

THE 5-STEP CONTENT STRATEGY



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FOR BLOGGERS &
ONLINE BUSINESS OWNERS

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Introduction

Congratulations! You have a blog or website, and have joined the millions of entrepreneurs and online marketers who are eager to turn a passion or interest into a reliable income stream. You understand the global power of the World Wide Web to turn a single blog post or webpage into a list-building, sales-generating, passive income machine.

There's only one problem.

You don't have a clearly defined strategy for content creation and delivery.

You know you need a plan, something that can guide your content marketing efforts, but you don't know where to get started. What you need is a proven system, a clearly defined and easy to follow blogging strategy that takes into account several key factors.



- You need to know exactly who you're addressing before you start creating content.
- You should have a handy list of keywords and phrases related to the niche or micro-niche you are serving.
- A real understanding of the big problems and questions that keep your audience awake at night is a crucial part of any successful content strategy.
- Additionally, you need to be crystal clear on why you are creating content, understanding that everything you create should have a clear and defined purpose for your business.
- You need a content calendar or editorial calendar that works for you, not some hazy, vague idea of when you should be doing what.
- After you have compiled all the above information, you need to actually create your content, or arrange to have it created for you.
- Finally, a smart blogger or web entrepreneur understands that monitoring results and tweaking your content strategy accordingly is crucial to both short-term and long-term success online.

This content strategy guide was created to help you effectively do all the things just discussed. The first step to organizing the content side of your business into an easy to implement and successful plan is convincing yourself you need a plan in the first place.

There are definite benefits to being organized and focused with your content, so let's take a look at those advantages now.

Why Do You Need a Blogging and Content Strategy?

Is it possible to succeed online without having plans, systems and schedules in place? Maybe, but it certainly doesn't make life easy for you. If the creation and delivery of blog posts, videos, ad campaigns and other content-related interactions with your audience isn't scheduled regularly, 2 bad things happen.

1 – Your sales, and therefore profits, are up and down. So is your traffic. You never have any way to know from one day to the next what to expect from your business.

2 – You lose readers and viewers. This happens because your audience is hungry for information, and after several days or even weeks in a row of not hearing from you, they will go somewhere else to get the information and help they seek.

This brings us to the first benefit of a clearly defined strategy regarding content production and delivery... you benefit from a constant traffic stream. As mentioned above, this is important for you and your audience. Your followers stay engaged, and they know to depend on blog posts, emails, videos and other forms of content on a regular basis.

This keeps them happy, and they grow to like and respect you, since you are regularly giving them answers to the questions that nag them. You reliably and routinely solve big problems in the lives of your prospects, and they reward you with loyalty, traffic, sales and profits.

Plans and Schedules Make Your Job Easier

No matter how much you love being an online entrepreneur, some days the thoughts just don't come. You stare at a blank spreadsheet on your laptop or PC, and struggle for content creation ideas. When you have systems in place that take the guesswork out of every step of the content research, creation and delivery processes, those days don't happen.

When you have a plan of attack for your business, everything you do is easier. After weeks or months of following a particular plan, your brain knows what you are going to do before you even crawl out of bed in the morning. There are more than a few studies that show the human brain craves order and discipline. It likes standard operating procedures and systems. It just functions better when it knows what you are going to do today, tomorrow, this week, next week and next month.

Simply put, a clearly defined approach to how you handle the content side of your business just makes your life easier.

More is Better... As Long as You Create Quality

You have a lot of competition out there. The more content you create and disseminate to the World Wide Web, the better chance you have at turning your website efforts into a successful online business. When your strategy regarding content is clearly defined, you end up with more content than if you just decide to wing it and take a daily "*What will I do today?*" approach.

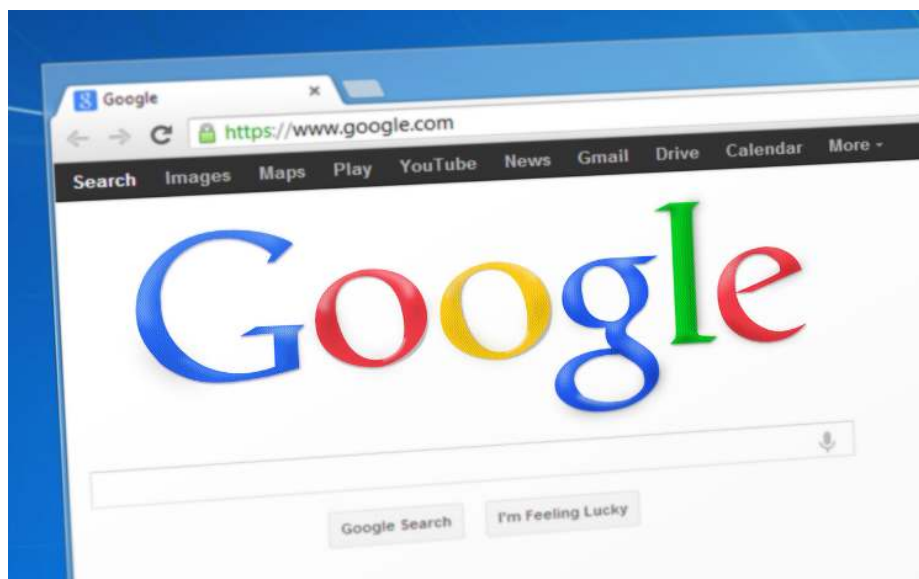
It's easy to tell yourself you are going to write one really great blog post each week. If you don't have that commitment down on paper, on a calendar or schedule, it may not happen. When you fall back on a proven system, rather than just hoping you can find some time every week or month to create the content you need for your business, you end up with more content on your blog or website.

You also connect more with prospects and customers through email, YouTube, Facebook and other social media channels. You have more content for other bloggers in your niche to refer to their followers. More is always better in terms of content, as long as you take the time to create quality pieces of media. The best content marketing strategy will fail every time if you simply create low-quality junk just because your calendar says you need to write a blog post today.

The Search Engines Will Love You

You probably understand that Google, Yahoo, Bing and the other search engines have virtual spiders that "crawl" the web. Their goal is to index every single page of content on the World Wide Web. The more content you create, whether it be video, text, graphics or some other form of media, the better understanding search engines get about what you are trying to communicate.

This means a deeper understanding of what your blog or website is about. This is extremely important for search engine rankings. While it's true that more pages and more content don't automatically guarantee better search engine optimization, they do give you a better chance at being found by search engine spiders.



A Higher Perceived Level of Authority

Don't underestimate the power of reputation online. It's absolutely everything, and can make or break your business. People purchase things from other people they know, like and trust. You have probably heard that before, since this mantra is pounded into the heads of bloggers and online entrepreneurs all the time. There is a very good reason you constantly hear about the importance of becoming an authority figure in your market.

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Who are the people you admire in your life? No doubt you respect them because they have developed some level of authority, in your eyes. You know you can turn to them for dependable and accurate information in some field or area of expertise. This is the level of authority you enjoy when your audience sees you constantly creating amazing content that solves serious problems in their lives. You benefit from a much higher perceived level of authority with a step-by-step content strategy.

If you need more reasons why the 5-step content strategy revealed in this report is so important for the success of your blog, here are a few that should grab your attention.

- You get better conversion rates when you have plenty of content to split test.
- The number of followers you create on social media sites improves dramatically when a social media marketing plan is included in your content strategy.
- You have more opportunities for referral traffic from respected blogs and websites in your niche.
- You establish deeper, fuller relationships with your audience.
- Marketing and advertising savings are yours, because following a content creation and delivery plan means lots of free traffic.
- A plan shows you what works, which saves resources because you can stop investing time, money and energy into strategies that don't help you or your business.
- It attaches a specific set of goals and results to each piece of content you create, which means a much better chance at getting the results you are looking for.

The first step to benefiting from a proven 5-step process for content planning, generation and distribution is being crystal clear on your target audience.

Step 1: Get Clear on Who You're Writing For

When you have clear vision and perfect focus, you have a much better chance of hitting your target. For an extreme example, imagine you are about to throw a piece of refuse into a trashcan or garbage bin. Do you close your eyes, spin around three times, and then take your best shot? Or do you walk up to the bin as close as possible, open the lid and carefully place the garbage into the trashcan?

You know the answer to those two questions. This illustrates why you must know everything possible about who you are blogging for. This is true whether you have a video blog, your blog is connected to a podcast, or you make infographics and memes to get your message across. Whether you are using text to communicate, or some other form of media, you should make the following considerations when formulating your content strategy.

The Importance of Knowing Your Niche Intimately

There once was a man named Bob. He had a passion for pizza. He was an excellent chef, and his friends were always telling him he should open a pizza parlor. Bob's specialty was pizzas with meat as the primary ingredients. Bob quits his job, opens up Bob's Meatzas, and waits for the inevitable onslaught of customers.



The only problem is, while Bob knows everything about making delicious pizzas with meaty ingredients, he didn't do any market research. Bob opened a meat pizza restaurant in a fashionable section of Los Angeles, California. A few seconds of research on Google would have shown him that Los Angeles has the second largest number of vegetarian restaurants, and therefore vegetarian-minded diners, in the entire United States.

You must know your market or your niche intimately.

Had Bob opened his meat-based pizza operation in Madison, Wisconsin, where cheese is king and there are many fewer vegetarian restaurants per capita than Los Angeles, he may have been an overnight success. This may seem contrary to logic. In a place like Madison, Bob will likely be up against other pizza places that serve meat-based entrées.

However, the reason why there are fewer vegetarian and vegan places to eat in Madison than Los Angeles is because the market is simply not there for plant eaters. Understand the market you are targeting before you enter it, and get to know your niche better than your competitors.

What Is Your Actual, Deep-Down, Target Audience?

If you want to start a weight loss blog, are you really going after the weight loss crowd? If so, you may as well get to love your current job, because you may not ever develop a real presence in that massive, broad marketplace. If you want to help people lose weight and become healthier, focus on a smaller niche. If you are a 45-year-old male who is a husband, a father, and works construction for a living, why not target men like yourself?



It's easier to hit a target when it is incredibly specific. If someone stumbles across your blog and it only says you want to help people lose weight, that person is not going to stay around long. However, when other male construction workers who are married and have children come across your blog, and they are in their 40s or 50s and having trouble losing weight and becoming healthy, you have a good chance of making real deep connections that create followers and customers for life.

Niche down from a broad category to find your true target audience, and reaching them will be much easier.

Have You Done Keyword Research?

What words and phrases are important to your industry? What longtail keywords, terms and phrases of more than 3 words, are your prospects typing into search engines right now? These are the powerful tools you are going to use in your content to help search engines understand what your blog is about, and additionally, to help web surfers find you when they are looking for just that information.

Here are a few excellent keyword research tools.

- Market Samurai
- SEMRush
- SpyFu
- Google Keyword Planner
- KeywordTool.io
- Google Adwords
- KW Finder
- The Moz Keyword Explorer
- KWFinder

With these free and paid applications and websites, you can quickly identify the most popular keywords and phrases in your niche. Include these in all forms of the content you create, for more qualified, free traffic, and happier followers once they make it to your blog.

What are The Biggest Problems in the Minds of Your Audience?

Why do people want to lose weight? One person may be very egotistical, and simply want to lose weight and develop a ripped, shredded body so he can stare at himself in the mirror for hours on end. If you were addressing this individual, you would have to stroke his ego. Another person may desire to lose weight because she is tired of not having any energy, and her doctor says she is headed to a heart attack or stroke if she doesn't lose some weight as soon as possible.

These two people have to be approached in very different ways.

Their problems regarding your market, in their minds, are vastly different. The idea here is to understand the biggest problems and most concerning questions your target audience has.

What literally keeps your prospects up at night, as they lay in bed, praying for sleep that never comes, because their mind is constantly worrying and concerned about a question or problem related to your niche? Figure out what these problems are, solve them, and your content strategy, as well as your business, will benefit greatly.

Step 2: Clearly Define Your Content Goals

Seasoned bloggers and online entrepreneurs have marketing plans written up at least a year in advance. They know exactly when each of their promotions is going out, what that promotion is going to be, and they do the required research to see if there is a market for that product before it is developed. A lot of online entrepreneurs research, create and then profit from a single product.

The benefit of this is a single piece of content, when perceived as valuable by your audience, which can be sold and marketed for years. You don't have to keep creating new content. Whatever type of content you create or have created for you, what is its purpose? What do you expect from it? Are you just cranking out a blog post because your editorial calendar says you need one this week? That is the wrong attitude.

You need to know what you expect from a piece of content before you create it.



Before you sit down to generate content of any kind, regardless of what type of media it is, you should ask yourself, *"What do I want this content to do for me? Will it ..."*

...Promote a product or service?

...Be used as a product or service?

...Make up one part of a larger content package?

...Be used in a paid marketing ad campaign?

...Fill an autoresponder sequence?

...Simply deliver information?

...Be used to build my email list or drive some other call to action?

Whether you're blogging or adding helpful content to your website, from time to time, you want to deliver great information without asking for a sale or expecting your reader to take some course of action.

Sometimes when you create content, you will expect to use it as a product, or you may want it to promote an upcoming product launch. Be crystal clear on what you expect from each piece of content before you spend time, energy and possibly money on creating it.

Step 3: Your Content Schedule

In the last section I referenced successful bloggers and online entrepreneurs that plan their promotions well in advance. How do you do this? The answer is by using a Content Calendar, better known in the internet marketing community as an Editorial Calendar. Here are just a few things you should include in the calendar you use to plan your content strategy.

- The number of blog posts you will create and publish each week or month.
- What days those blog posts will go out.
- How frequently will you reach out to your list through email, on a weekly and monthly basis?
- How often will you involve social media to support your blog posts, product launches, the videos you create, etc.?
- When will your monthly, quarterly and/or annual product launches and promotions be scheduled?
- What day will you set aside time to study analytics, to find out what is and is not working in your business?
- Free time is important to schedule as well.

You can get your hands on any virtual or physical calendar and create your content strategy. However, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. The following Editorial Calendar applications and websites are used by top bloggers and information marketers for their content strategies, because of their versatility and customization, and many are free to use.

In addition to content, you can use them to handle your social media efforts, marketing and ad campaigns, and just about every aspect of your business.

- Wordpress Editorial Calendar
- CoSchedule
- ToDoist
- Google Docs
- Google Sheets
- SocialCast
- Marketing.Ai
- Trello
- InboundWriter

HubSpot offers a number of free editorial calendar templates you may decide to use. They are available at the following link:

<https://offers.hubspot.com/editorial-calendar-templates>

InboundWriter is a monthly content planner that deserves an in-depth explanation. Imagine knowing approximately how many new readers or followers you will receive by blogging about a particular topic or subject. That is exactly what InboundWriter gives you. It will even suggest specific keywords and phrases that can drive readership, and tell you if your competition has already blogged or talked about that particular topic! This incredible content planning tool is free if you publish 4 or fewer times a month.

Step 4: Create Your Content

Now it's time to do the deed. You have done the appropriate market research and keyword research, you know your exact target audience, and you have a content schedule or editorial calendar in place. All your hard work up to now means you are ready to start creating content. You are excited about getting going, you are at a high-energy state because you can't wait to begin benefiting from a smart content strategy and then ...

...your mind is blank.

Don't worry. This happens to even the most successful bloggers and online marketers. How do you come up with content ideas? Is there any way to create a massive amount of content in bulk, at one time? Should you make a video, a blog post, develop a new product or promote an upcoming product launch? Take a deep breath and relax. If you have set up your content calendar correctly to this point, you know exactly what is needed, when it is needed, and how long you have to create that particular piece of content.



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Coming Up with Content Ideas

You look at your Editorial Calendar and see that you need a video to post on your blog and YouTube. You have smartly looked ahead to get a jump on your content strategy, and you realize you have 14 days to come up with this content. The video is going to drive people to a landing page where you build your email list. You have done your video marketing research, and expect that somewhere around 45 to 60 seconds is the sweet spot for this type of video.

The only problem is, you don't know what to talk about! The following are some proven techniques for developing really great content ideas, and these methods are used by the most successful Internet marketers all the time.

- Curate content from other blogs in your niche.
- Develop a top 21 or top 50 list of people to follow on Facebook or Twitter that are influential in your market.
- Send out an email and ask your audience exactly what type of content they want.
- Interview a respected authority figure.
- Hire a freelancer to research content ideas that apply to your industry.
- Write a "Resources I Use Every Day" post.
- Hand your keyword research to a freelancer on Fiverr that specializes in creating short whiteboard videos.
- Review a service or product you have personally used.
- Create an inspiring testimonial or case study, relating the experience that a happy client had using your product.
- If you need copy for a video to build your email list, like in the example above, tweak the content you wrote for your highest converting opt-in page.

- Check your analytics (more on this in the next section). Find blog posts in your archives that have driven you a lot of traffic, and repurpose them.
- Be open, and talk about your failures.
- Host a competition, contest, sweepstakes or giveaway.
- Create an autoresponder sequence to promote your upcoming product launch.
- Generate a glossary or index of industry-specific words and phrases that helps your readers develop a better understanding of your niche.
- Have someone interview you.
- Create a short report or e-book you can use as an opt-in freebie.
- Write a "Top 10 ...", "Myths and Misconceptions about..." or "How to..." blog post about something in your niche.
- Conduct a survey or poll.
- Make crazy predictions.

Your editorial calendar tells you what type of content you are going to need by a certain date. The examples above help you figure out some unique ways to approach the content you have to create. This is by no means a complete list. You can refer to other blogs and authority websites in your niche for a limitless list of content ideas.

When you employ a writer or video maker, or some other type of freelancer that specializes in content creation, you can develop large batches of content in a very short period of time. Obviously, this costs money. You may be surprised though, at how affordable some quality writers, video specialists and other freelancers actually are. This bulk creation strategy not only takes care of a lot of content generation, it also frees up valuable time for you to be spending on important areas of your business.

Step 5: Boosting Your Results

You could make the argument that this is the most important part of a successful content strategy. If you don't know what is working, you could continue banging your head up against the wall, working tirelessly on content that is getting you nowhere. In other words, you need to know the numbers of your business. When you track what works and doesn't work, tweak your schedule and your content accordingly, and begin revitalizing old content that has done really well for you, you benefit from understanding analytics.

Here are a few applications and websites that can help you discover where to focus your attention, making your content strategy more successful.

- Piwik
- Google Analytics
- SumoMe Content Analytics
- SumoMe Heat Maps
- KeyHole
- Buffer
- Clicky
- KYA

For WordPress Blogs and Sites

- Google Analytics+ Plugin
- Google Analytics WD (Free Plugin)
- Google Analytics WD (Premium Plugin)
- Jetpack by WordPress.com
- Analytify Google Analytics Dashboard Plugin
- MonsterInsights Plugin
- WP Statistics
- AFS Analytics
- WP Power Stats

A lot of people hate the thought of pouring over numbers and research. Once you add this to your content calendar and plan, you only need to spend an hour or so each week crunching the numbers. After a while, you will know exactly what numbers to pay attention to, and what metrics can help you get the most out of your blogging efforts.

When you first get started monitoring your results, you will begin to notice patterns. You will find over time that certain keywords and phrases do better for you than others. If you discover an old, forgotten blog post is attracting a lot of attention, breathe some new life into it. Promote it with social media posts. Add a relevant call to action that helps you build your email list or drives readers to a high converting sales page.

Tweak your content schedule accordingly. As you discover what works and what is less than profitable for you, change your content calendar and plan. Studying analytics also lets you know what blog posts and other content are not getting the attention they deserve. This provides opportunities for driving traffic to that content. Eventually, this process leads to a finely-tuned business and marketing plan that squeezes the most possible success out of your online entrepreneurial efforts.