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The Ultimate Content Strategist Playbook No. 2:

Strategy and Roadmap

Brands are now in uncharted territory when it comes to content marketing, and outlining a documented content strategy is hard.

There isn’t an established template for how to proceed.

Agenda

1. Adopt a winning perspective
2. Identify your audience
3. Audit your existing storytelling assets
4. Conduct a gap analysis

1. Adopt a Winning Perspective

What's the secret ingredient to good content marketing? That's the question everyone's trying to figure out, and if you Google it, you'll find a thousand different blog posts with varying answers. But when you talk to the most successful content marketers, three common strategies emerge.

Content First, Marketing Second

STORYTELLING

“I basically ignored press releases and focused one hundred percent on storytelling. My stories have real protagonists who are trying to solve real problems and reach real outcomes.”

—TOMAS KELLNER, MANAGING EDITOR, GE

Don’t Build a House on Land You Don’t Own

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Relying on Your Brand’s Expertise

Don’t abandon the core mission and expertise of your brand

The key is to tell stories that connect back to your brand without involving any overt promotion or contamination of editorial integrity.

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Reporting within his own company

"It's basically just old-fashioned shoe-leather reporting. You have to go to the factories. You have to develop sources. You have to go to the labs and see what those guys are doing.It didn't happen overnight for me. It took me a while to develop my network of sources, and to figure out who's working on what."basically ignored press releases

—TOMAS KELLNER, MANAGING EDITOR, GE

2. Identifying Your Audience

Once you've embraced that your audience must come first, now comes the fun part: figuring out who, exactly, that audience might be.

Primary and Secondary Audiences

Primary and Secondary Audiences

Primary: Your primary audience consists of that ideal reader you imagine yourself reaching with a content program that's firing on all cylinders.

Secondary: If you have more than two audiences you want to reach, there's a good chance you need more than one content strateg**y.**

Level of Understanding

NOVICE

Has an incomplete understanding, approaches tasks mechanistically, and needs supervision to complete them.

PROFICIENT

Has a deep understanding, sees actions holistically, can achieve a high standard routinely.

ADVANCED BEGINNER

Has a working understanding, tends to see actions as a series of steps, can complete simpler tasks without supervision.

COMPETENT

Has a good working and background understanding, sees actions at least partly in context, able to complete work independently to a standard that is acceptable, though it may lack refinement.

EXPERT

Has an authoritative or deep holistic understanding, deals with routine matters intuitively, able to go beyond existing interpretations, achieves excellence with ease.

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Demographics

What is the age, gender, education background, etc. of the target reader in each demo?

MILLENNIAL MONEYMAKER: 22- to 32-year-old college graduate on a promising career path.

ACCUMULATOR: 32- to 62-year-old professional in an successful career.any overt promotion or contamination of editorial integrity.

The media landscape is crowded and competitive, filled with incredible content. What need or want brought these people specifically to you?

What specific problem can you solve? What value can you deliver?

3. Auditing Your Existing Storytelling Assets

There's a good chance you've already been creating content even if you don't have a documented strategy in place. Very few brands start their content marketing with zero storytelling assets on hand. Underdeveloped company blogs, social channels, existing white papers, data, internal subject matter experts—these things can all become huge components of your new content strategy.

Storytelling Assets

ASSET TITLE: What the heck do you call this thing?

LOCATION & FORMAT: Where does this content live, and in what form does it exist?

CONSTRAINTS: What limitations are placed on this form of content?

POTENTIAL: What potential stories could stem from this asset?

WORKFLOW: How is this asset currently created and approved?

4. Conduct a Gap Analysis

Want to know another one of the biggest mistakes brands make with their content marketing? Assuming they're only battling with their direct business competitors for consumer attention.

Gap Analysis

STEP ONE: Identify and list all publishers already serving the primary and/or secondary audiences you've identified.

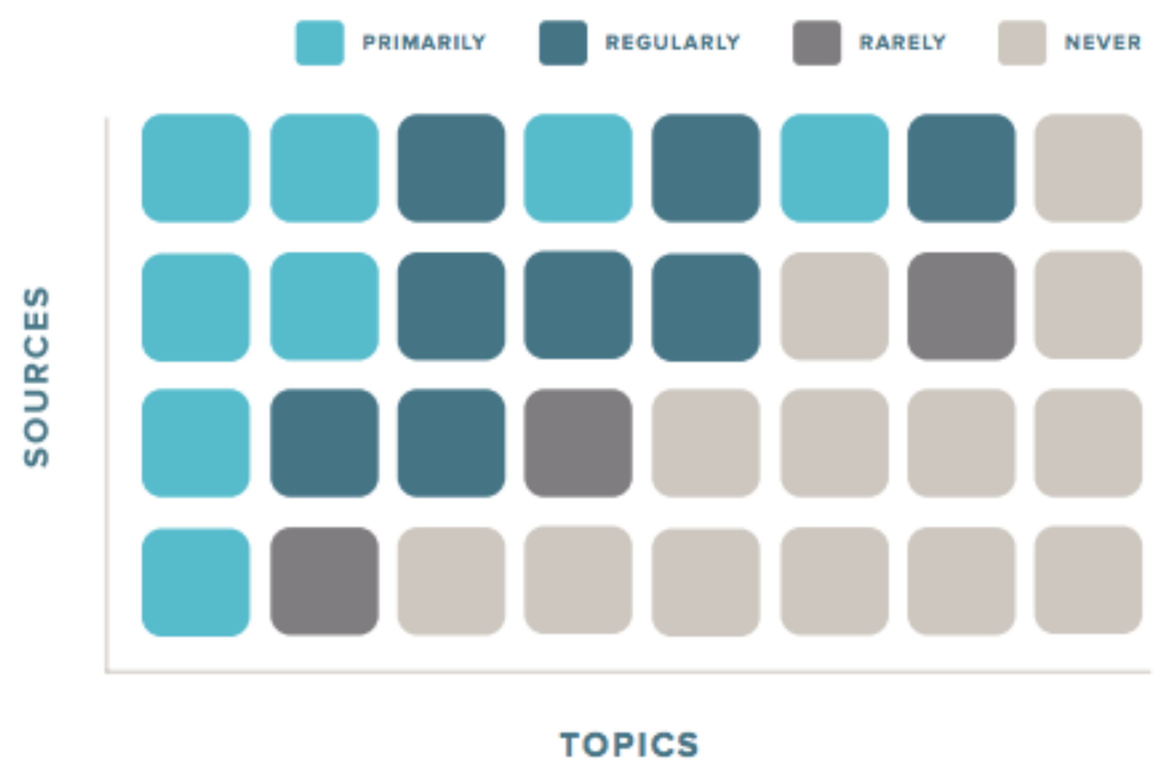
STEP TWO: As you spend time researching each publisher's approach to content, make a list of:

- Audience types those publishers are targeting.
- Content formats they use (news, tutorials, video, etc.).
- Sources they use in their stories (consumers, executives, etc.).
- Topics they cover (investment tactics, individual stories, etc.).

STEP THREE: Create a grid chart. Place the first list of competitive publishers on the vertical axis. Place the second list of content attributes on the horizontal axis.

Gap Analysis

STEP FOUR: Color-code the report based on how often each publisher addresses each attribute on the vertical axis.



STEP FIVE: Pay close attention to the grey (no evidence) and charcoal (rarely) “gaps” in the existing landscape; that’s where your opportunity lies. well as a mission statement to guide your work everyday

Conclusion


CREATING MEDIA CONTENT
IS A DIVERTING ACTIVITY
THAT RARELY RESEMBLES
ACTUAL WORK.

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