars
- Podcasts / Radio Shows
- Product Packaging
- Streaming Media (Periscope, Facebook Live, Snapchat)
- Apps
- Forums / Wikis/ Groups /Resource Centers

Why Content Marketing?

Content Marketing is the base of EACH business Neil Patel is involved with.

How did you hear about Neil?

- Was it his Quick Sprout blog?
- NeilPatel.com blog?
- Crazy Egg blog?
- His writing with Forbes magazine?
- His writing with Entrepreneur magazine?
- An interview, podcast, slideshare, or video that he's on?

This is ALL content marketing.

Content Marketing does the following:

1. Helps people solve a problem... Which turns you into a person of authority in your industry/space.
2. Proves your credibility and trustworthiness.
3. Gets you more exposure to more new people.
4. Gets you bigger, better opportunities (such as being asked to write for other publications, which have more eyeballs, and that you can put your site link into a byline... Or interviews with news stations/magazines/news publications/etc. that get seen by a lot of people!)
5. Sells people without having to "sell" them. By proving your worth, helping them solve problems, and being consistently helpful, they will WANT to spend money with you.
6. Most importantly... Content Marketing can help you automate the 5-20 touches that a prospective client needs to have from your brand/business before they make a purchasing decision.

What's even better is that content marketing is evergreen, and usually grows in value over time. This means it's alive for as long as the content is online. If you've optimized and promoted your content properly, it will be found and looked at for a long time.

Overall, this means a much higher lifetime ROI for your content marketing efforts, than almost anything else you could do for your business.

The Base of ALL Content Marketing: Writing

Yes, even your photos and your streaming media require some writing!

Whether you've written back and forth with your fans/followers to find out what matters to them, you have to write a caption to go with your awesome photoset, or you're just writing an article... The written word is the foundation of every content marketing plan.

Which is why our content marketing lessons will focus on writing, for the next several weeks.

YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

The first step of writing effectively, is writing to ONE person, as if they were a friend who has asked you to elaborate on a topic or to help them.

The question is... Who is that person?

Obscurity vs. Specificity

The reason most writing is weak, boring, or confusing, is because it isn't specific enough.

Most of the time the writing isn't specific enough because it's trying to write for too many people at once.

[Do a quick Google Search for "Neil Patel Entrepreneur Magazine".](#)

The first result should show you all of his recent pieces of content. And all you have to do is read the title to understand whom he wrote the article for.

Your Goal: Write To ONE Person

Does that sound impossible? I promise it's not.

Every good marketer will tell you that when you try to be everything to everyone, you end up being nothing to no one.

Being specific, and speaking to a specific "someone", helps you stand out as a leader. Because leaders are SPECIFIC.

You may have 3 different problems that you help people solve in your business. That's okay. Because you're ALWAYS going to write on ONE problem at a time (since that's what you're learning here)... And you can write about that ONE problem to ONE audience type.

Start Broad and Then Narrow

Who is your broad audience?

1. List the demographics of your audience. (Age, Location, Gender, Income, Relationship Status, Family Status, etc.)
2. List the problems of your audience.
3. List the nightmares of your audience.
4. List the wishes/dreams of your audience.

Who is your ideal customer group?

This is the type of person that you WISH would buy from you all day, every day.

1. List their SPECIFIC demographic information (to your best knowledge).
2. List their SPECIFIC problems.
3. List their SPECIFIC nightmares.
4. List their SPECIFIC wishes/dreams.
5. Get as specific as possible—what kind of character traits do they have? State of awareness? Attitudes? Perceptions on life? What is their journey to buying from you?

Create an Avatar of ONE specific person.

Pretend you are writing a character in a book, and be as detailed as humanly possible.

1. Demographic information (age/sex/location/family status)
2. Personal interests and life situation (job, relationship status, do they have a family, etc.)
3. Character traits / life perceptions / life experiences / attitudes / motivations / state of awareness.
4. Personal problems.
5. Personal nightmares.
6. Personal wishes/dreams.
7. How do they come to find you? What kind of interactions do they WANT to have with you?

Ideas To Help Define Your Avatar

1. Think of the best client you've ever had, and write down everything about that experience and person who bought from you.
2. Go onto your social media accounts and look at the people who interact with your brand. Is there anyone in particular who stands out? Why? Would you want them as a customer? Why?
3. Check out reviews of other products/services to get an idea of a super fan. What qualities do you wish your own clients possessed? Write them down.
4. Look at content marketers that you admire and look at the people who comment or share the content. Was the article written for those type of people? How? Can you create a practice avatar by just looking at the article and super fans?

The Process

You may need to develop 2-3 avatars, if you have a couple of primary problems/topics that you'll be creating content around.

As you create content and get real audience/reader/viewer feedback, you may want to make some changes to your avatar. It's a natural part of the content marketing process.

As you become a more experienced content marketer, your avatar will evolve. And soon you won't have to constantly remind yourself of whom you're creating content for. The point of this exercise is to help you to identify a specific audience to target with your message and content.

Now that you have an idea of who you're writing for... it's time to plan content that search engines want to rank and deliver as results to their searchers!

CONTENT STRATEGY

To become a content marketer that others listen to, you must start with a theme, a plan, and knowing what kind of content you want to create and share with others.

The Core

At the center of your content marketing should be your core message.

This is the overarching theme and umbrella of all of your content marketing efforts. Beneath that umbrella will lie the subtopics and categories that you can break your content into.

Here's a great formula, created by ContentMarketingInstitute.com, for figuring out your core content marketing mission:

The content we produce helps our company accomplish [goal] and [goal] by providing [adjective] and [adjective] content that makes [audience description] feel [emotion] and [emotion] so that they can [task] or [task].

Subtopics / Categories

Underneath your singular content marketing goal, there will be subtopics and categories that you can write about.

These are all individual topics that support and further accomplish your primary content marketing goal.

Underneath those topics, you'll be writing individual articles.

Start by choosing 3-7 subtopics/categories.

Don't make it too complicated. You can always add more, later.

Example: Crazy Egg

Company Mission: To provide affordable, effective heat-mapping technology that helps people improve on-page conversion.

Core Message: You can boost your website's profit within 30 days.

Sub Topics/Categories (support Core Message): web design, conversion optimization, blogging for business, conversion, copywriting, scrambled eggs, and analytics

Identify Your Objectives

Usually, by starting with your core direction, you'll be able to easily identify what the objectives of your content marketing are.

Like all marketing initiatives, you have to know what you're trying to get out of your efforts.

Think about how your content marketing fits into your overall marketing and sales plan:

- Warm up and grab leads, via collecting emails and following up with prospects.
- Help with customer support, by creating articles that explain your product and how to use it.
- Become a thought leader in your industry.

Making Share-Worthy Content

The best way to choose content channels is to understand what your target audience is responding to most often, right now, and honestly assessing what you are capable of doing right now.

Are people responding best to video?

Infographics?

Quizzes?

Images?

Articles?

Podcasts?

A combination?

The key here is to choose something you can keep up with consistently. Hopping on a trend that you can't keep up with, isn't going to be worth much to you. Struggling to create valuable content that you aren't good at creating isn't much good to you either.

Scheduling: Be Realistic

Remember, consistency—more than anything else—is the key to content marketing success.

Realistically assess the following:

1. What are your strengths?
2. What kind of content are you most interested in creating?
3. What tools do you have available to you?
4. How much time can you realistically devote to creating content?

Low frequency but high quality and high value content will be worth more to your readers (and you!) than if you have super frequent but low quality and low value content.

Special Considerations

Do you have a board of directors that need to approve your content first?

Do you have to stick to specific compliance standards?

Does your content need to be checked for legal compliance/accuracy?

(At least one of these will typically apply to health care, legal, nutrition, finance, and insurance industries.)

Make sure you appropriately plan for the time, resources, and people that will be required to get your content to a publishable state.

Hiring A Writer

Even if you hire a writer, it's highly recommended that you personally keep the idea bank stocked up when you're first starting your content marketing strategy. (The exception to this would be if you hire a content marketing agency to help you out—they usually do the legwork for the content they create on your behalf.)

Make sure that you still plan time into your schedule to quality check the writing that another person does for you. It's your reputation on the line!

Key Performance Indicators

For every piece of content, you need to identify the objective that you are trying to accomplish. And then you need to measure the performance of the content.

- Email sign-ups
- Blog comments
- Number of people who move from the blog to a particular page
- Increase in overall site traffic
- Increase in overall site rankings
- If the piece is quoted or featured in other major publications

In all cases, it's a good idea to track users behavior for better insights and see the long-term ROI of your content marketing efforts.

As you can see, a sustainable and measurable content marketing strategy takes a considerable amount of forethought.

The more you invest into preparing your content marketing strategy, the more likely you will see a high ROI from your strategy. This has been the secret of Neil, as well as several other marketing pros, for over a decade.

HOW TO WRITE LIKE A PRO

Very few people start out believing they're a writer. Yet, writing is simply a process of putting your thoughts down in a manner that makes sense, and in some cases, entertains.

Simplify to Power Up

Almost every professional writer under the sun will tell you the same thing: the act of professional writing is a simple, methodical process.

- Practice and being addicted to editing is what turns someone into a professional writer.
- Make sure you prime the pump:
- Always be reading to stir up ideas and catch new patterns of writing and thinking
- Always be observant of the events, locations, and people in your life, so that you can find unique insights and metaphors to bring to your writing.

1: Determine the Topic

Look through your idea bank and/or content calendar

Pick a topic from the list

Gather whatever notes you wrote on the topic, when it was placed on the list.

Now go through these questions to begin getting clear on your topic:

1. What directions can you take with this topic?
2. What questions need to be answered for this topic?
3. What opinion do you have on this topic?
4. What would people find valuable to read about this topic?

2: Research

You'll want to open your web browser to try to answer these questions on the topic you've chosen for your content piece:

1. What supplemental facts, studies, or statistics are relevant to your topic?
2. What other articles have been written about your topic?
3. What is the opposing view to your own opinion on the topic?
4. What would make the topic more valuable? (Lists of resources, links, etc.)
5. What statements have been made about your topic? (This is especially valuable if they are statements made by people of high credibility or exposure.)
6. Are your sources of information credible? It's good to double check.

3: Organize

1. Choose an angle for your content topic
2. Select the research that is relevant to your angle and topic.
3. Begin to outline your writing.
4. Use the TOSS formula:
 - Topic / Theme
 - Opinion
 - Supporting statement or fact
 - Supporting statement or fact
5. ***Start by creating ONE guiding sentence to keep your writing on task.***

TOSS EXAMPLE

Topic: The consequences of long-term sugar consumption

Opinion: long-term sugar consumption has negative consequences for the human body

Supporting statement or fact: sugar contains no nutrients necessary for the growth of the human body

Supporting statement or fact: consuming sugars can overload your liver with fructose.

Supporting statement or fact: sugar has body-fat promoting effects.

Guiding Statement: The dangerous truth of long-term sugar consumption is that it contains no positive nutrients necessary for the care of the human body, can overload your liver with fructose, and has body-fat promoting effects.

4: Write

There are several types of writing structures you can utilize

We'll build on the TOSS formula:

1. **Introduction:** this is where you introduce the topic or theme, and state your opinion.
2. **Body Paragraph 1:** This should cover one of the supporting statements or facts. Make sure to include any relevant research or quotes.
3. **Body Paragraph 2:** repeat of body paragraph one for a different supporting point.
4. **Body Paragraph 3:** repeat of body paragraph one for a different supporting point.
5. **Conclusion:** Wrap up of the topic, and a call to action.

5: Cool Off

Take a break and walk away after your first draft!!! Give it at least 24 hours before you come back to revise and write more.

6: Edit

The key to GREAT writing, is relentless editing. Here are some questions to ask yourself, while editing your article:

1. Does your article cover a SINGLE topic?
2. Is the writing clear?
3. Is the writing simple to understand?
4. Does the writing make sense?
5. Is anything missing from the writing?
6. Is the tone of the writing well suited to the topic?
7. Have you checked for punctuation and spelling?
8. Have you made sure that it's easy to scan?

This may seem familiar—because this is much like the process of writing that you learn in school.