

What is Content Marketing and Who Can Benefit from It?

Increased revenue. Improved customer loyalty. Decreased operational costs. Sound familiar? At least one, if not all of these three make up part of your business' profitable results. True? Good. But there is another one: Content marketing.

If you have been looking for new and innovative ways to achieve your profitable results, then you must have come across the term more often than not. However, the buzz that has been created around it has made content marketing seem such a tough, technical and complicated form of marketing.

But, really, it's not!

So, to prove this, we will take you through everything content marketing. And do it without giving you a headache. It is going to be an easy ride. Let's begin with the very basics.

What Is Content Marketing?

Well, the simplest definition of content marketing is, the creation, curation, and sharing of free but valuable content to engage your current customers and attract and acquire new prospects, thereby building trust with them and driving profitable customer action. Unlike the traditional outbound marketing that was salesy and intrusive, content marketing mainly focuses on delivering information that makes buyers more intelligent, allowing them to make informed decisions.

Ideally, a well-thought-out content marketing strategy should deliver value to the audience. It should educate and should be:

- relevant to your audience
- consistently made available
- beneficial in terms of information provided

Obviously, to cut through all the noise on the internet, you will need a clear strategy and a clear blueprint in place. Such a clear-cut content marketing strategy should help you:

- create awareness of the products and services
- attract and acquire potential customers
- retain existing customers

What are some examples of types of content marketing?

Today, content marketing has really exploded in popularity. It has now become a necessity for any modern brand. Perhaps the reason “content is king” is now homestay to any successful marketing strategy and campaigns.

Content marketing employs the use of:

- YouTube videos
- eBooks,
- Blog posts,
- Podcasts,
- Social media sites
- Whitepapers
- Webinars
- Microsites
- Email newsletters

Who Can Use Content Marketing?

Literally anyone!

No, seriously, content marketing can be employed by almost everybody. Do you want to market your products and services online? Obviously yes. Then, yep, content marketing is for you. An online presence cannot be emphasized enough in this era. Whether you have a big budget or a lean one, you can always use content marketing to your advantage.

Content marketing can be beneficial to:

- personal brands
- small businesses
- large corporations
- established organizations

Content Marketing Strategy

You cannot go into content marketing blindsided. You have to know what you want to achieve and how you will do so. And that is where drafting a content marketing strategy comes into play. If you are serious about using content marketing as a long-term strategy to attaining marketing goals, then a content marketing strategy is a must.

Because we promised to ease you into everything content marketing, here is a simplified procedure for creating a successful content marketing strategy:

i. Define your objectives

What do you hope for your business through content marketing? Why are you putting in the effort into content marketing? To increase customer retention? To create awareness about products or services? Brainstorm and note down your objectives for content marketing.

ii. Define your target audience

Who are you hoping to interest with your content? Develop the profile of your buyers and potential customers, this is known as buyer persona.

iii. Understand your audience's needs

By needs, we mean in terms of information. What would they like to know from you about your business, brand, products, services, offers, payment plans and such like information? This information can be obtained through various channels such as customer feedback, social media, and conversations with clients. Group the information obtained by persona as well as funnel marketing stage to enable you to understand the necessary content to be developed.

iv. Identify your uniqueness

What will set you apart from the competition? Everybody is taking up content marketing so what is going to attract audiences to your content? What will be unique about your content? Think hard, think smart and find a unique attribute

v. Develop a plan for content execution

How will you create your content? What types of content will be created? How will your content be shared? How often will you make your content available? Daily? Weekly? Monthly? All these questions when answered should help you develop a map and plan to guide the creation and sharing of content.

vi. Content marketing measurement

Based on your objectives you have to measure the impact of your content marketing. Your objectives will determine the content metrics to be measured. Content metrics fall under four major categories:

- Lead generation metrics
- Sharing metrics
- Consumption metrics
- Sales metrics

vii. Develop a plan for content amplification

How can you market your content? This is simply pushing your content to reach further than your primary audience. Employ social media tools such as Facebook ads to promote your content. Use your employees to further your content market. Consider every possible avenue to reach a greater audience.

The Benefits of Content Marketing.

After you have put in the work, then you expect to see some results, right? Well, there will be results, but with content marketing, they may not be visible in the nascent stages. You'll not experience tangible benefits overnight. But if you're consistent, every high-quality content placed out there becomes a valuable SERP real estate that will eventually pay off.

Here are some of the benefits to expect:

- Improved brand recognition and brand awareness
- Improved brand-client relationships that lead to loyal customers
- Increased brand visibility on search engines and online platforms leading to higher conversions.
- Creation of traffic on your brand's site thus lead generation improvement
- Higher domain authority. Writing higher quality content will increase the perceived authority, relevance, and trust of your brand.
- Indirect and direct customer conversions from prospects to buyers.

- Creation of communication channels to customers and prospects through social platforms.
- Decreased marketing costs and compounding value.

Why is content marketing important?

Simply put, content marketing is a means to an end. But so are many other marketing options. The reason as to why we feel content marketing is important is because, in this digital era, the online community is where any brand needs to reign supreme to be successful. And that is just what content marketing is aimed at.

But don't take our word for it. Here are a few statistics that show how important content marketing is:

- Today, 44% of direct email blasts are never opened.
- 84% of millennials clicked off of a website full of "irrelevant and intrusive" ads. This means that ads may only come later after you've worked on more targeted inbound marketing strategies.
- 86% of people skip through tv commercials
- Social media, blogs & SEO have a lower cost per lead than traditional channels and have higher conversion rates due to their ability to run targeted campaigns.

Numbers don't lie. While some of these strategies have worked in the past, content marketing will allow you to build your own audience, without necessarily renting attention from other people's media.

One of the reasons why inbound content marketing is highly effective, where traditional outbound content is not, is because it allows businesses and organizations to show off their expertise, and even products, without coming off as overly promotional.

With content marketing, small and large enterprises can: enhance their social media strategy; can create content on their own media to drive inbound traffic and leads and can improve their SEO since search engines such as Google reward businesses that create and publish unique and quality content.

Your Business or Brand Can't Ignore Content Marketing

Yes, the content marketing field is very competitive today. And, yes, it is challenging to constantly create high-quality, engaging content and challenging as well to measure the effectiveness of content marketing strategies. But the fact is, the digital environment is proliferating, and that is where you will find your consumers.

So, engaging and informing your customers and prospects about your products and services and creating long-lasting relationships is not a business option, it is a requirement. Ignoring content marketing would be a precipitate for failure. Because without it, your business risks becoming irrelevant.