SMARTER
CONTENT
MARKETING

LEARN THE SECRETS OF SMARTER CONTENT MARKETING!

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Introduction

Even in the age of video, live streaming, and social media, content marketing is still the reigning King when it comes to building successful campaigns that will drive in traffic, and bolster sales and prospect activity. It's also still the most effective way for both new and seasoned marketers to connect with potential leads, and to build organic traffic funnels from the major search engines.

But the days of writing a short article, getting a few backlinks, and sitting back while the traffic pours in are long gone. There's just too much competition for those forms of marketing to be effective, and the search engines have changed the way they place value on content in terms of providing exposure through keyword searches made by those in your niche.

Successful content marketing requires more effort and thought, and it requires a more complex strategy than ever before, but it's certainly not difficult to do. If you create a powerful strategy based on the smarter content marketing tactics in this report, you'll be able to quickly funnel traffic into your websites while ensuring that your campaigns are designed to achieve long-term success.

In this guide, you're going to learn about some of the key metrics you can use to judge whether or not your content marketing strategy is a success, and how to formulate a winning strategy right from the beginning, requiring fewer tweaks and limited trial & error.

There is a system – an absolute formula – for creating successful content marketing campaigns, and I'm going to lay it all out on the line for you in the coming chapters.

You're also going to learn about some very specific ways you can generate even more traffic to your website through content-based campaigns, and how to figure out exactly what your visitors are interested in, so you can deliver the best possible on-site experience to your prospects.

So, without further delay, let's get started!

Out With The Old

To begin, I want you to know that the older (and outdated) methods of content marketing are simply no longer effective. They're either marginally useful, not useful at all, or, at worst, damaging to your ability to generate leads and create effective traffic-generating campaigns that will stand the test of time.

For many years, content marketing relied almost exclusively on search engine traffic, but that strategy is no longer as viable. There's just too much competition and search engines highly favor older sites that have established trust and authority, over new sites that have yet to build on an overall quality score, or history. Getting ranked as a new site is *very* difficult, though definitely not impossible.

At one time, all you had to do to rank well in search engines was use targeted keywords throughout your website content. In addition, repeating keywords throughout different areas of your website (such as meta keywords, page title, header tags, etc.) would also help score a better ranking in search engines. This was often referred to as "keyword stuffing".

When ranking based on keyword stuffing became extremely competitive, and search engines grew wise to the methods people were using to manipulate their website's ranking, it became far more difficult to get anywhere by using those methods.

They simply became outdated and ineffective.

To combat the changes in the way search engines determined what websites should appear when specific keywords were entered, website owners started to focus instead on building backlinks from authority websites, essentially leeching credibility from other established pages. With a decent number of backlinks pointing to your website, and with on-page SEO used to optimize your pages to target those keywords, you could usually count on your website ranking in the first few pages of the major search engines.

Then, the search engines changed their algorithms yet again, and webmasters were scrambling to figure out exactly what the search engines wanted to see on their website to assign decent ranking.

Here are a few tactics that either don't work anymore, or don't work as effectively as they once did. Keep an eye out for these, so you don't end up penalized by the major search engines:

- **Keyword Stuffing** – Never, ever include the same keyword any more than necessary to convey the point of your article. You could get penalized or even banned from search engines if you try stuffing too may keywords into your content.

- **Backlink Farming** – While it's still important to build backlinks to your websites from authority sites, getting too many backlinks too quickly, or obtaining a lot of low quality links will do nothing for you and may even cause your site to be penalized by the search engines. Instead, focus on building quality links over a longer period of time. Slow, and steady.

- **Keyword Domain Names** – The tactic of registering keyword-based domains in order to rank better in the search engines isn't always successful. While it won't get you penalized, it won't necessarily help your ranking either. Instead, register domain names that are easy for visitors to spell, are relevant to your website's content, and help you build brand recognition. And make sure they're memorable!

- **Overuse Of Anchor Text For Backlinks** – Years ago, it was vital that you use your main keyword in all, or most, of your backlinks, but these days you could be penalized for that. Instead, you should spread your backlink anchor text amongst a range of components, such as your page and article titles, main keyword used within content, keyword variations, etc.

- **Pages For Every Variation Of A Keyword** – Many people used to create a brand new article (which was usually just a slight variation of another similar article) for every single variation of a keyword, but these days that's not a good idea. One long, high quality article is much, much better than 10 or more thinner articles.

So now that you know what to avoid, here's the great news. You don't have to rank in the search engines for major keywords in order to be successful! In fact, you can run a successful business without any search engine traffic whatsoever.

So, what DOES work for SEO and content marketing? Well, that's a tough question to answer because SEO is such a complex topic. It would take a lot more than a short report to cover it all.

Since it takes so long for newer sites to gain traction in the search engines these days, it's actually a better idea to focus more on getting traffic from other sources, like social media, rather than specifically focusing on search engine traffic. Not only will you get more traffic faster, but you will actually boost your SEO rankings significantly!

A basic strategy would look something like this:

- Write long, high quality articles between 1,500 and 3,000 words each and post them to your website or blog.
- Optimize them for the search engines with relevant keywords used throughout content, article titles and create a linking strategy that directs readers to other relevant articles on your website.
- Make sure you have social like/share buttons on every page of your website or blog.
- Share all of your content to your own social media profiles.
- Ask your followers and visitors to like, share, and comment.
- Build links naturally.

Key Performance Metrics

In order to gauge the success of your content marketing efforts, there are a few key performance metrics you should pay attention to. Most marketers just look at their traffic logs to judge whether their content marketing is successful, but there's so much more to it than that.

Let's take a look at a few of the different metrics you should be paying attention to when deciding if your content marketing strategy is working as it should.

Traffic

Obviously traffic is your most important metric. Not only should you pay attention to your overall website traffic, but to a few other important traffic metrics, as well such as:

- **Traffic to individual articles** – This will help you decide what your visitors are most interested in reading about, and whether or not you've been delivering that to them.

- **Where your traffic is coming from** – If you're getting very little traffic from certain sources and more from others, you can either choose to focus on those you're successful with to get even more traffic from them, or focus more on those you're getting very little from in an attempt to increase traffic from those sources.

- **How many people are sharing your content** – It's very important to find out how many people are liking and sharing your content, because this will tell you whether you're truly reaching your audience or not. People won't like and share content that didn't interest them.

- **Comments** – Comments are always a good indicator of whether or not your content is living up to the standards people expect. If you receive very few comments, or people don't have a lot of positive things to say, it might mean you're not hitting the right points with your content.

- **Conversion rate** – Pay close attention to your conversion rates to see if your content is doing its job. Your content is useless if all it's doing is attracting traffic. That traffic must also convert into email subscribers, CPA leads, sales, etc.

Impact

The bottom line is making sure your content marketing efforts have a positive net effect on your business rather than a negative one. There are several ways your content marketing can actually have a negative net impact on your business, and that's something you want to avoid at all costs.

Negative impact can be caused by a number of things:

- **Poor quality content** that leads people to believe that you are not an authority on the topic. You need your readers to have faith in your comprehension of the topic, and look to you as a leader of informative and accurate information.

- **Content that doesn't resonate** with your audience will hurt your chances at encouraging repeat visitors while also showing a lack of understanding of your market.

- **Content that sells without informing** is a common mistake that new marketer's make. You want your content to provide useful information while also entertaining your audience.   Creating engaging content will drive in traffic and ensure return visitors.

Failing to do that will destroy your chances as converting leads into customers.

Positive impact happens when you create **high quality content** that truly **connects and resonates with your target audience**.

This is why it's so important to know your market (the niche) **and** your audience (the people) <u>extremely</u> well. You want to know exactly what they will connect with, what kind of content provokes a positive response, and how best to help or educate potential customers.

The more you have a pulse on your market, and the better you know your target audience's deepest needs, hopes and desires, the easier it will be to create content that will drive in traffic and convert into sales.

In the next chapter, we're going to talk about how you can figure out exactly what kind of content your audience wants to read so that you can build wildly successful content marketing campaigns!

How To Create Content
That Converts

Anticipating *exactly* what kind of content your audience is most interested in is difficult to do without first conducting market research.

The key is to research potential content **before** you write it, and there are a few ways to accomplish that quickly and easily.

The first easy way is to evaluate social media, like Facebook or twitter, to look for articles that have received a high number of likes, retweets and shares. That's a clear indication that the type of content being shared is well received and in demand by your target audience.

Makes sense, right?

You can also keep tabs on the type of content that has very few likes and shares to see if you can spot **why** it may have performed so poorly. You can look for the differences between poorly received content and information that generated a positive response from your target

audience. Quite often it isn't just about which author had the larger following, but about the type of content itself.

Social media provides you with a clear and concise snapshot of content that is being widely distributed through sharing, and content that is stale (no retweets, limited sharing), making it easy for you to create content based on the formats proven to be successful.

This type of market research also puts you in the seat of your potential prospect, providing you with a different perspective on what you would find engaging, and what kind of content truly reaches out to you and pulls you in.

Would **you** want to share content that contains factual errors, inconsistences, or grammatical mistakes? Would **you** want to share content that was thin on value and thick on advertising? And you certainly wouldn't want to share content that was boring or uninteresting.

It's important to create the type of content that **you** personally would want to read and share, but you must also make sure this content is right for your audience. That's why it's important to research carefully <u>before</u> you create content.

Another easy way to research what people are looking for is to explore the comments pertaining to an article on popular websites in your market. Make sure to also include Facebook comments, blog comments, etc. This type of direct feedback can be an absolute goldmine of information and will help to shape the type of content you decide to create for your audience.

For example, a comment on an article might say something like:

"Great article, but you didn't mention what qualifications one might need. Is a degree required, or would a certificate be enough to land a job in this field?"

This would tell you exactly what information you might want to include in your own article on the subject to make sure you hit all the points a reader might expect to see and be most interested in.

This is especially true if you see the same type of comments multiple times. Taking note of how often a particular question is asked, or comment made about something that is lacking, the easier it will be for

you to craft compelling articles that answer burning questions in your market.

By studying your competitors' content, focusing on the comments it receives, and the level of distribution it gets through sharing on social media, the better understanding you will have about the type of content will be most appealing to your average prospect.

Setting Yourself Apart

Beyond figuring out exactly what your visitors are most interested in, you also need to deliver an experience that goes above and beyond, if you want to truly stand out from all the competition and build a brand recognized for quality and trust.

Let's take a look at some ways you can set yourself apart and develop the most effective content marketing strategy possible.

Create A Content Plan

Most people go into content marketing without a plan or strategy in place. They think simply writing articles for their blog or website, and sharing links to those articles through social media is enough.

It isn't. If you want to create high performing content marketing campaigns you need to take things a step further, and develop a plan of action as well as a content plan.

To start, think about your **primary goal**, which is probably to make money, as well as any secondary goals, such as increasing your social media followers, reaching new customers, or building an email list.

Every article you write should somehow help you achieve one of those goals. One article might focus more on helping you sell a product or service, while the next might lead to an opt-in magnet to increase your subscriber base. And yet another may be a knowledge-based content that simply lends credibility to your brand and helps to educate your customer.

No matter what, **each article should have a purpose** that will help you reach your goals.

You can create an editorial calendar of upcoming article ideas, and be sure to write down which goal that article will help you work towards. That way you can space out your content in a way that helps you work towards all those goals simultaneously, and you'll see at a glance that you aren't overlooking important aspects of your content marketing plan.

Don't Forget Existing Content

If you've been in content marketing for a while, you may already have a base of content you've built up. Maybe it's not performing well or isn't receiving a lot of exposure.

It can be remarkably effective to go back and edit that older content in order to add new information, update material, remove anything that has become outdated, and improve the quality of the content itself.

Include Multiple Formats

You can also take existing content and rebrand it into other content formats, such as by creating a SlideShare, a video or an infographic. Repurposing content is also an affordable way to breathe new life into content, while providing your website with new material at no cost.

These days, people are looking for content that goes above and beyond simple articles. They want to see interesting images, info graphics, videos, slideshows, reports, and more. They are looking for magazine-quality content, or even better, and if you can't deliver that, there are thousands of other sites that can.

As an added bonus, any additional media you add has the potential to boost your search engine rankings, as well as getting you more traffic from places like YouTube or Pinterest that rely on forms of media other than the written word!

Conclusion

Content is still King, and it always will be. Without high quality content, you will struggle to draw in prospects, gain interest from new customers, or build a recognized brand in your industry.

It takes more work, more effort, than ever before, but that means you have a chance to stand out. While others still cling to that bygone era of easy traffic through outdated methods, you can create a user experience that will not only gain favor with the search engines, but will attract the right kind of buyers, while expanding your outreach, increasing your social media presence, and making more money.

Make sure to study your metrics carefully and research well before you write a piece of content. This will help you write content that will please your audience and help you achieve your goals.

Good luck!

Resources

Here are a few resources to help you build the best content marketing campaigns possible:

>> Create interactive videos, easily! Go: https://animoto.com/

>> Capture emails easily and turn your content into PDF files with a few clicks! Get it: https://postgopher.com/

>> Create infographics easily using:

https://www.canva.com/create/infographics/ and

https://piktochart.com/

>> Create Slideshare presentations in minutes even if you've never done it before! Go: http://www.SlideShare.net