Developing your content marketing strategy & measuring its success

Todd Wheatland, global head of strategy
"Holland. The Original Cool."
Highlight Reel
CONTENT TO INSPIRE.

CONTENT TO ENGAGE.

CONTENT TO INFORM.
“Content marketing is like a first date. If all you do is talk about yourself, there won’t be a second date.”

- David Beebe, VP Content @ Marriott
Content strategy
AUSTRALIAN CONTENT MARKETING

CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

44% Have a documented content marketing strategy

71% Say their strategy includes a plan to operate content marketing as an ongoing business process, not simply a campaign

48% Say their strategy is extremely or very effective at helping their organization achieve its current content marketing goals
Strategy is about choices:
you can’t be all things to all people
When it comes to content strategy...

There’s no fool-proof template, no silver bullet.

BUT, there is a linear path you can follow to increase your chances of content marketing success.

Why do you need a content strategy?

Done well, content strategy:

• Helps companies understand and produce the kind of content their audiences need
• Allows organisations to develop realistic, sustainable and measurable publishing plans that keep their content on track in the long term
• Cuts costs by reducing redundant or extraneous publishing efforts, while increasing effectiveness of existing assets
• Aligns communication across channels so that web content, print collateral, social media conversations and internal knowledge management are working toward the same goals (in channel-appropriate ways).

Erin Kissane, The Elements of Content Strategy
INFORMATION GATHERING

1. Why are we doing this?

2. How will content marketing support our broader business goals?

3. Who are our target audiences that will buy from us?

4. Who are our target audiences that want to consume our content?

5. Who is going to do the work?

6. What can we offer to our target audiences at each stage of the buying process?

7. How does our target audience find us?

8. How can we stay competitive within our market?

9. How do we define success, and how do we define failure?

10. Where will we focus our content distribution and promotional efforts?

11. When do we publish?

12. When do we measure results?
in practice
The approach

01 **Audience**
- What do they love?
- What do they need?
- Pain & passion points?
- What emotion to evoke?
- How will we drive action?

02 **Brand**
- The Brief
- Brand Objectives
- Messaging
- Content & Channel Audit, i.e. Owned-Earned-Paid

03 **Opportunities**
- What role will the brand/content fulfill? i.e. Educate? Offer Utility? Entertain?
- Where are the content gaps?
- Channels or tech opportunities?

04 **Creative**
- Concept development
  - What idea(s) will deliver on the opportunity
- Format development
  - Audience testing

05 **Produce**
- Collaborative content production
- Clients, partners etc. Communiqué

06 **Amplify**
- Content is distributed and amplified to audiences through owned, earned and paid (social, native etc.) channels.

07 **Measure**
- Content and brand metrics are measured and used to optimise current and future content planning and production. Communiqué.

**STRATEGY**

**CONTENT CREATION**

**AMPLIFICATION**

**OPTIMISATION**
What’s in a strategy?

01 Objectives
Overview of business and marketing objectives, defining how content fits within existing activities.

02 The Background
Overview of the business landscape, including an analysis of competitors and identification of key challenges and opportunities.

03 Target Market
Detailed analysis of audience challenges, interests and media consumption behaviours.

04 Content Approach
Overview of channels, content themes, formats and topics around which the editorial strategy will be structured.

05 Amplification
Recommended approach to paid and organic amplification through social media and native advertising.

06 User Journeys
User journeys and how content supports the buying process. This should include our lead nurturing approach.

07 Reporting & Analytics
Key objectives and KPIs for the program, including a plan for how these metrics will be tracked and analysed.

08 Next Steps
Communicate what the next steps of the engagement, including timelines, deliverables and key contacts.
Structure of a typical brand story...

When will we know we’ve reached the new world? What will have changed?

What challenges does your protagonist need to overcome? What tools do they need? Who will help them overcome the challenges?

The challenges & jobs to be done

Why do you exist? What caused your movement into digital?

Catalyst

A vision

What do you stand for? What are you trying to achieve?

Who is your protagonist? Why are they your protagonist?

Heroes

The new world
The content tilt

What is the ‘content tilt’?

The content strategy aims to define the ‘content tilt’ - content that will differentiate your content from everything else that your audience is consuming.

Having a unique perspective creates an opportunity to lead and, ultimately, own the category you are in.

Without ‘tilting’ content just enough to tell a truly unique story, you risk blending into the rest of the noise and being forgotten.

Further reading:
https://www.quicksprout.com/the-beginners-guide-to-online-marketing-chapter-3/
https://blog.kissmetrics.com/create-authentic-brand-story/
http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/story/
http://www.convinceandconvert.com/content-marketing/3-ted-talks-that-uncover-the-secrets-of-storytelling/
1. Hero, hub hygiene

**Hero**
Large-scale, tent-pole events or ‘go-big’ moments designed to raise broad awareness.

**Hub**
Regularly scheduled ‘push’ content designed for your prime prospect.

**Hygiene**
Always-on ‘pull’ content designed for your core target.

2. Evergreen vs topical

**Evergreen**
timeless, canonical and valuable
- Interviews with industry experts.
- Instructions and tutorials.
- How-to.
- Lists.
- Answers to frequently asked questions.

**Topical**
timely, relevant and current
- Industry news.
- Current events.
- Company news.
- A wrap-up post from a conference you recently attended.
HYGIENE CONTENT
Always-on content optimised to audience intent and interests.

CONTENT ALIGNMENT
- **HERO CONTENT**
  - Large-scale, tent-pole events or programs that drive awareness at scale.
- **HUB CONTENT**
  - Regularly scheduled content around audience passions.
- **HYGIENE CONTENT**
  - Always-on content optimised to audience intent and interests.

Content aligns with calendar year events and organisational objectives.
how to get started
Content audit process

- Data analysis.
- Survey audience/public.
- Survey internal teams.

DOES THE AUDIENCE FEEDBACK MATCH THE INTERNAL FEEDBACK AND DATA?

**The Brand Story**
Responses here are credible, attractive and true.
Data audit process

• Use Google Analytics to identify the current performance of your website.

• Ensure you build segments based around your key goals.

How is my audience finding my content?  
(Channels report)

Which content piece is performing the best in terms of traffic, engagement, and conversion?  
(Landing Page report)

What should my content performance benchmarks be?  
(Landing Page report)

Do I need to prioritise building an audience; or should I nurture my existing audience?  
(New vs Returning report)

How many pieces of content do I need to create a month?  
(Frequency & Recency report)

What are the topics I should be talking about, but are not?  
(Site Search report)

Is my content successful at driving business transactional goals?  
(Behavior Flow report)

What is the value of my content?  
(Behavior Flow report)
Goals, objectives & tactics

Goal
A goal is a broad primary outcome.

Objective
An objective is a measurable step you take to achieve a strategy.

Tactic
A tactic is a tool you use in pursuing an objective associated with a strategy.

Strategy
Strategy is the approach you take to achieve your goal.
In practice

**Strategy**

**Business Goal 1: Create Awareness**
- **Marketing Objective:** Grow market share
- **Marketing Tactics:**
  - Develop an ‘always on’ content publishing and execution strategy.
  - Run targeted native campaigns to support content.

**Business Goal 2: Build Community**
- **Marketing Objective:** Increase audience on channels
- **Marketing Tactics:**
  - Run UGC promotional campaign to reward advocates.
  - Uncover new audiences through social listening & research.

**Business Goal 3: Influence Action**
- **Marketing Objective:** Generate leads
- **Marketing Tactics:**
  - Employ lead nurturing tactics to optimise path to purchase.
  - Use scientific principles of persuasion.
GOAL: Visibility

Tactics
SEO Amplification

Consumption Metrics
How many people viewed, downloaded or listened to this piece of content?
- Page views
- Video views
- Document views
- Downloads
- Social chatter

Sharing Metrics
How resonant is this content, and how often is it shared with others?
- Likes, shares, tweets, +1 and pins
- Forwards
- Inbound links
GOAL:
Brand perception

Tactics
Messaging style, tone of voice, targeting channel usage

Qualitative Metrics
- Focus groups
- Feedback forms
- Questionnaires
- Etc.

Sharing Metrics
- Likes, shares, tweets, +1 and pins
- Forwards
- Inbound links

GOALS & OBJECTIVES:
The McDonalds model

1. Embrace self-serve information
2. Make information a spectator sport
3. Identify customer knowledge gaps
4. Market your marketing
How you define a lead will vary; but from a content marketing perspective, a lead is when you have (through the exchange of engaging content) encouraged someone to give up enough information about themselves that you now have permission to "market" to them. Once you have the prospect’s permission, you can use content to help move them through the buying cycle.
GOAL: Lead generation

Tactics
Provision of ‘premium’ content, such as whitepaper, event or demo, or subscribing to a newsletter, SlideShare CTA or other pop-ups.

Lead-Gen Metrics
*How often does content consumption result in a lead?*

- Form completions and downloads
- Email subscriptions
- Blog subscriptions
- Blog comments
GOAL: Lead nurturing

Tactics
Strategic use of CTAs

Sales Metrics
*Did we actually make any money because of this content?*

- **Online sales**: typically measured through your ecommerce system
- ** Offline sales**: you track these through your CRM and unique URLs measured by your analytics program
- **Manual reporting and anecdotes**
GOAL: Customer loyalty & retention

Tactics
eNewsletter - customised for your database, member print mag or e-zine, exclusive events, webinar series, etc.

Customer up-sell and customer retention goals can work hand-in-hand. The ultimate goal is to turn customers into passionate subscribers. People who have “opted-in” to receive your content.

Metrics
- Email subscriptions
- Blog subscriptions
- Etc.
**GOAL:**
Don’t forget...

The end goal is action, not eyeballs!

The return on any one of the above objectives must have direct impact on one of these areas:

- Revenue
- Lower expenses
- Happier customers

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### Measurement against objectives

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<th>Awareness Metrics</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Measures</th>
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<td>Perception</td>
<td>Brand lift in social media vs Competitors Unaided / aided recall Purchase intent</td>
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<th>Consumption Metrics</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Site Traffic</td>
<td>UVs via search engine via Social via Paid Via EDM</td>
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<td>Net Views</td>
<td>On site Other platforms</td>
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<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Bounce rate Time on site Pages per visit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social Amplification</td>
<td>Likes Shares Comments by Channel</td>
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<th>Lead Generation Metrics</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
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<td>Capture &amp; Nurture Leads</td>
<td>Opt-in subscribers Lead forms completed Social followers Cost per lead Pipeline/nurturing activity</td>
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<th>Sales Metrics</th>
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<td>Revenue Generation</td>
<td>Net new Renewed</td>
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Content strategy in context

AUDIT
WORKSHOP
STRATEGY
IMPLEMENTATION
CALENDAR & PROCESS
REPORTING & REVIEWS

Executive Summary
Goals & Objectives
Audience
Content Pillars
Platforms & Channels
Editorial Strategy
defining your target audience

Analyse (we mean really study) the “who”.
Audience: defining your target audience

Who are they?
How do they spend their average day?

What are their needs?
This is not “why they need our product or service,” but what are their informational needs and pain points as they relate to the stories you will tell.

Why do they care about your brand?
Remember, the persona most likely doesn’t care about your products or services, so it’s the information provided to them that will make them care, or grab their attention.

Audience: segment your audience

The key to an effective content strategy is to be sharply focused. Well-defined segments mean more targeted messages and programs that resonate greater with buyers. The added insight collected by segmentation then produces faster results for marketing and sales teams alike, including: faster close times, higher response rates, shorter conversion cycles, bigger sales, easier engagement, higher customer loyalty ad higher ROI.

Consider segmenting your audience according to:
• Customer behaviour (within online channels)
• Buying cycle stage
• Device preferences
• Platform preferences
• Demographics
creating personas
Audience: persona research

- Common searches
- Content discovery
- Money/time spent
- Purchase decisions
- Loyalty
- Content preferences
Persona template

Background

Pain Points

Buying Habits

Content Consumption
Content strategy in context

AUDIT
WORKSHOP
STRATEGY
IMPLEMENTATION
CALENDAR & PROCESS
REPORTING & REVIEWS

⇒ Executive Summary
⇒ Goals & Objectives
⇒ Audience
⇒ Content Pillars
⇒ Platforms & Channels
⇒ Editorial Strategy
Defining topic pillars

What are you going to talk about?

• What does your audience want?
• What do your stakeholders want?
• How do you know?

Content pillars: pillars and sub-categories

PILLAR 1
- SUB-CATEGORY 1
- SUB-CATEGORY 2
- SUB-CATEGORY 3

PILLAR 2
- SUB-CATEGORY 1
- SUB-CATEGORY 2
- SUB-CATEGORY 3
AL-KO’s Without A Hitch

AL-KO’s pillars on Without A Hitch are: Caravan, Marine and Trailer to represent its three target markets. Each pillar had the same following sub-categories: Accessories, Buying, Maintenance and Towing.

Source: withoutahitch.com.au

Pillars don’t need to be made public, but they should be known and shared internally so the public messaging is consistent.
City of Sydney content pillars

**Living Sydney**
Quality of life stories that share what it’s like to live in Sydney.

**Sydney Now**
Events and a lively city to explore.

**Moving Sydney**
Getting around the city. These are stories about getting around by pedal, foot or motor.

**Your City**
Core business including services, consultation, decisions made by council etc.

**Sydney Story**
Past, present and future stories including history, research and future projects.

**The City At Work**
Business and work. These are stories about working and doing business in Sydney.
Pillar generation
How to discover what to talk about.

01 Does the pillar relate to the brand story?

02 Does the pillar solve an audience problem?

03 Does the pillar have a clear focus?

04 Does the audience identify with the pillar?

05 How could it be made better?

06 Is it made for the audience - or the brand?
Platforms and channels

01 Owned
- Website
- Microsite
- App
- Social

02 Earned
- Influencers
- Advocacy
- Employees

03 Paid
- Promoted posts
- Outbrain
- Native advertising
Executive Summary
Goals & Objectives
Audience
Content Pillars
Platforms & Channels
Editorial Strategy
EDITORIAL STRATEGY: ELEMENTS

MISSION STATEMENT

EDITORIAL PLAN

BUYING STAGES
Editorial strategy – developing a mission statement

Once you are grounded in the “why” and “who” of your content marketing, you can get laser-focused on your content marketing mission statement.

For you old-school publishers, this is your editorial mission statement. All great media companies have one. If you are aiming to develop a successful content marketing strategy, you need one too.

Your mission statement has nothing to do with the products and services you sell – it’s all about the information needs of your persona:

- The core audience target
- What will be delivered to the audience
- The outcome for the audience
Welcome to Inc.com, the place where entrepreneurs and business owners can find useful information, advice, insights, resources and inspiration for running and growing their businesses.
Creating content that resonates

Certain types of content work better for certain audiences at certain points of the funnel.

While not gospel, this matrix is a good starting point on what type of content to create.
Mobile-first

Think about how your content displays on a mobile device.

Is the key information immediately visible?

Is the website optimised for mobile viewing?

Have you built an accelerated mobile pages (AMP) version?
Strategic Checklist

- Does the content reflect the brand story in the strategy?
- Does it relate to a core pillar and an audience passion/pain point?
- Does it understand the goal or job to be done for the audience on site?
- Is the content in the most effective format for that audience?
- Does it provide value to the audience?