

SME CONTENT MARKETING

How to understand
content marketing
and do it yourself

JUSTWORDS

THE CONTENT AGENCY

Content Marketing for Smart SMEs

Most SMEs around the world have three key challenges that constrain them from becoming the next big thing – Time, Resources and Budget. These aspects affect every aspect of their marketing strategy. Needless to say, the constraint also applies to Content Marketing.

Content Marketing has been the buzzword since 2016 and the air is rife with stories on how important it is to have a content marketing plan in your marketing arsenal. With shortage of resources and time, is it feasible for SMEs and startups to dedicate time to it? Will you need separate resources for content creation and marketing? Moreover, after dedicatedly making this investment, how can the results be measured?

In this eBook, we breakdown the fine points of how SMEs can set up their content marketing plan efficiently so that they can point resources to where it is needed the most without any additional strain on their budgets.

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Marketing for SMEs

The first thing to understand about content marketing is that it is the subset of your overall marketing plan. You may look at ATL and BTL, non-traditional media or digital. With any media, you will start with a marketing goal that is most often linked to your lead and sales generation exercise, brand building or customer engagement. The goals are almost the same for any business. The budget, numbers and timeline and how you execute the plan makes all the difference.

Decoding Content Marketing

Before we delve into the how, let's get a better understanding of what content marketing really is.

Content Marketing is a marketing tactic where you create useful content to subtly engage with your potential customer and influence them to take an action. The action can be any of the activities aligned with your marketing goals that eventually drives profit to your brand.

Useful Content: Consider a brand specializing in home decor which now wants to push its range of curtains. Speaking to your audience about how to choose curtains, the types available in the market, the right length and shades are some of the examples of content your audience may find useful.

Subtly: By providing this information about curtains, you aren't directly selling your curtains. Instead you are developing an interest in your customer's mind about your product range

Action: A link to a specific type of curtain, an offer for a home trial or even a home decor consultation are some of the actions that you want a potential customer to take when they read this article.

The key here is that it is not just one article that can do this. It is a series of consistent blogs or updates that will establish your authority on the topic and have your customers think of you whenever they want to buy curtains.

Content Marketing Usage

Where is content used and where is it marketed? Find out below -

Website content: Content that goes on each page of your website from Homepage to Product Descriptions to About Us and FAQs. You also need to get your content right for your Terms and Conditions and Privacy Policy pages. This content is often optimized by Search Engine Optimization specialists.

Landing page content: This is a subset of your website pages but with specific purpose. Landing pages are created with the specific intention of helping the user 'convert'. The conversion can be a lead, a sale, an eBook download or a newsletter subscription.

Meta content: The SEO content of your site which is written to keep Search Engines and Users informed about the content of your site.

Blogs: Blogs about the industry, your products, company updates, expert interviews, research, insights and topics of general interest for your customers.

Newsletter content: Periodic newsletters sent with company and / or industry updates that can do the pull marketing and get users back to your website

Advertorials: Done in collaboration with popular publications, this involves pushing out content that looks like news but is a sales pitch for your product. The typical Green coffee content you see on the OutBrain network are examples of advertorials.

Social Content: Content pushed out on social media to interact and engage with existing and potential customers.

Guest content: Have 'influencers' speak about your brand to their captive audience and drive traffic, leads and sales for you.

Videos and images: Images used on the website and outside showcasing your brand. Tutorial or demonstrative videos created by you.



5 USEFUL CONTENT MARKETING STATISTICS

- 9 out of 10 B2B buyers say online content has a moderate to major effect on their purchasing decisions. - Lenati
- Top three B2B goals of content marketing: Lead Generation (85%); Sales (84%); Lead Nurturing (78%). - Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
- Long-form blog posts generate 9x more leads than short-form blog posts. -Curata
- 200 million+ people now use ad blockers - PageFair
- 70% of B2B marketers plan to create more content in 2017 compared to 2016. - Content Marketing Institute

Find more such statistics here - [here](#)

Creating your SME content marketing strategy

Having a plan in place is one of the most important parts of content marketing. Often, SMEs get carried away with the jargon and think that doing a few blogs a month is all it takes for a sound content strategy.

On the contrary, content marketing involves that you develop a holistic perspective about everything in content and align it to achieve your marketing goals.

There are two ways to go about creating your strategy – the budget way where you dedicate internal resources to do this for you. Be careful here as you'll still be accounting for their time and salaries. You can hire a content marketing specialist within your team to chart out your plan or have your head of marketing do it for you. In either case, creating a detailed plan will require 8-10 days.



DIY Content Strategy

Create customer personas: Think of your typical customer sets, their age, habits and general likes

Where they hang out: What they do on the internet, the social networking sites they frequent

What they read: Do they like to read more research oriented, technical blogs or fluff content

Analytics: Use GA to decode what users you get on your website and how much they match your target customers

Develop tone and voice: People often confuse tone and voice to be the same but these are in fact two different things. It is important to define both so that anyone executing the strategy is in line with what you envision. 'Voice' is the differentiating factor between you and your competitors. It is a part of your brand identity and remains constant across channels. 'Tone', on the other hand, changes with respect to the audience you are addressing. [This article](#) by Joel Klettke is a great read to help you define your tone and voice.

Define your goals and metrics

This is the most important part of your plan and the one thing you need to go back to on a weekly basis to see if your content marketing is on track. This will have quantifiable goals that can be tracked to your content marketing efforts like x% increase in targeted traffic and thereby in newsletter subscriptions, leads or sales.

3 month action plan: Chalk out strategy for 3 months including editorial calendar and blog topics. Keep a check on how many social posts and engagements you do in a week. One of the key things is to spend 1/2 hour a week to analyse your work and document insights. This way, things become a little easy at the end of the month.





What you'll need before you start:

Basic knowledge of SEO: A big chunk of content marketing relies on your content being discovered by your customers at the time they 'intend' to buy or explore your product. To ensure your content is in line to aid this discovery, you'll need to have SEO content.

Basic knowledge of Analytics: You'll need to understand basic measurement metrics and where you can find them. You'll need to know this irrespective of who does your content marketing so that you can clearly measure results.

Budget:

Doing your content strategy on your own is one of the popular tactics followed by SMEs in order to save on costs. Typically, because you wear numerous hats within your SME, it may take more time for you to chalk this out though.

Advantages of DIY:

The insights you'll gain from creating your content strategy are tremendous. You'll find a new way to look at your customers, understand your competition and a better perspective on the market landscape.

Disadvantages of DIY:

This isn't your bread and butter (unless you are an SME for content marketing) so your expertise may be a bit limited.

With external support

Most SMEs shy away from the concept of hiring a content marketing agency because of the cost attached to the exercise and the ambiguity in measuring results. The first step is to remove the ambiguity and understand that you need to get a full understanding of the metrics. This isn't optional and every SME will need to go through this learning curve.

Once you know the 'what', leaving the execution of the 'how' to experts doesn't feel so daunting.

Allocating a budget to content marketing is like allocating it for any marketing activity. You'll have to find a clear way to connect it with your overall goals and work backwards on what you can attribute here.

Executing your content marketing strategy

DIY

Content marketing isn't a one month project. You'll have to constantly keep at it to see results. If you are someone who can multitask with ease and manage your SME marketing while you do other things, you can try a DIY. This is most likely not the case and most SMEs have numerous problems to tackle with limited resources.

The other option is to hire a specialist internally to execute your overall marketing plan including content marketing. If you are committed to the long term, this works great for SMEs. You can even start with a junior level position and train them on the job. This works great in terms of budget savings for you and a learning experience for them.

Hiring a content marketing agency

A content marketing agency works great to take the load of your hands. For an SME that has full concentration on sales and scaling up, you need the right support to get your marketing plans off the ground. With expertise in both SEO and marketing and a goal-oriented strategy, a content marketing agency can ensure that results are delivered within finite timelines

If you plan your strategy correctly, the ROI from the marketing will justify your budget allocation to the activity.

Converting your customers into Content Marketers

Can your customers become content marketers. They sure well can!

Existing and potential customers are quite vocal these days about a brand they like (or dislike). From "checking into" your restaurant on Facebook to leaving a tweet about the quality of food, they are the real brand advocates.

The content they create, especially testimonials, are perfect for building your brand image. Here is how you can leverage the content your customers create

Acknowledge: When a customer reaches out to you on social media, their first requirement is that they be acknowledged. Whether the comment is good or bad, acknowledging it first makes a huge difference. It helps them calm down and allows you to continue the conversation over email or phone support.

Ask for testimonials: If you have someone who simply loved your product or service, don't be shy in asking for testimonials. Several brands offer additional goodies or discounts for this too

Address concerns: Negative feedback received online can quickly spin into a PR nightmare. Make sure that your company is calm and cool in addressing every concern.

This builds trust in the brand that there is a human behind the scenes working to solve the customer's problem.

Use images: Customers often post images using your product or service. You can use / share these images after giving due credit. (Works great if you are in the food or travel industry)

Post a blog: Delve into insights about customer habits from purchase to after sales and use the insights to create a blog.

Create a case study: Think of the time when you used an innovative way to solve a customer problem. Pen a case study that can be showcased on your website and social media.

Take a survey: Ask your regular customers to take a short survey. Use the insights to up sell, cross sell or share insights with others if it is generally useful information.

Converting employees into Content Marketers

When it comes to charging up your workforce and aligning them with your content strategy, SMEs tend to do better than large organizations on many fronts. This begins with ingraining the thought of every employee being a content marketer for the company. They are the face of your company and direct advocates of your brand and can be used amazingly well to become the voice of your brand. Here are a few ways in which your employees can help in content marketing -

- 1.** Thought leadership: Every SME is likely to have a few Subject Matter Experts in the team. Those with years of experience in their specific field and tons of insights. You can leverage this by asking them to pen down blogs based on their research, experience and industry insights. You can always have professional writers from your content marketing agency to polish the edges. You can even have third-party websites do an interview of your experts and working style.



2. **Social advocacy:** Having employees who speak well about your brand is a cool thing to have. For example, there are quite a few questions on Quora on cool workplace examples and we see both founders and employees answering these questions. This becomes a great way to showcase how the brand is viewed inside-out.
3. **Recruitment:** Ask your star employees to pen a quick blog on what it feels like to work with your organization. A blog like this on your recruitment page works as a perfect testimonial for future employees. Discussing interesting perks and showcasing photos from your picnics and retreats is a great way to attract fresh talent.
4. **Reputation monitoring:** Big companies have entire social listening teams who are available 24x7 for even the smallest escalation. While you will be keen to keep up on everything being said about your company, your employees can become your eyes and ears and keep a lookout on what is being said and analyse sentiments behind the writing.



Recruitment: Ask your star employees to pen a quick blog on what it feels like to work with your organization. A blog like this on your recruitment page works as a perfect testimonial for future employees.



Serenading influencers for your content marketing



All industries have their set of influencers who have a captive audience following every word they say. Influencer marketing is quite abuzz these days. It is mostly done as a paid campaign as influencers want to milk their followers worth.

But if an influencer genuinely likes your brand, you can serenade them by sending samples or actual products in turn for a good word. But this isn't a one off. You'll have to love your influencers back, follow their posts and applaud their achievements to constantly be on their radar. This will allow you to tap them in your hour of need.

Conclusion

Content marketing strategy is not just about the blogs you put out there. It is every written word, visual image and animated video out there that works to pull your customers and create brand recall.

SMEs can take the help of a content marketing agency to take a major workload off their hands and find a budget-friendly way to gain more for their efforts. But the whole effort needs to be complemented with internal efforts from each employee.

Everyone can be a content marketer. You just need to find the right pitch to get them going.



About Justwords:

We are an award winning content agency, which aims at becoming a content backyard for anyone seeking out good content at good prices. So if you are looking for content writing services, content outsourcing and content marketing, we would like to help.

We believe that content is the frontline of every business. It goes to battle every day, interacting with the target audience through various platforms like the website design services, social media services, SEO services, blogs & PR services, whitepapers, case studies and through several other marketing products. So, we're here to help win that battle.

Let's talk about your content

And find out if you could be generating more leads online today through content marketing

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