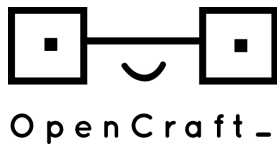


Discovery OpenCraft Marketing



Prepared for OpenCraft

March 2023

Background

This document explores marketing opportunities that will drive **more leads** to OpenCraft using an allocated **15 hour monthly** marketing budget.

Value proposition

First off, let's define OpenCraft's value proposition. This will describe our ideal customer, their pain points, and what makes us different from our competitors.

Here are the two [personas](#) we are targeting:

Rowan Program coordinator at School or Company Responsible for online, medium-to-large scale courses and programs Needs: - Stable and usable LMS to achieve training goals - Learner data for research - Security and stability - Staging environments How OpenCraft can help: Institutional plan with options (Marketing site, theming, SSO, etc.) edX Insights Development of "must-have" customizations based on budget Sandboxes Tech support Client examples: HMS, HGSE, Duke, Cloudera, <u>PearsonX</u>	Open edX proficiency: Good as a user, some IT knowledge or staff that doesn't have the skills/time to build stuff themselves Challenges: - Needs tech support - Have budget but restricted - Often wants theming and customizations (new types of exercises, improvement of existing features, integrating 3rd party tools)	Ranji Chief of Training at Big Private Organization Coordinates large scale course programs Needs: - World-class, flexible and scalable platform - Very high availability - Lots of customizations - Dedicated, robust support - Multiple staging environments How OpenCraft can help: Customized instance Sandboxes Extensive development work Dedicated support Client examples: McKinsey, <u>LabXchange</u>	Open edX proficiency: Trained course staff, skilled IT personnel Challenges: - Platform must adapt to widely different clients and use cases - Size of company, office politics and bureaucracy can affect projects
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Drawing from the above, let's define the following:

- **Customer:** Medium to large institutions, or businesses
- **Problem:** Institutions and businesses need a flexible, scalable, and secure platform to deliver online courses for learners and trainees.

- **Solution:** OpenCraft customizes the Open edX's open source platform to deliver scalable, high-quality, secure online courses. Open source software ensures continuous improvement to the source code, and it's also highly flexible. OpenCraft is a trusted Open edX partner, and works closely with edX and tCRIL, both in the governance of the open source project and as a major development partner.

With this in mind, we need to review our marketing efforts to see if they align with our target market. After careful consideration I'd suggest using the majority of the marketing budget over the next few months to improve OpenCraft's **website**, and to create an **inbound marketing strategy**. This is a long term strategy that will be a strong foundation to propel long-term growth.

Domain Authority

To start we need to look at OpenCraft's domain authority. Domain authority is a search engine ranking score, by [Moz](#), that indicates how likely an *entire* website will rank in the search engine results in relation to its competitors. The scores range from one to 100. The higher the score, the higher the probability of better results in the Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs).

To build opencraft.com's domain authority we need to look at the following:

- Prioritize quality backlinks, above the quantity of backlinks
- Analyze backlinks and ensure any quality websites have a *dofollow*
- Create relevant content - this will make it easier to get natural backlinks (we'd first look at the current Opencraft website pages, and then create an Inbound strategy)
- Generate shareable content focused on our target customers
- Update older content and add new information that will interest our target customers
- Identify our competitors and look at things they do and we don't do that'll benefit our website visibility
- Look at where our competitors are getting backlinks from and whether we can get similar ones
- Spread our website content through social media posts, campaigns and our newsletter

It will take time to build our domain authority. The results aren't immediate. But ultimately by improving our domain authority we'll increase our website visibility on SERPs. So I'd like to start tackling this slowly on a **monthly basis**.

Out of interest, here is how OpenCraft's domain authority and ranking keywords compare to our direct competitors:

Name	Domain authority	Ranking Keywords
Racoon Gang	37	1.9k

Appsembler	37	570
IBLEducation	32	47
OpenCraft	29	123
Edu Next	29	62
Edly	22	799

While our domain authority is not bad compared to our competitors, this gives us a good base to work towards ranking better for quality keywords. Our ranking keywords are also quite low compared to Racoon Gang and Edly. [Ubersuggest](#) shows the following keyword gaps (keywords other companies rank for that OpenCraft doesn't):

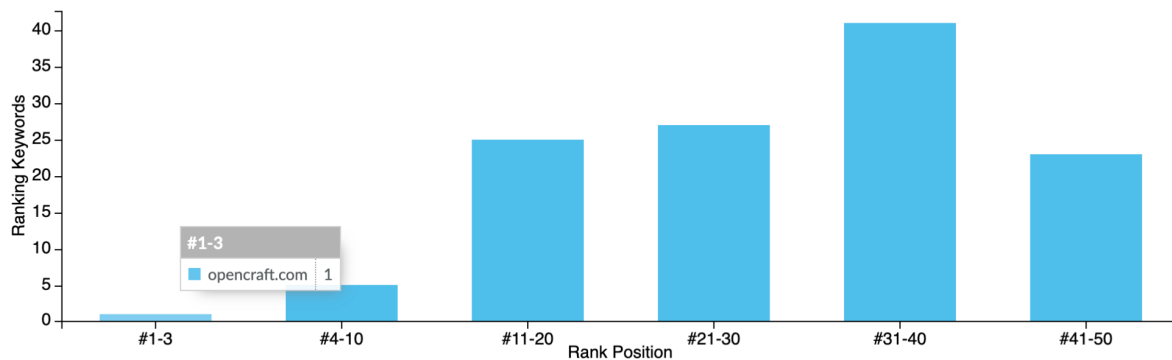
COMPETITOR DOMAIN ?	COMMON KEYWORDS ?	KEYWORDS GAP ?
edunext.co	27 View All ▾	83 View All ▾
raccoongang.com	27 View All ▾	2,953 View All ▾
edly.io	20 View All ▾	1,207 View All ▾

As part of our marketing efforts we can look at the SEO difficulty (how difficult it is to rank in organic search results for a specific keyword), and traffic volumes garnered from any quality keywords our competitors may have. This will allow us to see if it's worth pursuing any keywords they rank for that we don't.

We also need to see how our keywords are ranking. Moz shows that we only have 1 keyword ranking in position #1 - 3 and 5 keywords ranking in position #4 - 10. By improving our domain authority we'll be more discoverable in the search results. But first we need to analyze our current keywords and start incorporating keywords that will match user intent.

Keyword Ranking Distribution

The number of keywords ranking in the search results within given ranges.



Competitor Analysis

Before tackling any website changes, I'd suggest we do a brief competitor analysis. This will let us see what our competitors are doing to market to their target customers, and whether we can adopt any of their strategies. We'll focus on the following:

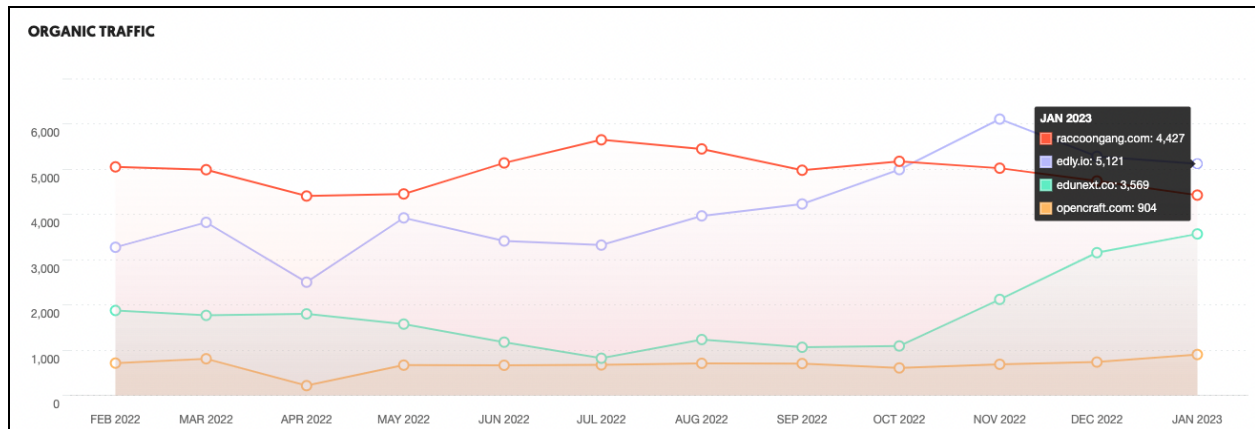
1. Their website sitemap, user experience, and copy
2. Their product offerings
3. Their sales tactics
4. Their marketing and social media content

Let's do a brief analysis of our competitors below to see if this exercise is worthwhile:

	OpenCraft	Racoon Gang	Edly	Edunext
Targeting Based on websites	It's not clear from our website who we target in comparison to our competitor websites. I know we're targeting larger institutions now, so we need to make this more apparent.	Customer Onboarding, Online Learning Business, Higher Ed, K12, Nonprofits, Businesses	K12, Higher Ed, Corporate, Nonprofit, Businesses	Academic Institutions, Companies, Online Academies, Nonprofit Organizations, Government Initiatives, Consultants
Key Messages Key message in website headline	Create your online courses using the Open edX® platform Offer beautiful	Online Learning Done Right Flexible online learning solutions using the Open edX® platform	Build better learning experiences with a Learning Management System designed around your	Build and Grow your successful online learning initiative with the Open edX®

	courses to your learners with your own branded site <i>I think we should look at reviewing this copy, especially the sub-headline.</i>	Try our learning management system and deliver online learning using the top-notch learning technology!	learners' needs We craft intelligently engineered Open edX-powered Learning Management Systems	platform Let edunext provide the technology and support so you can focus on the strategy.
Campaigns	Get started, and Contact us CTAs <i>Once we have a content strategy up and running I'd like to employ display advertising.</i>	Book a call, and Get a quote CTAs Display advertising (on social media, eg. a Campaign on LinkedIn opens this page)	Request demo, Get started, contact us CTAs Display advertising	Start for free, Contact us
Content	Blog <i>(We need to work on targeting specific keywords for each blog)</i> Projects <i>(We need to bulk up our Project content. It'll have SEO benefits and let people know how we work)</i>	Blog (nicely categorized) Portfolio (in the form of case studies)	Blog Case Studies News and Updates Guides and Whitepapers	Knowledge Base Blog Video Guides
Social media followers	LinkedIn: 470 Twitter: 23 <i>(no links to social accounts on website)</i>	LinkedIn: 1,361 Facebook: 559 Twitter: 1,002	LinkedIn: 1,915 Facebook: 6K Twitter: inactive Instagram: 287	LinkedIn: 3,768 Facebook: 18 Instagram: 349
Notes:			There is a lot we can learn from Edly's website. It speaks directly to the user (website pages and blog content). It's clear who they're targeting. It doesn't overuse jargon. And their plans are easy to understand.	Edunext offers something similar to OpenCraft's <i>Pro and Teacher Plan</i> (which is no longer our business focus)

If we compare OpenCraft's organic traffic to our competitors, we also see a major difference (OpenCraft is the **yellow line**):



OpenCraft has the lowest organic traffic compared to our competitors. For example, in January 2023, each company had the following organic visits:

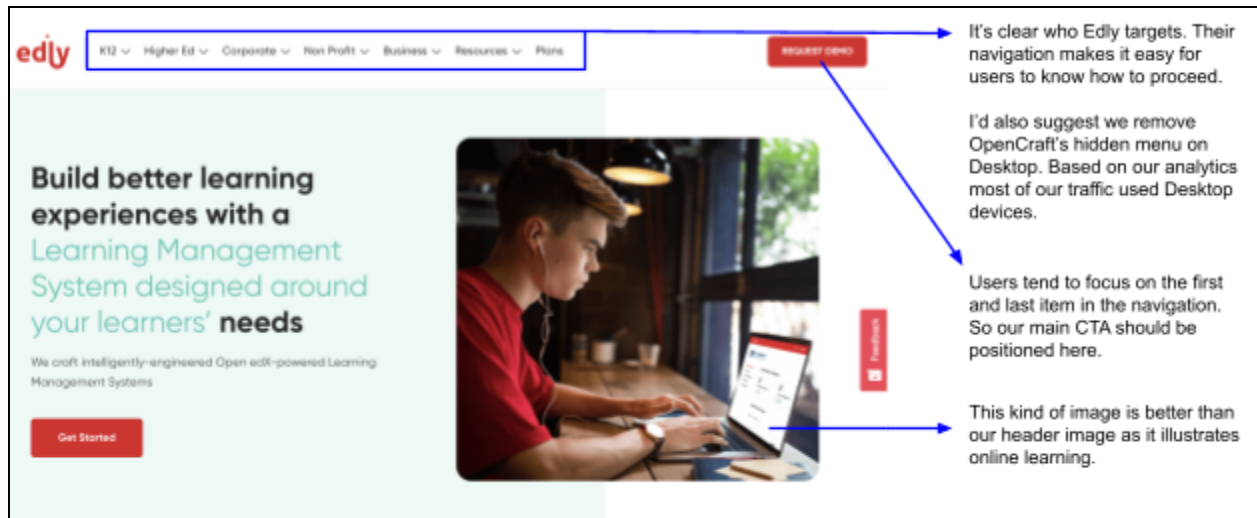
- Edly: 5,121
- Raccoon Gang: 4,427
- Edunext: 3,569
- **OpenCraft: 904**

What's interesting here is that Edly actually has the **lowest** domain authority of all the websites. So having high traffic volumes doesn't always mean a high domain authority (DA). This could be because Edly is driving traffic to their website through online campaigns - so they don't need to perform well in search engine results.

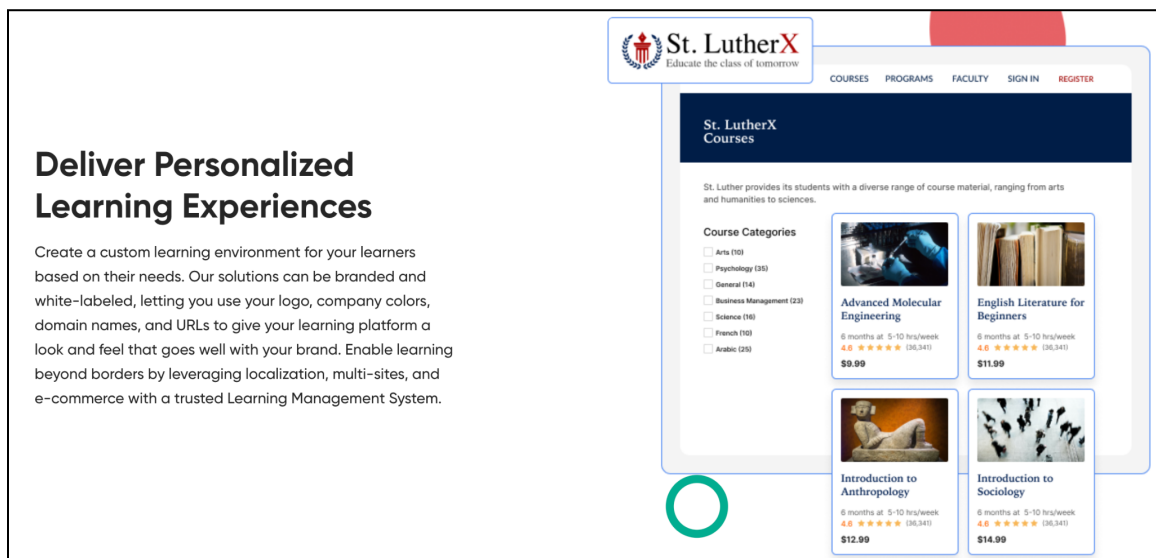
But we want to strike a balance. We'd like to aim for a good DA and higher traffic volumes. That'll be gold.

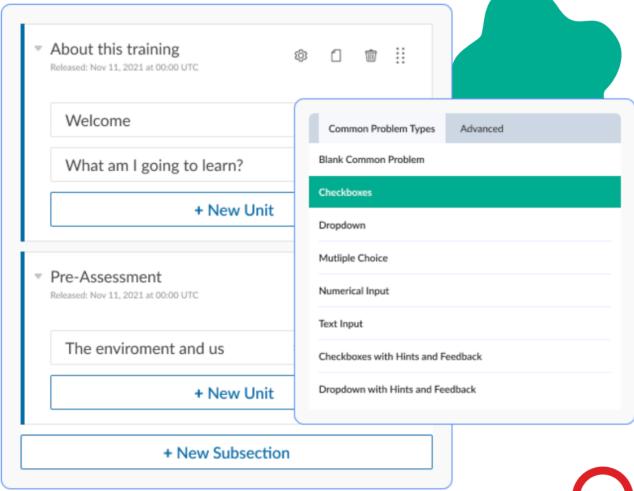
Website Design

When reviewing the OpenCraft website **vs** a competitor like Edly, it's much clearer who Edly targets and what they offer. They talk directly to the user, using simple language. So doing competitor research will help us work on the structure of our website, from the sitemap through to how we display content on each page. For example, this is the kind of thing we can learn:



I'd like to pay *particular* attention to the homepage. Currently our homepage uses a lot of jargon and doesn't clearly explain what we do. Edly's home page walks the user through their offering using simple language and imagery:





The screenshot displays the Edly course authoring interface. On the left, a course structure is visible with sections like 'About this training' and 'Pre-Assessment'. A 'New Unit' button is highlighted. On the right, a 'Common Problem Types' menu is open, listing various question formats such as 'Blank Common Problem', 'Checkboxes', 'Dropdown', 'Multiple Choice', 'Numerical Input', 'Text Input', 'Checkboxes with Hints and Feedback', and 'Dropdown with Hints and Feedback'. A red circle highlights the 'New Subsection' button at the bottom of the course structure.

Create Courses with Ease

With our easy-to-use, built-in course authoring suite, course creators and first-time content creators can skip the long and complicated processes of setting up their courses. With Edly, you can quickly and easily create immersive eLearning courses without any advanced technical knowledge required.

There are many ways we can further optimize our website. According to Hubspot *“67% of the B2B buyer’s journey is digital, and B2B buyers are typically 57% of the way to a buying decision before they actively engage with sales”*. That’s huge!

This video captures a lot of valuable information about creating successful B2B websites that convert (something interesting to watch if you have time):



I'd like to allocate a portion of the monthly budget to website changes so we can start leveraging our website to convert more quality leads. I'd also like to push the fact that we offer UX and UI

services too. Our competitor websites don't advertise this type of service, so this could be a nice niche to explore, and a great differentiating factor. We also need to advertise that we're an Open edX Preferred Partner - this shows how trustworthy we are.

Content Strategy

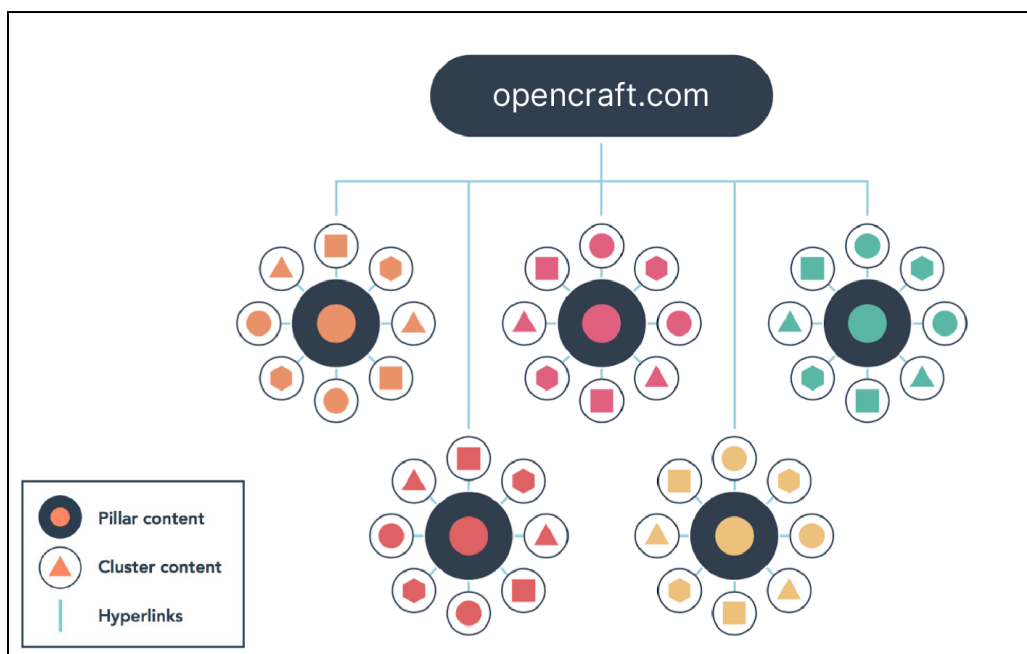
I'd like to pay particular attention to an inbound marketing strategy, whilst making tweaks to the website. Inbound marketing can help attract, engage, and delight customers. Our aim is to build a relationship with potential customers so we can turn them into paying customers.

Inbound marketing has been found to be pretty cost-effective. According to [Impact](#), *"inbound leads cost 62% less than outbound/traditional leads. Inbound leads convert more, too"*. This low-cost approach will help us:

- Get found in SERPS
- Drive traffic to our website
- Generate leads through our website
- Nurture leads into paying customers

There are different ways to build an inbound marketing strategy, but without a robust SEO strategy we'll find little success. In the past, SEO was based on keywords. But because of the sheer number of websites out there nowadays, search engines have changed how they filter results. Now queries are based on topics and associate keywords.

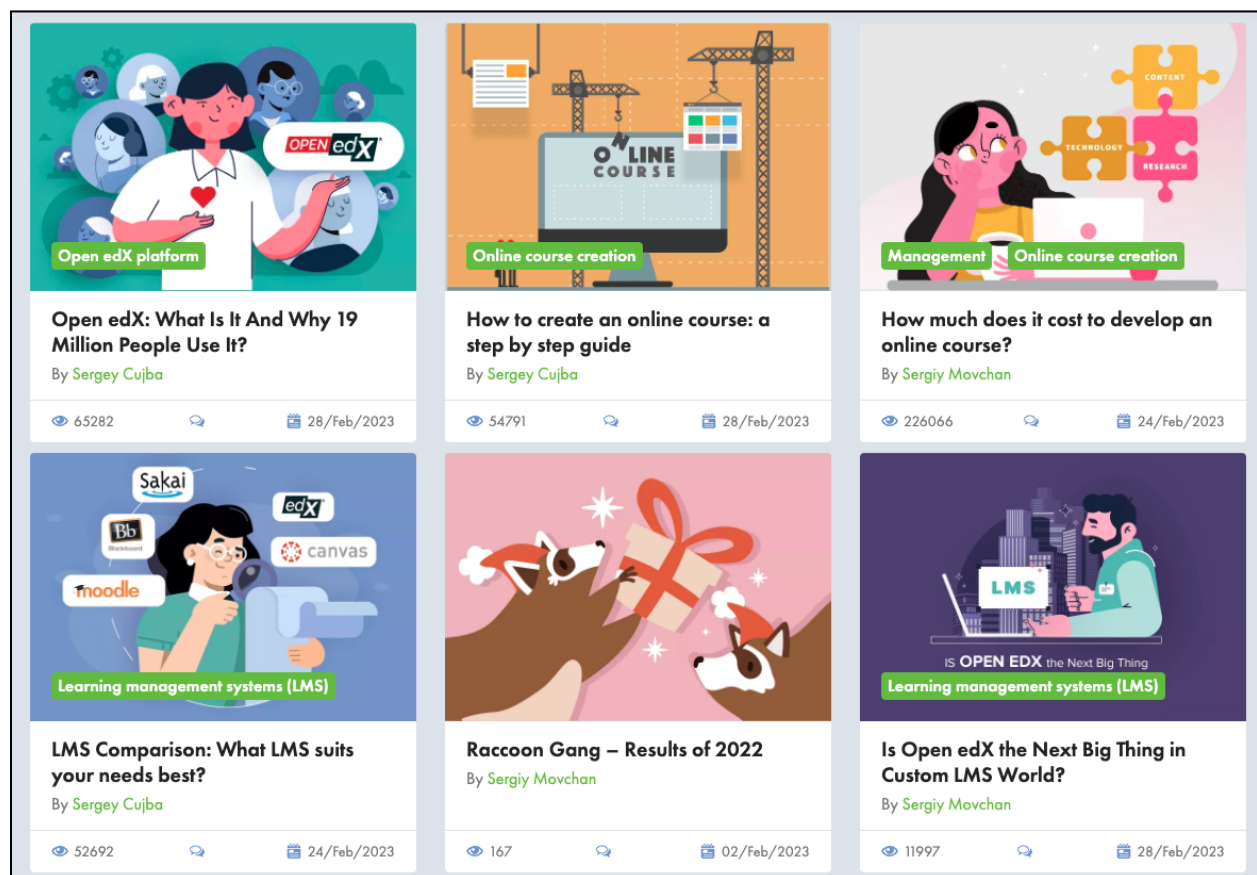
To account for this we need to rethink how we structure our blog:



We need to develop topic clusters where pillar content (a 3000 to 4000 word blog post) links to shorter blog posts (a 1000 to 2000 word blog post) and vice versa. The hyperlinking between posts tells search engines that the pillar page is an authority on the topic, and over time, the page may rank higher for the topic it covers. Each pillar post and associated post also needs to include a relevant call-to-action (eg. the pillar post content can be made into a free “guide”) where the user needs to enter their email address to gain access to it. In turn we build our email marketing database.

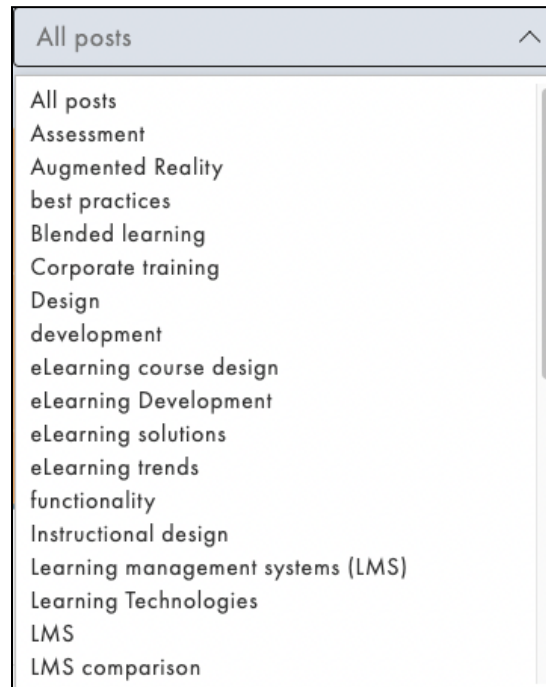
We can come up with as many topic clusters as we’d like, but to start we could focus on three. Each topic cluster will be determined according to our services as well as keyword research. Thereafter we’ll develop the first 3 pillar posts for these topics, and come up with a calendar allowing us to post 1 blog a week associated with each pillar post.

The OpenCraft blog is currently very technical. We need to offer content that our target customers will consume. Check out the type of posts Racoon Gang posts:

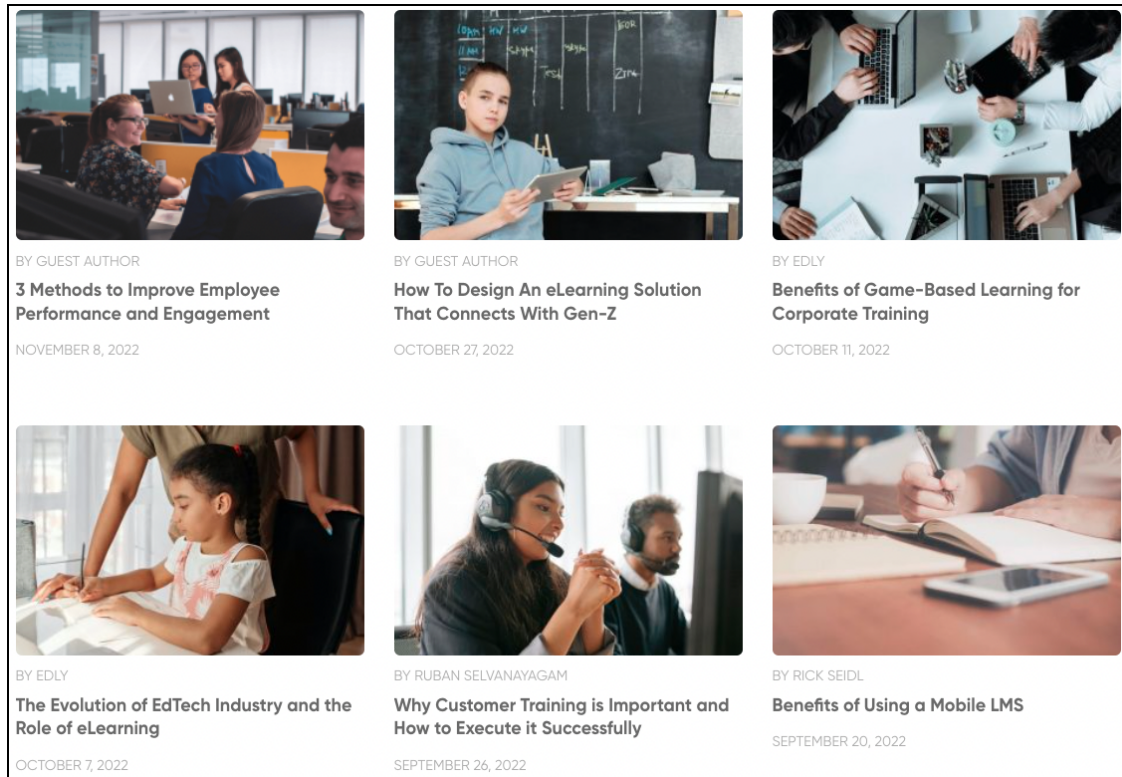


Content like “LMS Comparison: What LMS suits your needs best?” is a great topic. It speaks to a user's needs. Something like this could be attached to an email if a client asks what's the difference between Open edX and other platforms.

We can also take inspiration from the post categories Racoon Gang offers for topic cluster ideas:



Edly also has some great posts:



Look at the topic “How to design an eLearning solution that connects with Gen-Z”. The content is current, it’s relevant, and it creates awareness, which is exactly what an inbound marketing strategy should do.

So ultimately our game plan will look something like this:



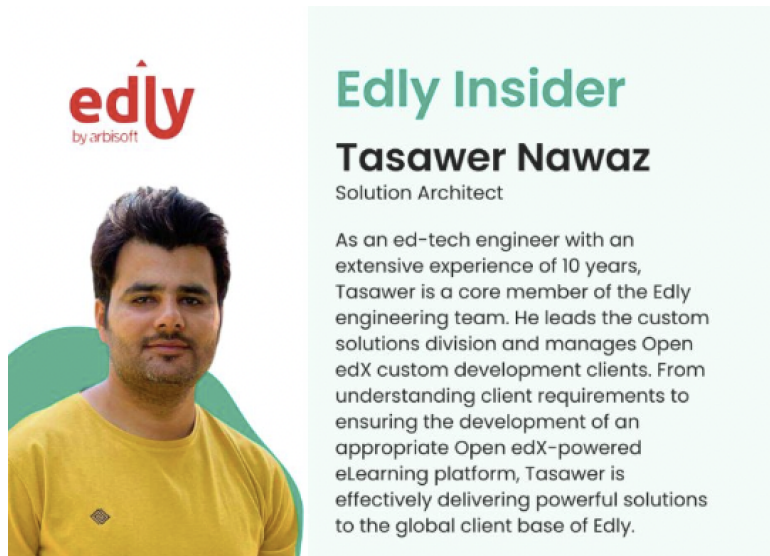
Marketing Channels

We’ll make use of the current marketing channels to advertise our content:

- Email (including Newsletter)
- Social Media (LinkedIn in particular for B2B services)

- Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Campaigns
- Open edX forum

Other than advertising our content, we can also advertise our people. I like how Edly advertises their expertise by advertising their people on social platforms, this feels like a personal touch:



Estimated time of responsibilities

I'd like to split our marketing budget into 4-month rotations for 2023.

Month 1 (starts March 2023)

Item	Information	Hours
Newsletter	Every Quarter (Mar, June, Sept, Dec)	8 hours
Website Revisions	Allocate budget to implementing effective website changes	4 hours
Marketing Working Group Meeting	Bi-weekly	2 3 hours
Total		15 hours

Month 2-4

Item	Information	Hours
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Website Revisions	Allocate budget to implementing effective website changes	6 hours
Content Strategy and Marketing Channels	Keyword research, pillar post, blog ideas, writing posts, posting on social media etc	6 hours
Marketing Working Group Meeting	Bi-weekly	3 hours
Total		15 hours

Questions

- Do we have a budget for Pay-per-click campaigns? Or should this form part of the marketing budget?
- Are there any other competitors we should compare ourselves to?