3 Keys to a Highly-Effective Content Marketing Strategy



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Covid-19 has significantly changed business-to-business marketing plans. As Forrester noted recently, “It’s more than a combination of discrete trends such as rising bounce rates, declining open rates, or increasing churn; it’s that buyers now expect a fundamentally different relationship with your company.” Consequently, creating compelling, relevant and consistent content is a highly effective way to attract and retain your audience’s attention, gain their trust, and, ultimately, to convert them to customers.

In a world full of false advertising and eroding trust, content marketing should be at the heart of any digital

marketing strategy. It’s the foundation of all digital marketing channels, including SEO, public relations, social media and traffic generation. According to Hubspot, 70% of marketers are actively investing in content marketing in 2020. Rather than trying to directly sell your products or services, you are offering useful, relevant content to your prospects and customers to help them overcome their challenges. So then, the focus is on content – be it in the form of infographics, YouTube videos, whitepapers, webpages or information in other formats.

Effective content marketing sends a message to potential customers that you are passionate about what you do and that you want to share your expertise with them – for free. To achieve this goal, it’s important to focus on three prongs: business goals, personas, and your sales funnel.

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Three Essential Factors to Build Your Content Marketing Strategy

In order for your content marketing efforts to be successful, you need to create a strategy based on these three factors.

1. Business Goals

Step One in beginning an effective content marketing strategy is to be certain it lines up with your business goals. Understanding what business goal you want to achieve or support gives you the needed clarity to set the appropriate marketing objectives. Are you aiming to strengthen customer loyalty and reduce churn? Maybe the goal is to attract new prospects or overcome objections. Once you have defined your marketing goals, you can develop your content marketing campaign.

2. Personas

Developing buyer personas is a necessary part of your strategy, but you have to take it a step further. Find the individuals within your audience that have the influence and enthusiasm that will help grow your company. If your audience is split into several types of buyers, refine your buyer personas to focus on those most likely to convert.

Start by identifying some of your most loyal customers. From there, find the primary decision-makers who championed the decision to purchase from or hire you. There are probably sales or service team members in your company who have close relationships with these people. Find those employees, and use sales data to create a persona – data points like goals/motivations, challenges, background, demographics, common objections, biggest fears and hobbies.

3. Your sales funnel

Vendor research happens online, and what will move the buyer down the pipeline is valuable content being published on your web, email, search and social channels. In order to drive success with B2B content marketing, you need to understand how the content you create fits into the different stages of your sales funnel.

Be aware that your funnel may vary from the norm depending on elements such as your sector, solution, business model, pricing structure and target market. In fact, experts report that “today’s B2B buyer might be anywhere from two-thirds to 90% of the way through their journey before they reach out to a vendor.” Confer with the sales team about the particulars of your sales funnel, then use that intelligence to create a marketing strategy that addresses leads at the top, middle and bottom of that funnel.

Related: Content and Content Marketing Are Not the Same. Here's How to Frame the Top 11 Content Formats.

What Can Be Gained from Content Marketing?

There are many benefits of content marketing, including:

- Addressing pain points leads to sales: When prospects look online for ways to solve their issues, your content is there to help over and over. As an example, marketers who use blogs as a primary communications tactic are 13x more likely to see return on investment.
- Creating a community: As you establish thought leadership through content marketing, you gain credibility and encourage stronger relationships with existing and future customers.
- Long-run savings: Good content has legs. It continues to work for you long after you've created it, continually bringing in qualified leads. That lessens paid marketing expenses. Demand Metric found that not only does content marketing cost 62% less than traditional marketing efforts, but it generates three times the number of leads.

HubSpot's content marketing efforts showcase the powerful results that can be produced from a comprehensive strategy. The company is well-known because they produce massive amounts of content. HubSpot sells inbound market, sales and service software, but its claim to fame among marketers is the quantity and quality of its marketing resources, much of which is free. Their repertoire includes case studies, guides, ebooks, blog posts, courses, reports and more. Their content drives free traffic to their site, with the end goal

of converting those leads into customers without spending a dime on advertising.

Related: The 5 Cs of Content Marketing Copy

Gaining Leads, Gaining Trust

Compelling and relevant content is the cornerstone of demand generation and lead nurturing strategy. Marketers depend on content to connect with prospects and existing customers in the current communications landscape, but to be successful, it must inform, excite and be worthy of sharing. It should arm audiences to address obstacles and accomplish their goals. If you're able to accomplish this, prospects will come to trust your brand. This involves prioritizing original content creation to promote that message so it can add value to the lives of your customers. Use the best practices discussed above to begin or refine your content marketing strategy.

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