Are You Creating Content for Human Consumption? Let’s Find Out.

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Once someone gets a taste of what you create, are they hungry for more? Creating and consuming great content is no different than creating and consuming a delicious, healthy meal. They both have a direct impact on our mental and physical health. Creators, like chefs, must understand the importance of our audience connecting with our creations, leaving them feeling better and craving more.

Just as we watch what ingredients we consume in our bodies, we must watch what information we consume in our minds. As creators, it is critical to handle this responsibility with care, knowing that your content can influence someone’s mood, energy and experiences. Are you creating content for human consumption?

Let’s dive into the analogy of successful content creators as professional chefs. When we approach content strategy from the perspective of a chef, we are able to compare something tangible and relatable (building a dining experience) with something newer and less familiar (developing a content strategy). Here are the six steps to developing an effective content strategy:

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1. Making the menu: content strategy

We begin by building with the end in mind. We know how we want our audience to feel and our content to taste when they leave our table. Our content strategy is the menu that outlines our plans for what delicious content we will serve. It's essential to understand the value of investing time and energy into strategically planning our content recipes and thinking through an outline of the big-picture experience.

We can think of planning our content strategy as we would a multi-course meal. We want to have content that serves as an appetizer or a lead magnet. This gives our audience a small taste of what's to come. In the appetizer, our objective is for them to click on our profile craving more. With content, this might look like an entertaining video using trending audio that grabs attention or an inspirational video that feels relatable and addresses a problem personal to them.

The main course, the bulk of our content, is where we bring the most value. This should include a variety of videos that educate, engage and build relationships. Every audience member should feel like they are sitting at the chef's table with warm bi-directional conversations, answering questions and learning together.

Lastly (and my personal favorite), we must include dessert. We want to sprinkle in opportunities to surprise and delight. This is the meal that changes our audience's perspective, fills a craving and leaves them thinking about their experience – eventually coming back for more. For creators, this is the content that catches the click and converts audience members from passive viewers to a community of customers and fans.

2. Cuisine and customers: Know your niche, and understand your audience

Before buying a single ingredient for any course, we must prepare with thoughtful research. We need to be clear on who we will be serving, as well as what tools and ingredients we will use. When you research your target market, you have a stronger understanding of your ideal audience. The first step is asking yourself: “Who am I cooking for?”

Every experienced chef builds a meal with a specific guest in mind. What do they like or dislike? What are they hungry for? Where will they be consuming it? What are their consumption habits? Do they prefer a variety of small bites or large fruitful portions? What are they craving that they are not finding anywhere else?

Choosing your niche is like determining what cuisine to specialize in. Which topics do you know best? What are you most comfortable with? If you cook this type of content every day, will you still be excited to keep cooking?

As a chef chooses their cuisine, a content creator selects their content pillars. It’s no coincidence that your favorite restaurants are consistently good, no matter the day or meal. A great chef is reliable and consistent, no matter what they serve. You want to have a few outstanding dishes that you can replicate once you understand what works and what your audience craves. Not everyone is going to like what you cook. This means you are doing it right. The more clued in you are to the desires of your specific persona, the more your ideal customer will connect with your creations.

Related: The Step-By-Step Guide to Finding Your Niche and Target Market

3. Creator’s kitchen: tools and tech

Think about what kitchen you will be cooking in and what tools you will use. Which tools are worth the investment? Meet your audience where they are. That means, for instance, identifying which platforms are best suited for your particular audience and where they are already gathering. Similar to how a Michelin star chef will find their ideal location before building a restaurant. Keep in mind that being a user on a social media platform is very different from being a creator. Just like eating at a restaurant is much different than cooking in their kitchen.

This is how chefs ensure their guests connect with the food they cook and keep coming back for more. A successful content creator considers how their audience will consume their content, the same way a professional chef understands the preferences of their guests before serving them a meal.

4. Identify ingredients: recipe reels

Now that you have researched and understood your ideal customer, the next step is identifying the ingredients. Identify what is most important to them and the environment or delivery method in which they prefer to consume. This allows chefs to design a custom menu and dining experience that aligns with the consumers’ unique interests and preferences.

Creators should have a profile feed of five-star “recipes” with consistent quality serving an intended audience. When your ideal audience looks at your recipe reels (the menu of content in your feed), everything should intrigue them, so much so that it feels impossible to order just one thing.

We must create intentionally, knowing our audience will consume our content in their minds, just as a chef carefully selects what ingredients their guests will put in their bodies. It can be scary to experiment with new techniques or try new ingredients that you may not have mastered yet, but it is the only way to improve your skills and better understand your audience.

As consumers, we know how unhealthy food changes the way we feel. It lowers our energy level and changes our mood. We want our content to be made for human consumption. We want our feed to fill a viewer up and change the way they feel for the better.

5. Professional presentation: initial impression

You've now done all that planning, before you even hit publish. Now it's time for your audience to enjoy your dish. Remember: Presentation is key for the initial impression.

What differentiates someone's cooking from just a hobby at home to a professional chef? It's their presentation, practice and professionalism. Everyone appreciates a menu with clear titles, ingredients listed and professional photos. Adding thumbnails to your short-form videos is an easy way to take the recipe reel on your feed to the next level. It's that extra touch that will impress your audience and make it simple for them to binge your content.

How can you transition from creating content for fun to building a digital brand? Successful content creators deliver high-quality content consistently. Just like a world-renowned chef, you must build your brand and your reputation so that people want to share, remember and return.

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6. Serving is surveying: Iterate and analyze

The last and most important step is to actually serve the food you cook. Don’t let perfectionism cause you to throw away all your hard work in the trash out of fear that it isn’t enough. It’s always better to serve a meal than to keep it in your drafts.

Even if you aren’t 100% confident in your meal or your ingredients, the best way to grow and improve is to actually share your creations with others. This is how you can get direct feedback on what works and what doesn’t work in real-time. Keep in mind that service can make or break a dining experience. If you serve an okay meal, but you’re an incredible server, this could make your audience more willing to share honestly. Ask your audience questions, reply to their messages, and engage in conversation to learn more.

Instead of guessing what your audience will enjoy, you can just serve it to them and talk to them about it. Survey their experiences, and analyze the results. This will inform how you plan and iterate future meals.

The content you create can change how someone sees the world. It has more of an impact than you may have even realized. Create with intention, and prepare mindfully. Ask yourself: Is my content made for human consumption? If so, grab an apron, choose a kitchen, and get to cooking up content. Your audience is waiting — and they’re hungry!

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