8 Things Technology Startups Need to Do Before Creating Their Content Strategy

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If you're an early-stage tech startup, you're probably aware that it's not just established tech companies that need a content strategy. Wherever you are in your business journey, you'll need a content plan to act as your guiding star when communicating with audiences. As your business scales, your strategy will naturally evolve, so how can you keep on top of this and all the other moving parts of your business?

Our team has been supporting early-stage tech startups with branding and content for the past six years. These are our key recommendations for developing and executing a flawless content strategy:

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1. Build your strategy from scratch

Investing in content creation and distribution may seem like just another to-do item on an already long list when you're just starting out, but the impact of a well-executed content strategy can be immense. Content marketing is too critical to leave as an afterthought, especially when it is the foundation of how you communicate with your audience. So, why is it so important to focus on content from day one?

Firstly, you can maximize your resources. When you're a

startup with a limited marketing budget, content is a cost-effective way to reach your target audience compared to paid advertising. Secondly, you can showcase traction to investors. The success of your content strategy can be used as proof of your popularity in the market you operate in. Thirdly, you can benefit from early audience discovery and testing. Monitor how your customers respond to your messaging and gain a better understanding of what content resonates with them.

2. Avoid taking shortcuts

If you fail to create a strategy from scratch, you'll poorly execute a plan with inconsistent messaging. Instead of a haphazard approach, start with a proper plan that the whole company is bought into. Before you start, don't assume you know your audience intimately; gather data to build a comprehensive understanding to create content that resonates. Even if you're not technical, don't ignore metrics. You should monitor which marketing methods are working or failing. Then you can make informed decisions about your strategy's performance and tweak where necessary.

3. Look inward, not outward

A robust content strategy begins with looking inward at your brand, not your competitors. Make sure you're answering these questions when building out your strategy: First, what's your business vision and mission statement? This relates to your company's values, culture and purpose. Next, how would you describe your brand's personality? This pertains to the human characteristics attributed to your brand. Then, how would you define your brand's tone of voice? This is about how your brand sounds to customers. Being able to definitively answer these questions will help you translate your brand value to external audiences when developing your messaging.

4. Understand your customers

For tech brands, there are two approaches to use when defining your target audience. The problem-solving approach considers your customer's pain points and how your brand's solution is different. The customer persona approach is about creating a semi-fictional representation of your brand's ideal customer based on research and data. By understanding your customer's motivations and needs, you can tailor your messaging and offerings to better meet those needs and stand out from the competition.

Related: 4 Simple Steps to Creating an Effective Content Marketing Strategy

5. Know your value proposition and USPs

Now it's time to look outward and see how you compare to competitors, identifying opportunities for differentiation. Your value proposition and USPs (unique sales propositions) will help form the thematic basis of your content strategy. Your value proposition is based on information about what your competitors are offering. It's important to understand their strengths and weaknesses to articulate why your brand offers the best solution. Your unique sales propositions augment the value proposition by defining the specific features and benefits that make your products stand out.

6. Establish realistic and measurable goals

The goals of your content strategy will be informed by your business goals. The type of content that creates brand awareness is very different from the type of content that drives traffic. To help set more strategic goals, it's

critical to start with a realistic planning horizon. For example, six months gives you enough time to gain momentum, test out different hypotheses and track performance. A long-term approach helps you focus on building a solid foundation instead of looking for quick results. Content can take a while to ramp up, but if you approach it with a long-term perspective, you'll eventually see the benefits.

7. Transition from content strategy to content plan

When executing your plan, the first step is identifying your priority marketing channels.

These will determine all the groundwork you've done in building out your brand strategy. That includes brand personality, value proposition, target audience and goals. We then recommend mapping your content posting schedule as a calendar – for optimum flexibility and visibility. Break up your content into 3-5 themes that align with your mission and address the needs of your target audience. By creating a calendar of themes, you can ensure that your content is consistent, relevant and serves your overall goals. Saving time and resources is essential in a high-growth company, so build time-saving practices into your content plan. For example, a blog post can be repurposed into multiple formats like a video or infographic.

When you're ready to execute your content plan, take a hint from B2B SaaS brand, Ahrefs, which relies almost solely on content to promote its SEO toolset. Their content marketing strategy was a key factor that grew their traffic to over 2.4M monthly visits. They conducted extensive keyword research and ensured SEO formed the basis of their strategy.

Related: 5 Steps to Creating a Content Marketing Strategy That Actually Works

8. Measure, track and optimize content

By tracking your strategy’s performance, you can see trends and tweak accordingly to improve traction. You need to measure KPIs including website traffic, social engagement, conversion rates and lead generation, depending on your goals. You should interpret the data for insights that inform your strategy as it evolves. For example, high website traffic might indicate that your content is reaching a large audience, but low social engagement rates might suggest that the content is not resonating with them.

As your startup grows, it’s very important to review your content strategy continuously. Once your business becomes profitable, consider hiring an internal marketer or an external marketing agency with the expertise to execute your strategy seamlessly.

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