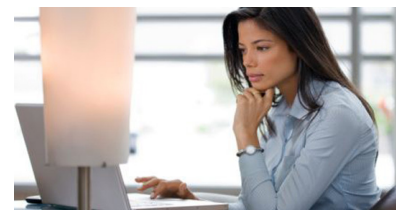


Content Marketing = Content *plus* Strategy



Educating your customers about your industry, and then positioning yourself as a thought leader within it, is the goal of a good content marketing program. It's an effective tactic, especially as traditional advertising is losing ground in the battle for consumer attention. To help ensure you connect with your target audience, you'll need to offer insights that are meaningful and relevant to their needs —and that takes a strategic approach.

What IS content marketing?

Effective content marketing is basically the development of useful information to educate customers and prospects, without any hard sell. For most businesses, the goal is to provide value that informs and inspires people to learn more about the company's products and services —with content often delivered through [blog posts](#), [case studies](#), whitepapers, and articles. When backed by a good strategic plan, this content can be a powerful tool to demonstrate your subject matter expertise, understanding of evolving customer needs, and innovative approach to common pain points. Content marketing is equally effective for consumer segments as well as business-to-business.

Do you have a defined and detailed content marketing strategy in place?



Source: CUGrow.com, credit union survey

3 questions to define your content strategy

It's not enough to simply push content: you don't want to talk at people, you want to invite conversation. That's why it's important to have an effective content marketing strategy, a framework that helps you align your efforts with key business objectives and a plan for measuring the results. At Beyond the Arc, we recommend you start by considering three key questions that set the stage for your content strategy:

1 What are we trying to achieve?

Define goals that help drive decisions about the kind of content you should provide. For example, are you trying to generate leads? Increase brand awareness? Strengthen reputation and customer relationships?

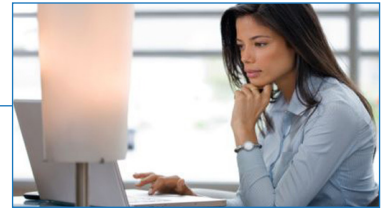
2 Who are we trying to reach?

Be clear about your target audiences and segments. This helps ensure you understand who you're talking to and what's most relevant to them.

3 What is our game plan to deliver the right message to the right audience?

Even great content can fall flat if it doesn't reach the right people. To invest your efforts (and budget) wisely, you'll want to consider which channels work best for your target audience, and which types of communications and messaging seem like the best fit.

Keep in mind that your prospects may need different types of information at different stages of the buying cycle. Early on, they may need to better understand the use cases, or how others make the best use of similar products or services. As they hone in, perhaps they are charged with establishing a business case for the investment and information about success stories and case studies might be more valuable.



Optimize content with deeper insights on your audience

Specifying what you want to achieve and who you want to reach are important first steps. But even more critical is making sure you really understand your target audience to help you deliver content that drives profitable results. Many companies are now looking toward [predictive analytics](#) as a [customer intelligence tool](#), capturing valuable insights about customer segments by mining data from many sources such as business transactions, surveys, social media, and more. Backing your content strategy with a data-driven approach helps you provide the right information to the right people, which typically increases marketing effectiveness.

By providing valuable content, defined by a smart business strategy, your organization can engage customers and prospects with key information that inspires confidence about your expertise, motivates sales, and increases potential for cross-sell and up-sell of your products and services.

Let's Talk

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