Content Marketing

CONTENT
MARKETING
FUNDAMENTALS

eMarketing
INSTITUTE

Content Marketing: Content Marketing Fundamentals

Title: Content Marketing: Content Marketing Fundamentals
Course material - knowledge required - for certification
Copyright © 2018 eMarketing Institute

Web: www.emarketinginstitute.org

Contact us
eMarketing Institute
c/o Web Media ApS
Tove Maës Vej 7, 3.tv.
DK-2500 Valby, Copenhagen
Denmark
VAT ID: DK 3531871301
Email: support@emarketinginstitute.org

1

Introduction

1. Introduction

At this point, when we are all witnessing the overall presence of digital marketing, we can no longer neglect the importance content marketing has. It has become a fundamental part of any digital marketing strategy. It is a pillar supporting all your efforts and attempts to position your brand on the market and achieve your business goals. No longer can a business be successful and establish a relationship with the target group without some type of content involved.

It all started back in the 1990s. The internet was just kicking off, there were fewer people online. In fact, it has been estimated that there were 100,000 websites in total in January of 1996, as opposed to 1.1 billion websites we have today ([Source](#)). This was the time when even Google was still an idea and it was not even possible to imagine writing a status update or chatting with your social media followers.

Image: http://www.internetlivestats.com/total-number-of-websites/
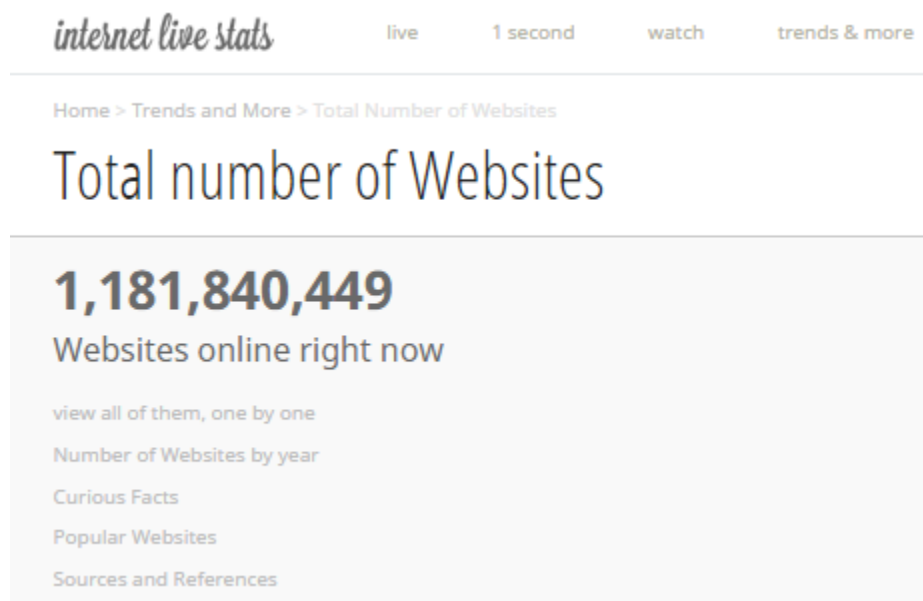
In his essay "[Content is the King](#)", back in 1996, Bill Gates explains the role of content in the modern world, and how the internet is changing the way we create, publish, distribute, and consume content. He predicts that the internet as a medium, which was then something new and different, will revolutionize the way people get information and the way they communicate.

This was only an introduction to what was to happen in the subsequent years. As the internet spread all over the planet, so did the content as one of the ways to reach online users, to

interact, attract, and sell. It started with websites presenting their business with a couple of web pages. This sort of static web presentation was then outdated, and the need to be more dynamic in communicating with the target group emerged. In the past, you could create a website and sit back, waiting for people to contact you. However, this approach is so obsolete nowadays, that in fact, it would produce zero results.

Today, it is expected from website owners to be active, to keep posting fresh information and to keep introducing new content. This is why a lot of websites have a blog. A blog is now a way to keep this dynamic approach, to be active and to make sure that new content is published regularly through this type of platform. Benefits of this approach are numerous, starting from gaining traffic, positioning for specific keywords to expanding reach through social media shares and obtaining new leads.

There is no doubt that the role of content has evolved over the years, but so have the content types and production processes. Written content has evolved with new styles taking over, but the usage of visual content is also gaining importance, especially in the last few years. The concept of storytelling was also introduced as a more elaborate content strategy.

The more content there is, the more important it is for the content to be extraordinary. It is as simple as that. There are so many websites online and so much content published each day, that it has become very difficult to make content that really stands out. To be successful at content marketing, you need to go beyond content creation and think about management and optimization as well. With sophisticated search engine and social media algorithms, as well as email spam filters, content distribution is also facing some challenges.

As the content has found its application in all parts of online marketing, developing a content marketing strategy has become an essential task and it is something that needs to be conducted very carefully with right goals in mind.

Content marketing statistics

The role of content has changed in recent years, so to understand this growing trend and how content affects online businesses in terms of decision making and strategy planning, take a look at the following content marketing statistics:

- 2 million blog posts are written every day. (MarketingProfs)
- 60% of marketers say blog content creation is their top inbound marketing priority. (HubSpot)

- 37% of marketers said visual marketing was the most important form of content for their business, second only to blogging (38%). (Social Media Examiner)

- Companies that published 16+ blog posts per month got about 4.5X more leads than companies that published 0-4 monthly posts. (HubSpot)

- The length of the average blog post is up 19%…about 1050 words. Shorties are on the decline: the percentage of posts that are 500 words or less is half what is was two years ago. Big posts are on the rise: the percentage of posts that are 2000+ words long has doubled every year. (Orbit Media)

- 41% of B2B marketers say their organization is clear on what content marketing success or effectiveness looks like; 59% are unclear or unsure. (Content Marketing Institute)

- Most marketers attribute increase in success to content creation which includes higher quality and more efficient content creation. (Content Marketing Institute)

- Email, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook are top 4 channels used by B2B business for content marketing distribution. (Content Marketing Institute)

- 83% of B2B marketers use email newsletters for content marketing. – Content Marketing Institute

- Lead generation and brand awareness, in that order, are the two most important content marketing goals of most B2B marketers. (Content Marketing Institute)

- B2B marketers cite website traffic, sales lead quality, and sales as the top 3 most important metrics. (Content Marketing Institute)

- Most B2B marketers state producing engaging content is the biggest challenge they face (60%), followed by measuring content effectiveness (57%) and producing content consistently (57%). (Content Marketing Institute)

- 72% of marketers say creating more engaging content is top priority for them. (Content Marketing Institute)

- Marketers plan to increase their use of videos (73%), visuals (71%), blogging (66%), live video (39%), and podcasting (26%), in that order. (Social Media Examiner)

- We are incredible at remembering pictures. Hear a piece of information, and three days later you'll remember 10% of it. Add a picture and you'll remember 65%. ([BrainRules](#))

- 76% of people use their Facebook feed to find interesting content. ([HubSpot](#))

- 615 million devices now use adblock. ([PageFair](#))

These statistics should provide a picture of how marketers see content and how relevant it is in their business strategies. The main conclusions we can draw from these statistics are the following:

- Companies that use content marketing have better results

- Lead generation is the most important content marketing goal

- Visual aspect boosts the performance of content

- Video and visual content will gain even more importance

- Email and social networks are the most important channels for content distribution

- Longer posts usually perform better

- Producing engaging content and producing content consistently are some of the most common challenges for marketers. Yet, these are the top priorities for most marketers because this is the road that brings success with content marketing strategy.

2

Basics of Content Marketing

2. Basics of Content Marketing

What is content?

Content is the information, the idea or the experience you publish online. It is anything that you produce and publish for the purpose of offering it to your audience. The format of the content is most commonly text, but it can also be visual, audio, or video.

Image: https://unsplash.com/photos/4m66VBr8zns

In the realm of the digital world, content should be:

- Useful
- Easy to consume
- Shareable
- Original
- Relevant
- Compelling
- Timely
- Personalized
- Authentic

- Engaging

- Educational

- Entertaining

- Insightful

- Conveying a story

- Contextual

In terms of business promotion, content is used as a way to directly connect with the target group. Each of these attributes is supposed to increase the quality of the content you present to your potential customers, and the main purpose is to encourage their interest in your business through this content.

Since the content is created with a specific purpose in mind, it has to be well-planned and carefully designed. As much as content creation involves creativity and skillfulness with transferring your thoughts and opinions, using content in content marketing is done with specific goals, and thus it is something you should think through.

What is content marketing?

Content marketing is a type of marketing focused on creation and distribution of online materials that directly or indirectly promote a brand. Direct promotion refers to the creation of promotional materials and content used for advertising purposes. This type of content is usually used in paid ads (SEM) or affiliate links (affiliate marketing). On the other hand, content marketing is frequently void of any direct promotion. The purpose of this kind of content is simply to increase interest in your products or services. This way, content marketing indirectly attracts and acquires leads and customers.

Looking at online marketing in general, it can be concluded that content marketing is a type that correlates with all other types of marketing because it essentially creates a base for them. In terms of SEO, content helps with keyword placement and website optimization. For email marketing and social media marketing, content is used to encourage interest through these two channels. The same can be said for paid advertising (SEM).

Supporting the overall importance of content marketing is the fact that most marketers will be focused on which is why they will work on producing even more content. Nonetheless, quantity does not take precedence of quality.

In terms of content marketing, quality is considered to be essential. There is so much stuff online. So much, that it is impossible for people to take in all of that content without feeling overwhelmed. This is why quality started to become more and more important. People are now quite selective of what blogs they follow, which post they are going to share on social media, which links they will click on in the email. Producing quality content is essentially going to help with achieving your business goals.

Although producing quality content is one of the things most marketers see as an obstacle, mainly because it requires more assets, both money and time invested into research and production, it has been constantly highlighted that the potential of such content is huge.

Companies that use content marketing strategy have consistently been showing better results in achieving their goals. When you implement quality standards into this strategy and make sure the content truly matches those standards, the results are going to be even better. The potential for achieving goals increases with high-quality content which is why this is an important part of a business strategy. Quality is what counts nowadays, and if you want to be really successful in content marketing and see the benefits it can bring to your business, think about creating content that stands out for its quality.

What you need to think about when creating content?

In business, content is not created randomly. It is not about writing the content you love, personally enjoy or about a viral video everyone is talking about. It is not about writing anything that comes to your mind.

Content creation includes so much more than having an idea about a certain topic. It is a planned strategy that is supposed to bring your business certain results, which means that you should think about all the aspects that could help you create content that brings you to that goal. Starting from the target audience, to search engine optimization, here are the things you need to consider.

Audience

The importance of user experience has been highlighted over and over again, and in terms of content, this means that you have to have your audience in mind when creating content. After all, you are creating content for the users primarily. Regardless the type of content, regardless the methods used for content distribution, the content you create has to resonate with your target group. This means that you have to think about the following aspects:

- Determine your target group

- Think about their possible questions, problems, dilemmas, etc.

- Be able to predict what kind of information can help in these situations

- Publish content that is relevant to your target group

- Use the language your target group can identify with

Niche

Niche in marketing refers to determining a concentrated topic that corresponds to the interests of your target group, as well as to the products you are selling. It is a subject you want to focus on with the intention to specialize in that particular subject and become a sort of an expert. By choosing your niche, you choose to focus on one narrow topic, which helps you define the road for your content marketing strategy.

Resources

The next step is determining the resources you have. The resources are needed for content marketing strategy, and they have to be planned and assigned to content creation like any other strategy.

Competitors

There is no doubt that uniqueness is an essential part of content creation, but it never hurts to check out what your competitors are going. This way you can keep up with the industry trends and standards.

SEO

In terms of SEO, content is essential. One of the major tasks of search engine optimization is particularly optimization of content. The main purpose of content optimization is to attract search engine crawlers and get the content indexed. This increases the visibility of the content and helps with increasing website ranking in the search engine results.

How to start with content marketing?

To start with content marketing, you will need a plan. Simply starting a blog and publishing content is not enough. Instead, think of content marketing as a tool to help you achieve your goals, regardless if that is increasing sales, generating new leads, etc. These goals are important because they affect the type of content you are going to create, as well as the ways you will distribute content.

Think about your target group and what kind of content they would like to read. It has to be something interesting, helpful, engaging, and relatable. It has to be a content of high quality. Start by brainstorming some ideas that first come to your mind, and then choose the ones that are most likely to bring a lot of visits, i.e. a lot of potential conversions. When using external resources, you should always use credible ones and make sure you provide a reference in a form of a link.

There are many types of content, and different types of content have different purposes. For example, "About us" page should be informative and provide details about you and your company. On the other hand, a "how-to" type of post will feature instructional text, preferably with images or videos.

What you need to have in mind all the time, regardless the type of content you decide to create, is the fact that each piece is a segment of overall content marketing strategy. Therefore, it needs to be in accordance with global goals, and it has to follow the approach your company is taking.

In terms of content marketing, branding is another aspect you should think about. Branding represents the process of creating a unique name and image for a product. This is mainly used in advertising campaigns, to create a sort of differentiated presence on the market and to make a product stand out from its competitors. When it comes to content marketing, content enables you to develop a branding strategy. It allows you to tell a story about your brand and create influence through high-quality content.

Finally, after successful content creation comes content distribution as a way to spread the influence of that content and eventually enable it to achieve its purpose, regardless if that is gaining conversions, leads, visits, etc. There are many different ways to distribute content, which will be explained in a separate chapter, but what is essential to think about in relation to content distribution is the following:

- Data from the previous campaigns

Take a look at the data from the previous campaigns to find out which distribution channels provided the best results. When it comes to the best results, make sure you analyze the performance and how each channel affected your business. For example, if you notice a large number of visits from Facebook, but hardly any conversion, maybe this social network is not the way to go in your case. On the other hand, if you notice that email campaigns produced great results in the past, make sure you include this channel when planning content distribution for the future campaigns.

- Current trends

Everyone interested in promoting their business online has to keep up with current trends. Things on the internet change all the time. Some social networks are growing in popularity, some are introducing new features, search engine algorithms are updated, etc. Since all of these, and many other factors affect content distribution, you need to keep up with the current situation and keep an eye on trends that are being introduced because these trends can affect your content marketing strategy.

3

Types of Content

3. Types of Content

It is possible to differentiate between three types of content, and each of those has specific characteristics that make it suitable for different strategies and distribution channels.

Written content

The type of content you will see the most online is the written content. It is information shared in a written form, most commonly in a form of articles or blog posts. The major advantage written content has over the other types of content is that is can be "seen" by the search engines. This means that the search engines can read and understand the text, which allows them to index such content and show it in the search results. Since every website has a goal to be positioned high in the search engine results pages, it is only natural to use written content to do so.

Having in mind the role of search engine crawlers, you use content to present your website in such a way that it becomes associated with relevant search terms, leading to relevant visits. When you design content, you have to think about it in SEO terms, but you also have to consider your audience. These are the two aspects that affect content creation the most. Content optimization for search engines is important, but not at the cost of disrupting the user experience.

Marketing Land   CMO   SOCIAL   SEM   SEO   MOBILE   ANALYTICS   DISPLAY   RETAIL   MARTECH   MORE
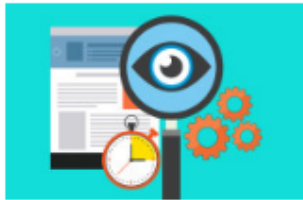
Compare 13 leading SEO software platform vendors

With hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, and even millions of pages, sites and keywords to manage and optimize, enterprise SEO has become...

Digital Marketing Depot | Apr 25, 2017 at 4:03 pm ET

5 must-dos for SEO beginners

If you're new to SEO, or if it isn't your primary focus, you might be neglecting tactics that will really move the needle. Contributor Jordan...

Jordan Kasteler | Apr 24, 2017 at 1:30 pm ET
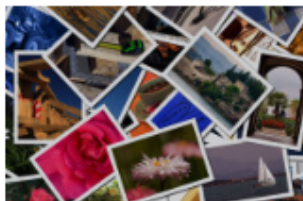
Images: Your easiest page speed win

Page speed is important for both rankings and user experience, yet columnist Kristine Schachinger notes that many companies are missing an easy...

Kristine Schachinger | Apr 24, 2017 at 1:01 pm ET

SEO & intelligent content: Discovery, connection and improved performance

Jim Yu explains how search data can be used to better understand your customers, allowing you to create targeted, "intelligent" content that...

Jim Yu | Apr 21, 2017 at 1:30 pm ET

Image: http://marketingland.com/library/channel/seo

There are some general guidelines you need to have in mind when it comes to writing content:

- Write for the people

The content you are writing should primarily be written for the people who are going to read that content. With this in mind, make sure the text is relevant, consistent, and readable. Avoid any interruptions, digressions, or repeated statements. Use formatting options to visually present the text in a more coherent way.

- Write for the search engines

Written content is generally written for the readers, but you have to think about search engines as well. This particularly refers to the website and blog content, where you essentially expect search engines to crawl your website and index the content. You will find more about writing for SEO in the chapter on content optimization.

- Stay focused

Each piece of content should have a specific topic and once you choose it, stay focused on it. Your website and blog should have its own niche, a topic you deal with primarily, but each post is a separate unit which should be all about the specific topic, which is actually a highly focused segment within that broad topic we call niche.

- Word count should not be set in stone

Even though the statistics show that there is a trend for articles to be 1000 word long or more, there is no magical number you should aim for. Just because some statistics show a higher level of engagement on average when it comes to 1000+ words articles, this is not a general rule. The message is the most important. If the message is short and concise, there is no point in trying to make it longer using unnecessary words just to fit the norm.

Having explained the concept of written content, it is possible to differentiate between several types of written content. Each has its own characteristics and they are used in different situations.

Website content

The first content you will be writing when setting up a website is the entire website content, not including a blog. This content is divided into several pages or sections, each focused on one particular segment such as the homepage, about us page, pricing, contact page, product description page, etc. The main characteristic of this type of content is the fact that it is informative. Through this content, you provide information about who you are and what kind of products or services you offer. You also need practical information such as contact data.

Blog content

A blog is a place where you publish regular updates, news, and articles related to your niche. It is helpful in terms of SEO, and it also helps with increasing traffic and engagement. Content formatting is especially important with blogging because it highlights different parts of the text, it makes it reader friendly, as well as SEO friendly. A blog post may or may not have visual elements, such as images or videos, added.

Image: https://yoast.com/seo-blog/

Ebook

To a certain extent, an ebook is similar to a blog post. It has a topic that relates to your visitors, it is supposed to increase engagement and visits, and formatting is also a necessary part of a good ebook. Unlike a blog post, an ebook is usually not published on your blog, but instead, it is a file that can be downloaded from your website or blog. As such, an ebook has a different layout and design. When it comes to word count, again, there are no specific guidelines. Your ebook can be as short or as long as you want and need it to be. Its main purpose is to provide useful information to the readers and inspire interest in your company. Ebooks are also a great material for lead generation.

Visual content

According to the statistics, visual content has better performance than any other type of content. Visual content attracts the visitors' attention more quickly, and the information presented in such a way is likely to linger more in people's minds than when presented in a form of a text. Not only that, but the visual content is also more likely to be shared on social media, thus increasing both engagement and traffic to the website or blog.

Having in mind the better performance of the visual content, it is obvious why different types of this content are constantly being used when creating content. In fact, visuals are often used together with the text. This way they serve as attention grabbers, plus they illustrate the main idea which is presented in the article.

Several types of visual content are commonly used:

Images

Images are most commonly used pieces of visual content. Content creators can use their own photos, they can purchase or download free images, or they can use screenshots of other websites or applications.

When using images, you should make sure:

- You have the permission to use the image
- Link to the external image source if necessary
- The image is related to the content on the page
- The image is appropriate for your audience
- You add your own logo/company name if the image is yours (Optional)

When choosing an image or several images for the content, think about the effect the image will create. How will the readers feel when seeing the article for the first time? Will they be intrigued by the image? Will they like it and thus continue reading the text? Understanding your audience in such a way helps you choose the most effective images.

Website homepage with images and graphics: https://www.emarketinginstitute.org/

Graphics

Graphics are image designs which usually feature pictorial representation of information, in a form of charts, text, symbols, etc. They sometimes combine all these forms. In content marketing, graphics are usually created to be functional, which means they have sections and data presented deliberately in such a way to highlight certain aspects. When creating a graphic, there is a clear goal in mind, something you want to achieve with it. You could make a poster to announce an event, where you will include the date and place of the event. You might want to present the data from your latest research, in which case a chart or a pie chart would be an element included in the graphic.

When designing a graphic, think about:

- The goal you want to achieve

- The main information you want to include

- The way you will present the concept

- Adding elements such as a photo, a text, or illustrations

28

- Adding your own logo/company name (Optional)

Infographic

Infographic, or information graphic, is a visual representation of data. This makes it a bit similar to graphics, but the main distinction is that an infographic represents a collection of data. Its main purpose is to present the data or the information in a clear, easy-to-spot way. This way you basically summarize information that would otherwise be presented in a form of a text but would receive far less engagement than when using graphic elements.

Infographics visualize information, statistics, maps, time frames, hierarchies, etc. They engage the readers with the visual representation and make a bundle of data and numbers seem more coherent and easy to compare with one another. Things to have in mind when creating an infographic:

- Choose colors, fonts, and illustrations that are clear and easily visible
- You could add a title at the top of the infographic
- If you have data that could be divided into segments, make sure you divide the infographic in such a way
- If you use the data provided by external resources, add the list of resources used at the bottom of the infographic
- Add your own logo/company name

Infographics demand the most time to create in comparison to other types of visual content, but, as the statistics suggest, they are more likely to lead to the greatest level of engagement and shares, which is why it is worth it to think about using them in content marketing.

Audio and video content

Audio and video content is often considered to be the most difficult type of content to make. Besides the fact that it demands time to think about the concept and the ways to present it, it also requires skill and time for recording and editing. This usually means that you will also need software for editing sound or video, as well as the know-how to use it. This is the main reason why many companies and businesses are skeptical about using this type of content, and frequently avoid it.

However, you should have in mind that this type of content is very popular on the internet, especially on the social networks. It is frequently shared and it generates a lot of clicks and likes. We will highlight three types of audio and video content you could consider in your content marketing strategy.

Podcast

A podcast is a form of an audio broadcast which is published online. Podcasts are much like radio shows, but instead of music, they feature some sort of narrative content.

The Marie Forleo Podcast
By Marie Forleo: Teacher, Writer, Entrepreneur, Philanthropist, Lifelong Learner
To listen to an audio podcast, mouse over the title and click Play. Open iTunes to download and subscribe to podcasts.

View in iTunes

Free
Category: Self-Help
Language: English

Customer Ratings
★★★★★ 217 Ratings

Links
Podcast Website
Report a Concern

Description
Named by Oprah as a thought leader for the next generation and one of Inc.'s 500 fastest growing companies, Marie Forleo's goal is to help you become the person you most want to be. In this show, Marie and her guests share actionable strategies for greater happiness, success, motivation, creativity, productivity, love, health, contribution and fulfillment — often with a lot of laughs. From business, marketing and career advice, to tackling failure, disappointment and fear, to philanthropy and doing our part to make the world a more loving, just and equitable place — we cover it all. Get inspired, grow stronger, more confident and create a business and life you genuinely love. Have a question or topic you'd like to see covered on the show? Go to marieforleo.com/marietv.

	Name	Description	Released	Price	
1	34 – The World's Most Un...	Sometimes we get so c...	4/21/2017	Free	View in iTunes ▸
2	33 – This Question Has th...	None of us want to live...	4/18/2017	Free	View in iTunes ▸
3	32 – Fear of Failure: Why G...	Fear of failure can be to...	4/14/2017	Free	View in iTunes ▸
4	31 –Kelly Brogan on Natur...	Some of the everyday tr...	4/11/2017	Free	View in iTunes ▸
5	30 – How To Do It All: My ...	If you're struggling to '...	4/7/2017	Free	View in iTunes ▸
6	29 – 2 Habits That Build T...	Nothing physical lasts f...	4/4/2017	Free	View in iTunes ▸
7	28 – Feel Like You Should ...	Ever feel so far behind i...	3/31/2017	Free	View in iTunes ▸
8	27 – Grace Bonney on Ov...	So often women beat th...	3/28/2017	Free	View in iTunes ▸
9	26 – Nobody Needs What ...	Surprise! Nobody wants...	3/24/2017	Free	View in iTunes ▸
10	25 – How to Stop Selling Y...	So many new entrepren...	3/21/2017	Free	View in iTunes ▸
11	24 – How To Pursue All Yo...	Can you keep switching...	3/17/2017	Free	View in iTunes ▸
12	23 – Dream Big: 5 Researc...	Do you tend to dream b...	3/14/2017	Free	View in iTunes ▸

Image: https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-marie-forleo-podcast/id1199977889?mt=2

The content featured in a podcast can be:

- A narrative about a certain topic

- Question and answer session

- A chat between experts in a certain field or industry leaders

- Review of a product

- An interview

- A course or a lesson

Regardless the topic, podcasts are a perfect way to distribute information online in a form other than written text. This form is somewhat easier for people to focus on because they can access it on the go, without the need to read and scroll through the text on the mobile devices. Instead, they put on their headphones, hit that play button and they are in.

Online users subscribe to the podcasts the same way they subscribe to a blog, which means they will get notified when a new podcast is live. Podcast recordings are available all the time,

which is perfect for people who want to listen to them when they have enough time, rather than aiming for a specific time.

Video

Just like images, videos are great for visual presentation of content, great for social media engagement, as well as for video ads. They often feature music or audio narrative along the visual content, making this type of content quite catchy and interesting to watch. Different types of videos, including short clips, vlogs, commercial videos, tutorials, and review videos, provide a range of different options for businesses to discover and use this medium for the purpose of promotion. The development of technology, with mobile devices featuring a camera, and popularity of platforms for sharing videos such as YouTube, enabled this expansion of the video content,so more and more businesses are considering using videos.

When it comes to the production of such content, it requires more skills and more time. Sometimes it also requires more time for planning and preparing everything. This is why, despite the fact that it is quite effective and successful at bringing results, a video is still one of the least used types of content.

Live chat

This is a form of video content that has been popularized recently, as live streaming became one of the features introduced by many social networks, including YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, etc. The main distinction of this type of video is that it usually requires less of preparation than a regular video. It is sort of chatty, improvised on-the-spot. It is also quite flexible because you can start a live chat from anywhere at any moment. Live chat is also a bit more interactive type of video because comments are updated in real time, meaning the person broadcasting the video can actually see and respond to the comments from the community.

Which type of content to choose?

The type of content you are going to choose for your website depends on a lot of things. First of all, you will need to assess the budget. For example, recording videos demands more of an investment, due to equipment needed and hiring someone for editing if you do not have the skill to do it.

You also need to think about the time. You should realistically plan content creation. There is no point in planning to publish a new article each day if you do not have the time to write it nor do you have enough of a budget for this many articles.

Then think about your audience. Will they really benefit from one new article a day? Or perhaps they might find a comprehensive weekly post more worthy? You should also analyze the way your audience responds to different types of posts. If posts with images have higher engagement level, make sure you focus on such posts. Even though videos have a great engagement in general, perhaps it is not the case with your business. And finally, it all comes to your business. Some types of products and services are better presented with a video, while images are quite effective for other types.

The best way to start is going for written content first. It really is a starting point, because you will need content when building your website anyway. You could also start with blogging before you decide to implement other types of content in your marketing strategy. Make sure you

always analyze the performance of each type of post and try to spot a general rule about what works best for your business.

Types of blog posts

Since blogging is predominant in content creation, we will mention a couple of blog post types you could publish on your blog.

Image: https://wordpress.com/learn-more/?v=blog
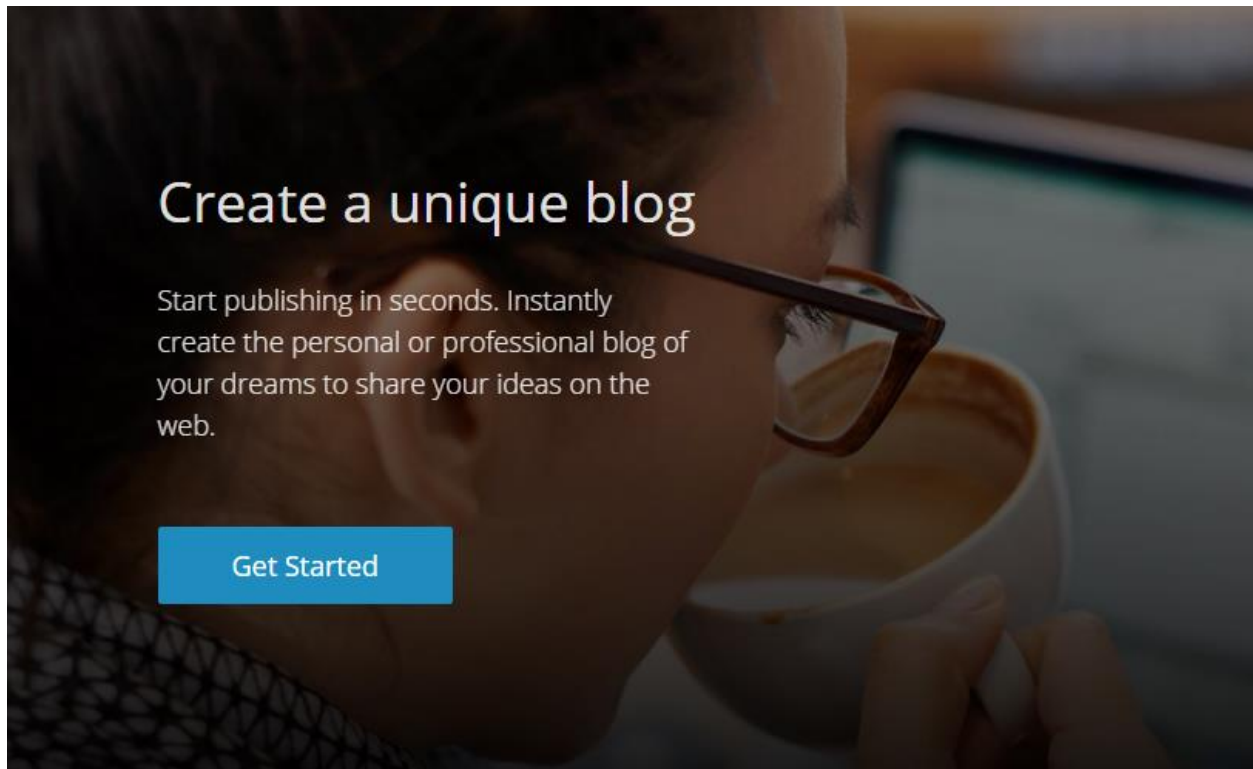
News post

In this post, you deal with the current news and trends, latest updates and events. It is a more dynamic type of post, but the content is time sensitive. For example, the news about the latest search algorithm update is certainly something helpful you would share in the news section, but it also becomes outdated quickly, as a new update is released after a couple of weeks. Despite this fact, news posts are very popular because they provide current information about the topic and they enable readers to keep up with the current trends.

How-to post

This is a type of an instructional post and its main purpose is to provide information and instruction about something, such as how to use a product, how to find a certain option in

software, etc. With this post, you basically tell readers how to do something, thus these posts are very useful. The language should be quite practical and easy to understand. Readers love these posts, especially if you provide visuals to illustrate certain aspects because you basically provide a solution to their problem. They get instructions they need. In terms of SEO, these posts are also great because you use the keywords naturally in the text.

Informative post

This post is somewhere in-between a news post and a how-to post. In this case, you choose a topic and provide information about it. It could be a current trend, so the post would be close to the news type of post, or it could feature instructions along with an explanation, in which case this would be closer to how-to post. In essence, an informative post provides more information about the topic. When choosing the topic, make sure it is closely related to your business and that it is something your audience will truly find useful. It is also good to include keywords in such a post, especially in the title.

Review

Review posts are also highly-searched posts because of practical information they provide. They are especially popular among potential buyers because they provide details about the products, opinions, experiences, etc. Therefore, this type of post has great power on the mind of consumers, especially if your company gets great reviews from authoritative blogs. Most commonly, reviews are in a form of a blog post, but there is a growing trend of creating video content for such purpose.

Resources/Links

As the name suggests it, a link post contains links to other resources. The idea with this type of blog post is to choose a topic, one that is relevant to your target group, and then find quality resources from which your audience will benefit. Besides a link, it is always good to provide a comment or an explanation about why you have chosen to link to that particular resource.

List

This is a very popular type of post, mainly because it is practical and its structure is so easy to follow and skim through. Lists are suitable for many different businesses. Sometimes they might overlap with links post, for example, if your topic is top 5 marketing blogs. This does not necessarily have to be the case because you can have a topic such as 5 ways to improve your email marketing campaign, where you would share your own tips and insights on this topic.

Podcast/Video notes

The main reason why podcast transcripts or video notes are recommended is because of SEO. Search engine crawlers cannot index content in audio or video format, which means you should provide a transcript for this kind of content in a form of a blog post. Occasionally, people might also find it helpful to have a transcript available, especially when quoting you.

Interview

Interviews are a type of collaborative posts where you provide questions for a person or several people about the topic that is relevant to your blog. While this might be seen as a type of post for audio and video content, this is not always the case because there are lots of interviews in a form of a written article. In this case, it is even easier to handle everything because you can communicate through email and you do not have to organize a recording session at all. An interview is a great opportunity to get an opinionated post from experts, industry leaders and persons who are considered an authority by your target group. The reach of these posts also might be greater due to the popularity of the people you are interviewing and the fact that they will probably share the post themselves.

Case studies

If you decide to dig deeper into a particular topic and present it in great details, a case study is a type of post you should go for. When it comes to case studies, they are likely to be conducted by industry leaders and those who have access to some sort of data about a certain topic. In this sense, they might seem a bit too complex for small-sized companies. The good thing about the case studies is precisely their complexness and large scale of data which is supposed to be used for drawing conclusions and analyzing behavior. This means that such post will naturally earn a lot of links.

Guest post

This is another post involving collaboration. The idea is to have a guest writing for your blog. Preferably, this guest should be familiar and respectable among your target group. It is also helpful if the guest blogger is an expert in the particular topic because this way you get a valuable piece of information shared on your blog. The main cause for this collaboration could be mutual promotion or payment. In both cases, it is essential that the guest blogger and the blog featuring the guest post have similar or even the same target group, to make this promotional activity successful.

These are the most common and the most popular types of posts. There are other groups as well, but what you will notice is that a lot of them overlap. For example, you will see a guest

post which features a list, making it a list post as well. An informative post can also feature some how-to tips, while case studies might also include a video with video notes.

It is completely natural for the posts to overlap and merge into new styles, but what we can conclude about successful content creation is:

- Content creation demands time
- Planning is a way to ensure high-performing content
- Content needs to be up-to-date
- Content should be relevant to your target group
- It is good to combine types of content to provide diversity

4

Content Creation

4. Content Creation

Content creation is a process that starts with an idea and ends with a published piece of content, regardless if that is written, visual, audio or video content. When you create content, you have several options.

Large businesses usually have a special department, usually within marketing sector, which will be in charge of content creation as a part of content marketing strategy. Small-sized companies can hire a person to join the team with the main task being content marketing or one of the existing team members can also take up creating content. Occasionally, some business owners decide to hire content creators to work on a specific content creation project rather than being involved in the entire process of content marketing.

Regardless if you are creating content yourself or you provide instructions for someone to do it for you, it is essential to understand the process of content creation and how it goes from one phase to another.

Think about the goals

Content marketing helps you with improving business. That is a sort of the ultimate goal you will have but it is too vague. With such a goal, you will have a hard time conducting and evaluating the strategy. To make this content marketing strategy a success you need to determine more concrete goals.

Some of those goals can be:

- Increase sales
- Generate more leads
- Get more social media followers
- Improve the reputation
- Work on branding
- Get more visits

Image: https://unsplash.com/photos/k0okLYIjoxo

When you determine concrete goals, try adding some sort of a quantifier, to make them quantifiable and comparable. You can either use specific numbers (generate 1000 more leads) or percentages (increase visits by 15%). Quantifiable goals are great for reporting and analyzing the strategy and comparing the results with the previous campaigns. In all, this will immensely improve your business and the way you organize not only content marketing, but the entire online marketing.

Besides reporting and analysis, which actually comes in the end, goals are also crucial in the beginning. They help you with defining which kind of content you will create. For example, if you want to increase leads, an ebook would be a great choice. This way you give an ebook for free in exchange for an email, while at the same time you grow your mailing list. On the other hand, if you want to boost social media performance, you could benefit from images and graphics.

Choose a topic

The second step in the process of content creation is choosing a topic. Through planning and thinking about goals you have probably chosen the type of content and now you need the topic. The topic does not refer to the actual title, it is simply a subject you want to explore in that specific piece of content, regardless if that is a video, a blog article or a graphic. In this regard, you want to focus on three main things.

Relevance

The topic should be relevant to your business and to your website or blog. You want to attract people who are interested in your business. It does not matter if those are new subscribers, social media followers or website visitors. This means that you always have to consider your target group and choose a kind of topic that will be relevant to them.

Uniqueness

With the amount of content nowadays, it seems impossible to be unique and original. Despite that, you should have in mind that "*in 2016, there were 15% of new daily search queries that Google has never encountered before*" ([Source](#)). Even if you decide to go for a topic that someone has already posted about, you can make it unique by implementing your distinctive style.

Necessity

The topic should be something your audience needs. Helpful content that provides a solution to a problem and answers a question has proven as high-performing content, which performs best. It brings most visits, it helps with positioning your website in the search engines, and it also helps you attract the people interested in that kind of a topic.

Brainstorm the ideas

When you think about the topic, a lot of ideas come to your mind. The way your mind works, it brings a bunch of terms and phrases related to the topic, but they are all simply cluttered without any structure. This is a starting point. Put down all the ideas that you have. For example, think about chapters of the ebook, or paragraphs of the article. Write the words you associate with these concepts. Write essential phrases or terms you would want to use.

When you have everything, it is time to get organized. Try to group similar ideas and concepts. Define sections of content and categorize them. The goal here is to make these ideas

structured. This way you get a coherent structure to follow when you start with the content presentation.

The purpose of the brainstorming is to capture all of your best ideas. You might want to do the process again to get even more ideas. At this point, there is no need to start with content presentation immediately. Instead, the focus is to prepare the concept which will be a basic structure for adding more materials and developing the topic in details.

Content presentation

Up to this, this was a phase of preparation and now it is time for the actual content creation. This way, you present the content and this presentation depends on the type of content you choose.

Writing process

When you have the idea and concept developed, the next part is the actual process of writing. This process can involve one or several people, and this depends on both your business and the

complexity of the project. Essentially, we can differentiate three types of writing roles people can take in the writing process.

Writer

This is the person who writes the content. In a company, it can be one member of online marketing team or it can be a contracted writer for the project in question. In small-sized companies, sometimes the owners or other team members can write content.

Ghost writer

Another situation with the writing is hiring someone else to write the content instead of you. The thing with the ghost writing is that the content is not attributed to the actual content writer, as per mutual agreement. Instead, a different person can be presented as a writer (one of the team members, for example) or the content can be posted without any author reference. A ghost writer most commonly is not a member of the team, but a writer hired for a specific project.

Guest writer

Guest writer is a hired writer who has his or her own blog and has gained a reputation online as a writer. Hiring a guest writer is a great opportunity to expand your reach and work on mutual promotion. Although additional promotion is one of the reasons for hiring a guest writer, this is also done when you want highly targeted content and a topic covered by an expert in this field. In this case, a guest writer is not a member of your team, but he or she is attributed as the author of the content.

Image: https://unsplash.com/photos/505eectW54k

Visual and audio/video content

With visual content, things are a bit more complex. The process of preparation and final editing is similar for all types of content, including written content, with different ways of presentations for each. There is a specific group of tasks that are involved in the process and one or several people can be responsible for those tasks.

Writing

Some types of visual content have written content, such as the case with some types of podcasts, for example. This kind of audio presentation should be prepared in advance in a written form first. This task comes first, after the preparation phase but before the creation of visual/audio content.

Designing

The next part is designing. If we talk about images and graphics, this is the main part of content creation. Besides hiring the person who designs the content, it is necessary to use design tools for this purpose. During this process, it is very important to have the main idea in mind, as well

as the goals of the content creation and the company reputation. The final product should match your company vision and the way you are planning to present your brand online through this visual content.

Recording

With audio and video content, the next phase will be presenting the material and recording it. The development of technology has enabled easy recording audio and video content. It is much less complex to do it than it used to be. Pretty much any smartphone can be used for this purpose, but for the professional content creation, it is recommended to use the adequate equipment. During the recording, it is very important to think about the way you are presenting the content. The engaging and interesting presentation is just as important as the quality of the content being shared this way.
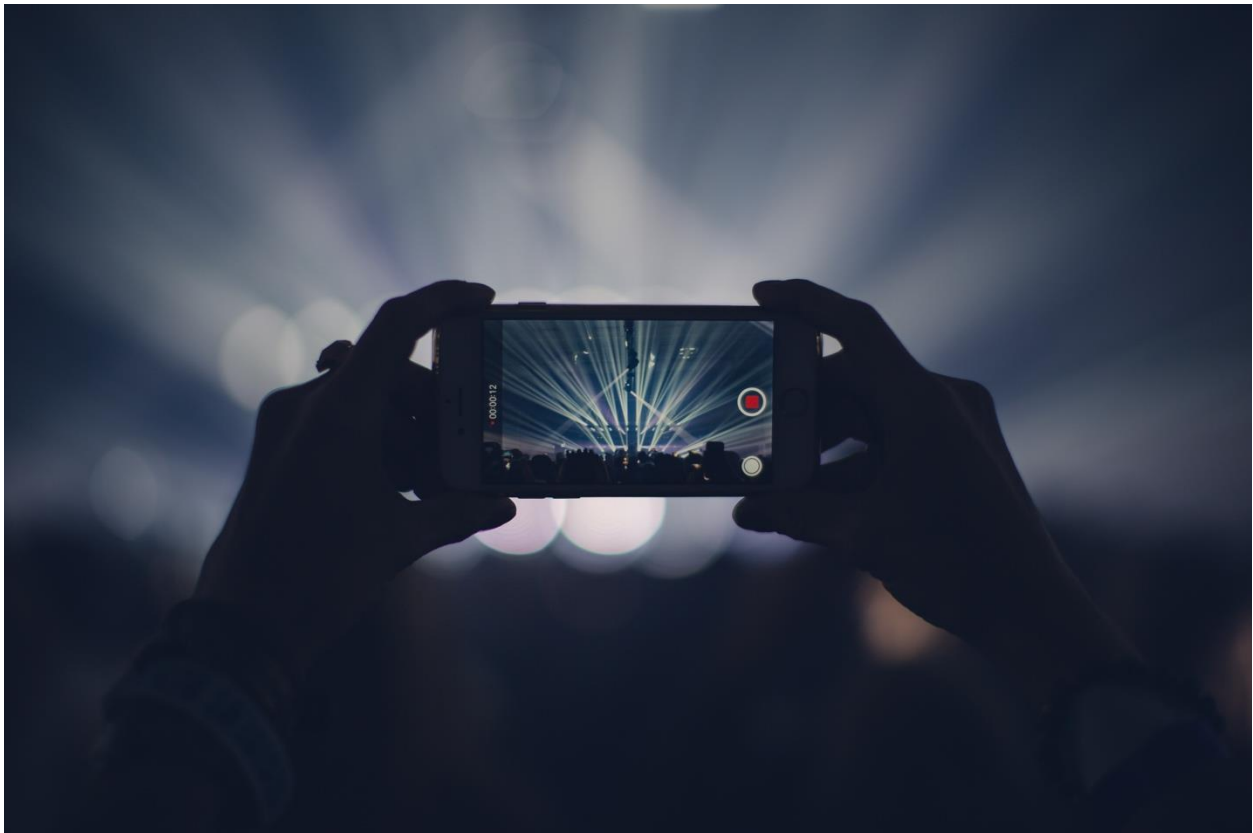
Image: https://unsplash.com/photos/b_xciWkK8Pc

Editing and proofreading

This is the last stage that precedes the publishing of the content. During this phase, the goal is to check the content material that has been created. This part is far from redundant. On the contrary, editing and proofreading, especially when it comes to written material may take the

same, if not even more time than the actual content creation. Through this process of editing and proofreading, you make sure that the material is perfectly shaped according to your vision, without any errors in accuracy, grammar, spelling, video editing, etc.

Publishing

In the end, you get to publish the final product. Once you are perfectly happy with the way it turned out, you are ready to present the content to the internet users. When it comes to publishing, the platform you are going to use depends on the type of content. If it is a blog article, you will probably publish it on your own blog or perhaps on another blog where you are presented as a guest author. If the video is the content in question, you also have several options. You could host it on your server, or you could use a more popular option and publish the video on a video hosting platform such as YouTube.

Essentially, it is always best to publish on your own platform, because this way you have access to the servers and you can make sure that the content is really there, without the risk of being removed. However, the main benefit of hosting your video on YouTube, for example, is the fact that you are likely to reach more people this way due to a social character of this platform.

These phases make the entire process more organized and coherent, which is very important if you want to create high-performing content. As you go through each phase, you get to focus on the specific task while keep thinking about the goals you wish to achieve with this content.

5

Content Optimization

5. Content Optimization

Even if you are new to online marketing, you must have already heard about optimization. The term itself means making something better, improving something based on certain standards. In terms of online marketing, this word is most commonly used in the phrase search engine optimization (SEO).

What is SEO?

SEO (search engine optimization) is the process of optimizing a website having in mind the search engine crawlers. Crawlers are used by the search engines to find and index new content on the internet. Unless the website content is indexed by these crawlers, it cannot be shown in the search results, which means no one can find it this way.

Image: https://pixabay.com/en/search-engine-optimization-seo-1359432/
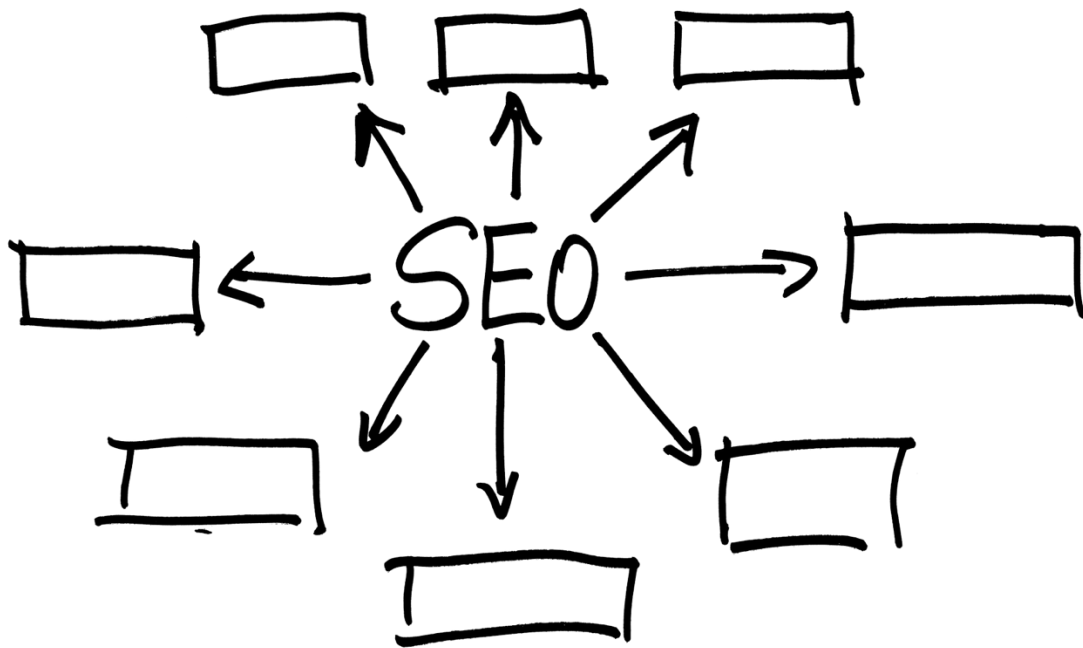
Optimization is divided into off-site and on-site optimization. This division is based on the place where the search engine optimization is taking place. Off-site optimization refers to using

external factors such as link building to improve ranking in the SERP. On-site search engine optimization is the process of optimizing content and other elements on the actual website for the purpose of enabling crawlers to find and index the website easily. This refers to the improvement of many elements of the website that affect website positioning, but one of the main things to consider is the optimization of content.

Content optimization

When it comes to content optimization, you want to focus on how to improve the performance of the content by following suggested practices and guidelines. Through the content on the website, you directly communicate with the search engine crawlers, "telling" them what the content, and ultimately the website, is all about. If you optimize content properly, the crawlers will be able to index such content and associate it with the right keywords. This way, when a relevant term is searched in the search engine, your website will be shown as one of the results.

Since being ranked at the top of SERP guarantees most clicks, this would be your goal, which you will try to achieve through optimizing content on your website.

Keywords

The first element of content optimization is keywords. A keyword is a word or a group of words you want to associate with the content on your website. The keywords should be relevant to the topic of your website and to your business. This way, when a search is done involving this word or this particular phrase, your website will be found relevant and thus it will appear among the results.

Obviously, it is essential to use only those keywords that are truly relevant to you, because otherwise, you will end up with no results. If the website is associated with wrong, irrelevant keyword, this will attract irrelevant traffic and you will not be able to convert those visitors. This will also result in a high bounce rate, which will indicate the search engines that the content is irrelevant and/or of poor quality. Eventually, this will result in losing ranking in the search engine result pages.

The keywords are used naturally as part of the content. It is also recommended to use the synonyms and the synonymous expressions. What is not recommended is to use too many keywords. This is where keyword density appears, as a metric to help you stay on the safe side.

Keyword density

Keyword density is the percentage of times a certain keyword is used on a page when compared to the total number of words on that page. Since keywords are indicators to the search engines what the page is all about, it might seem like a good idea to use a lot of keywords, but this is why keyword density is such an important metric. Search engines are marking as spam the content where the keywords are used excessively. This means that using too many keywords would actually cause you more harm than good.

There are no official guidelines on what percentage would be a recommended keyword density, but most SEO experts agree that it should be between 1 and 3 percent.

Use the following formula to calculate keyword density:

*(Number of times a keyword is used / Total number of words in the text) * 100*

For example, if a keyword appears 12 times in the article that has 1000 words, the percentage would be calculated like this:

*(12/1000)*100*

This equals to 1.2% keyword density.

Headings

When search engine crawlers find content on the internet, they need to understand what this content is about. Besides the keywords, they also use so-called tags. Tags are the options to highlight certain parts of the text. Content optimization includes using these options to practically tell search engines which parts of the text are the most important ones. The most commonly used option for this purpose is heading.

Heading or header tag is a part of the HTML code that distinguishes parts of the text. It starts with the h1 tag as the most important one. This tag is used for the page title and the crawlers see it as the most relevant phrase to the page content. It is recommended that the h1 tag contains a keyword or a keyword phrase, preferably in the beginning or as far left as possible. Next, comes h2 tag, as another highlighted piece of text, which is usually used for subheadings. If these subheadings have additional divisions, h3 tag is used, and so on. Again, the keyword usage is recommended, but it is always important for the text to be natural and not to disrupt the reading experience.
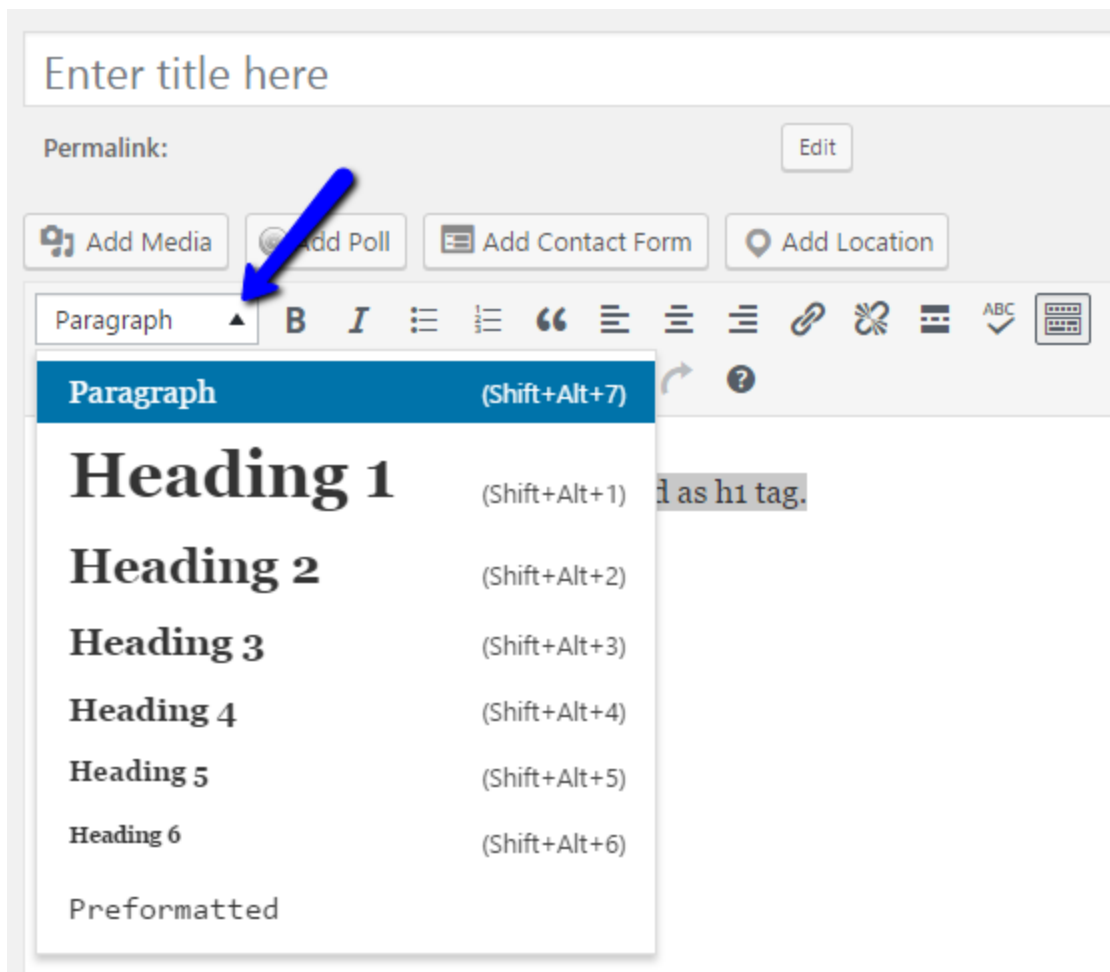
When it comes to the readers, headings are a good way to visually organize the text. They allow people to quickly skim through the text before reading it. This way they can either swiftly find the specific information they are looking for, or they could skim the text to determine if they would like to read it. In both situations, your website benefits as it essentially makes finding information and understanding the text easier.

The title tag is usually automatically marked as h1 tag. To use other tags in the text, mark the phrase and then use the text editor options.

Bold and Italic

Apart from heading tags, which are seen as more important parts of the text, there are two additional tags that are frequently used for highlighting the parts of the text. Those are bold and italic. They are seen as less important than heading tag by the search engines, but they are still considered to have some value as they differentiate from the rest of the text. Like heading tags, bold and italic options help with improving the user experience.

The title tag is usually automatically marked as h1 tag.
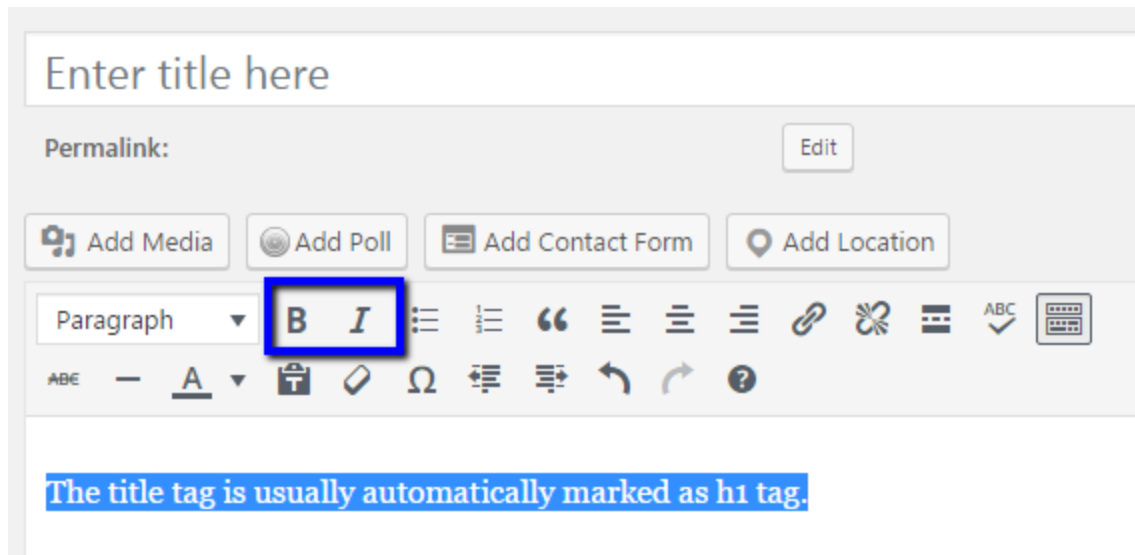
Image/Video optimization

Up until this point, it was all about the text optimization. When it comes to visual content, things are a bit more complex. For starters, the search engine crawlers cannot see the visual content and thus they are not able to index it properly without good optimization. This means that when a search engine crawler finds a content that is in a form of an image or a video, the crawler cannot understand what that image or video says. Obviously, this could signify that a great portion of content would be left unsearchable due to inability to index it. Having in mind the overall presence of the visual content nowadays, this had to be prevented.

In order to make images and videos visible, you have to provide some piece of text for the search engines to understand what these visuals are about. You should always have in mind that the search engines crawlers are unable to read the text from the image (yet), nor can they hear the recording from the audio/video. This means that the only data the search engine crawlers will get about these types of content are provided through the following optimization methods.

Image optimization

- Image file name

This is a commonly neglected part of image optimization, but the file name does matter. The image file name is the name of the uploaded image. An image filename **workplace.jpg** is recommended, while **IMG00045.jpg** is not.

- Image file location

Image location may affect SEO, which is why it is recommended to pay attention when creating folders in the back-end of your website. You should not use one folder, for example, named "Images" for all the images, but take the time to organize them in separate folders based on different categories.

- Image size

Loading time is a very important part of SEO, and the images are precisely the element that has a huge impact on the loading time of a website. Even if you display small image size on the website, but the actual image file size is large, this will still have a negative influence on loading time. You need to reduce image size while keeping the quality. You can do this with lots of online tools and website plugins, but you can also start with Photoshop.

One way to resize the image is to go to *"Image size",* click on *"Resample Image"* and then choose the option *"Bicubic Sharper (best for reduction)"* from the drop-down menu.
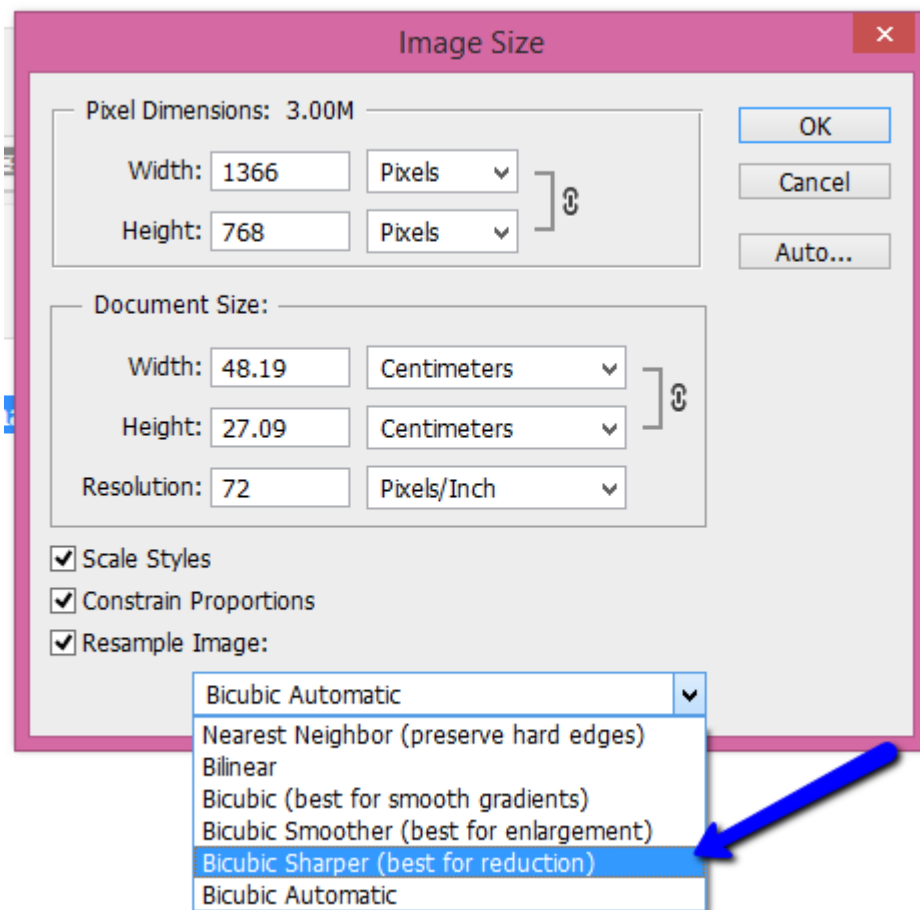
If you would like to reduce the image size without altering the image dimensions, here is another option. Choose the option *"Save for web"*in Photoshop and save in .png format. It helps with keeping the image quality.
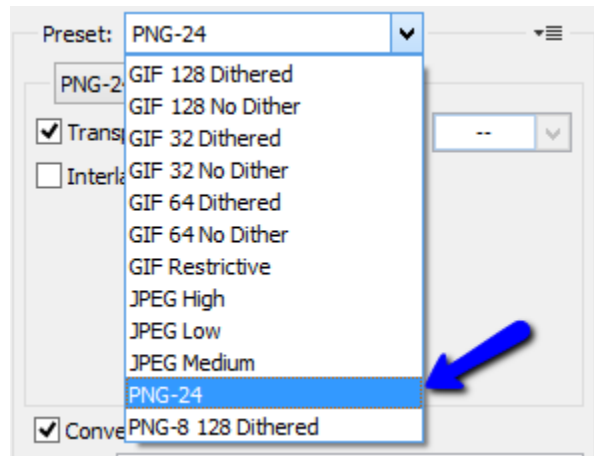
- Image captions

This is the text displayed inside the article, visible by both readers and search engines. Captions are usually placed above or below the image and they basically describe the image. This is not an important element, so add captions only when appropriate for the context of the article.

- Alt text

Alt text or alternative text is the text that is displayed when the image cannot be loaded and shown to the reader for some reason. This way the crucial information presented in the picture is still shown to the readers in a form of a text. In terms of SEO, alt text helps search engine crawlers to understand what the image is about and how to index it properly. This is especially important if the image features the text because search engines have no way of seeing this text. Therefore, make sure you use relevant keywords when providing alt text to describe the image. To add the alt text, click on the image options and provide the text in the "Alternative text" field.

Video optimization

- Video title

Video title matters a lot because it essentially tells both search engines and online visitors what the video is about. To make sure you maximize the SEO potential of the video, use keywords in the title.

- Video description

The same is applied to the video description. Provide a bit of context to the video and make sure you take advantage of using the keywords in the description.

Image: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrgcaRaOhEw

- Video transcript

Video transcript is often provided when sharing the video on a blog. In case you choose to do this, you will feature a video at the top of the article and then paste the transcript below. It is mostly helpful with SEO because the search engines can index this text content. In terms of online visitors, the transcript is helpful when they are unable to play the video (due to a limited internet access, for example) and it is a great material for those interested in quoting the parts of the text.

- Hosting a video

Benefits of hosting a video on social sharing platforms are huge, especially on YouTube, which is the second largest search engine. It is also owned by Google, so some marketers believe that it may have higher relevance when it comes to Google searches. Even if you prefer to host the

video on your own website, make sure you provide a preview or a teaser and post it on YouTube. In this case, you would also need to link to your own website where the full video can be found.

Practices to avoid when optimizing content

As much as content optimization is essential to make your content visible on the internet, there still are dos and don'ts you need to have in mind. The practices mentioned above are all on the to-do list and those are legitimate ways to ensure the highest performance of the content. Still, you need to have in mind practices that may harm your efforts and thus are on the list of things you should not do.

Over-optimization

In the effort to optimize the websites, webmasters have been trying to maximize their efforts using methods that are suspicious, to say the least. Even though it might seem as optimization, these practices are in fact perceived as over-optimization and may lead to penalties.

Here are a few examples:

- Anchor text matches the URL text
- Attracting traffic with non-relevant keywords
- All links pointing to top-level pages
- All inbound links come from blog comments or forums
- Using several h1 tags on one page
- Placing too many keywords in the footer
- Placing relevant links to the footer
- High keyword density percentage

Keyword stuffing

Keyword stuffing is a practice based on the presumption that the website will be ranked better if it has lots of keywords on the web pages. It is a way of manipulating the search engines in an effort to trick them that the page is related to the specific searches by using as many keywords as possible.

The reason why this practice is persisting to this day is the fact that once, years ago, it did work. However, the search engines have become so much more advanced since that they have ways of detecting and penalizing such websites. The search engines are now focused on providing

best user experience and a page with an unusually large number of repeated keywords and phrases fails at providing good user experience. This is why keyword stuffing is a practice to avoid when optimizing your website. You should always have a keyword density 1-3% as a sort of a guideline.

Cloaking

Cloaking is another practice that presents a perfect example of manipulation. With this action, you present different content or URLs to human users and search engine spiders. This can be done by providing one content in HTML for the spiders while showing a flash file to the users, knowing that the search engines spiders will not be able to see this kind of content due to its format. Since this practice violates Google's guidelines, these websites are most likely to be penalized.

Website comments

Comments on your website or blog are a great way to build community and connect with your target group. This also shows engagement and it is a great opportunity to get feedback from the readers, which are all the reasons you should encourage visitors to leave their comment and join the discussion.

However, this option is frequently abused by spammers, who post spam, advertising, and unrelated links, that are in fact harmful to your website. Since this can have a negative impact on the performance of your own content by lowering the reputation of your website and providing a negative user experience, you should be very careful when enabling website comments.

You should either follow the activity closely, to be able to remove any suspicious comment spam, or you could turn on comment moderation option, in which case you will have to review and approve each comment. Alternatively, you could use anti-spam tools, which are effective against spamming scripts, but when it comes to human generated spam commenting, they do not have a chance.

In essence, content optimization should be about improving your content while having both users and search engines in mind. As much as high ranking is important for you, your primary goal should be providing the best user experience.

In fact, search engine algorithms have become so advanced and intuitive that they are now trying to access user experience by actions such as one-click visits, visit duration, the fact that the user leaves the page and continues the search (an indicator that the content does not answers the query completely), etc. This all means that technical aspects are important, but in

terms of content optimization, it all starts with quality content. Quality content will naturally attract visits, gain links and attention, and with these optimization tasks you only enhance its existing potential.

6

Content Management

6. Content Management

What is content management?

Content management, often abbreviated as CM, is the administration process of handling digital content. It includes all types of digital content. Computer technology is used to manage digital content through which the content is stored and shared with online users. Basically, this includes all the tasks involved in content creation, optimization and distribution. Since it includes a lot of different tasks, it is possible to highlight several phases in the process.

Phases of content management

Four phases of content management can be identified:

Creation

The process of content management starts with content creation, which was analyzed in details in Chapter 4. The creation refers to all types of content. In this phase, content can be created with lots of different goals in mind, depending on the type of business, strategy, resources, etc.

Editing

The second phrase is editing, which includes reviewing and improving content. During this phase you want to make sure that the content fulfills the standards you have established, you want to adjust the style and review the material. This stage may also use localization, translation and other adaptations if necessary.

At this point, the content is not publicly available to the online users and search engines crawlers.

Publishing

Having finished with the creation process, it is time to publish the content. The process is done through a publishing platform that can be hosted on the server you manage, or you could use external services for publishing content. Through this process, you make content available for everyone online.

Publishing can be done instantly, or the content publishing can be scheduled. This can be done on the actual platform, but it is also possible to use plugins and tools to schedule the content publishing. This option is especially popular when it comes to social media content, as lots of tools enable social media integration and management.

Administration

Administration is the final phase that includes the task needed after the publishing is done. These tasks include assisting the online users, answering questions and comments, moderating comments, etc. Administration of content is a task that extends over a period of time. While the previous tasks are short-term ones, administration requires constant website monitoring. This is especially important for websites with a large amount of content and active user communities.
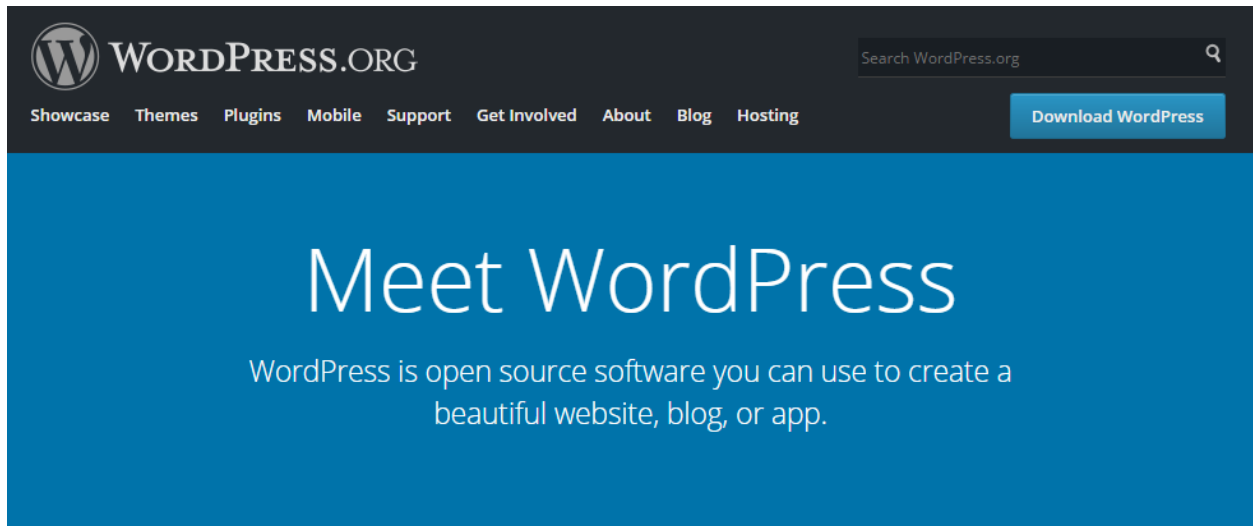
Content management can be handled by a single person, or a different individual can be in charge of each content phase. It depends on the complexity of the task as well as on the expertise of the person handling the task. It also depends on the amount of content being managed. The division of the tasks among the team members, where a writer is in charge of content creation, an editor for editing, reviewing and publishing and an administrator for content and website administration does have its benefits. Each of them specializes in a certain group of tasks which allows them to become experts in what they do. They will be more familiar with the tasks, and they would also learn the entire process in-depth, allowing them to work more efficiently.

What is CMS?

CMS (content management system) is an application designed to create and manage digital content. It is software with functionalities that enable the user or multiple users to work in a collaborative environment. Content management systems are used for content management tasks, including publishing the content.

The most popular content management systems are free and open-source CMSs, and they include:

- WordPress

Beautiful designs, powerful features, and the freedom to build anything you want. WordPress is both free and priceless at the same time.

- [Joomla](#)

- [Drupal](#)

WordPress is the most popular CMS with over 27% websites on the internet built on this platform ([Source](#)). The main reasons for such popularity are the facts that the platform is easy to use and it is considered SEO friendly. Each CMS can be customized using themes, modules, extensions and plugin which shape the website differently and unable functionalities that are not already built into the core platform.

The main benefit which also led to a wide expansion of such systems is the fact that they enable content creation and publishing to people with no advanced technical or coding skills. There is no need for coding because the system has everything designed and the interface is pretty straightforward to use.

CMS has a back end and a front end. Back end is what you see when you create and upload content through the CMS. The application will require to log in because access to the back-end is restricted to those who manage the website, regardless if those are content creators, administrators or web developers. The interface offers a set of options, usually arranged into menus for easier navigation.
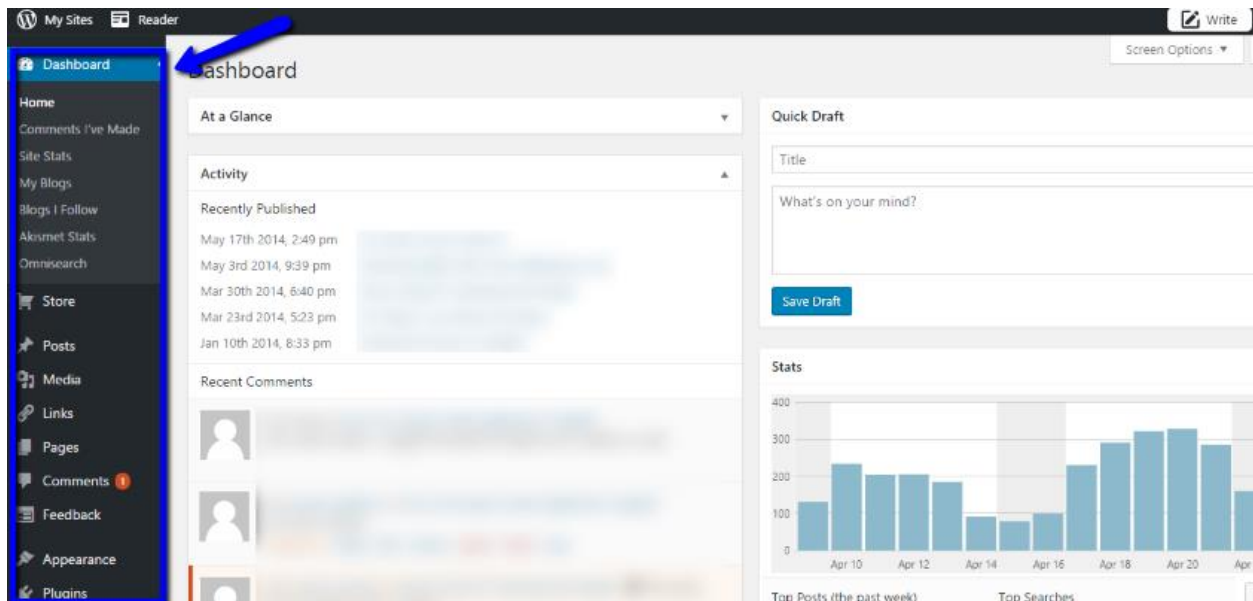
The front end is what the online users see. Once the website is published, everyone can see the front end online, except in cases when the content is protected by a password and it requires users to log in first. Front-end users can also add, modify and remove content with a limited number of functionalities available for them.

An alternative to using a CMS is creating and coding a website from scratch. In this case, you could either code individual static pages or create a custom interface for adding content. Obviously, this solution is a more complex one, because it requires both more time and an expert working on such coding project. This is the main reason why a great majority of websites is built on some of the available CMS platforms.

Basic things about CMS

The first thing you will need to do is to choose the CMS platform you want to use. The choice is based on your own preferences as most CMS platforms offer similar functionaries. The main features all of them provide, and you will mostly need in terms of content marketing, include:

Adding/Modifying/Removing content

This is the most basic function you will need. You will see options to post content, edit the existing content or remove content entirely.
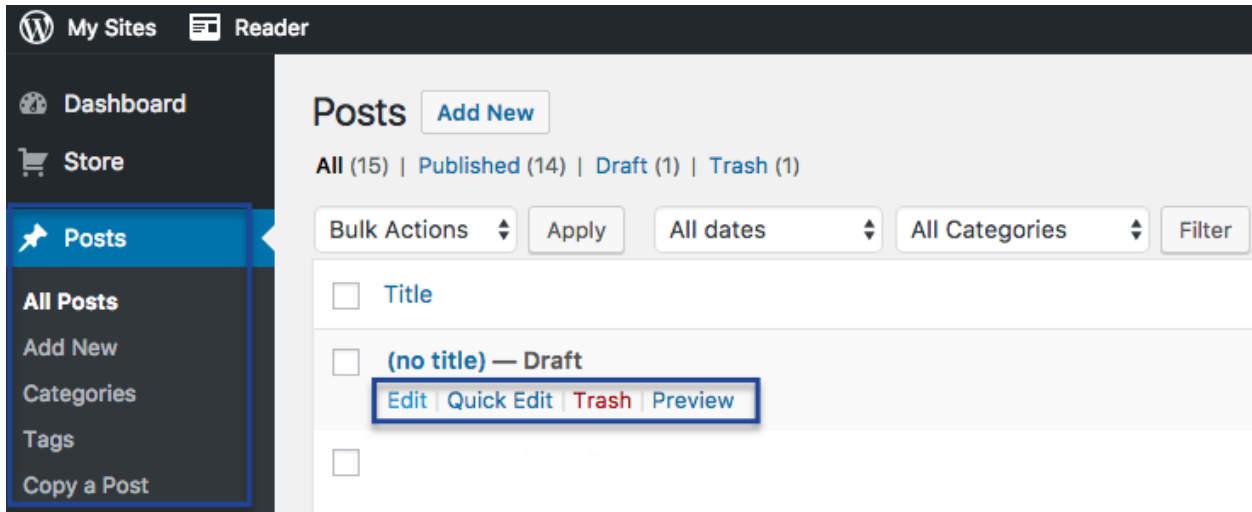
The CMS should support adding all types of content, as well as formatting features, such as headings, bullets, bold, etc. You will also have options to add links to the content. All of these and more options are available in the editor, but if you are good with coding, you can toggle to an HTML editor and do the formatting using HTML coding tags.
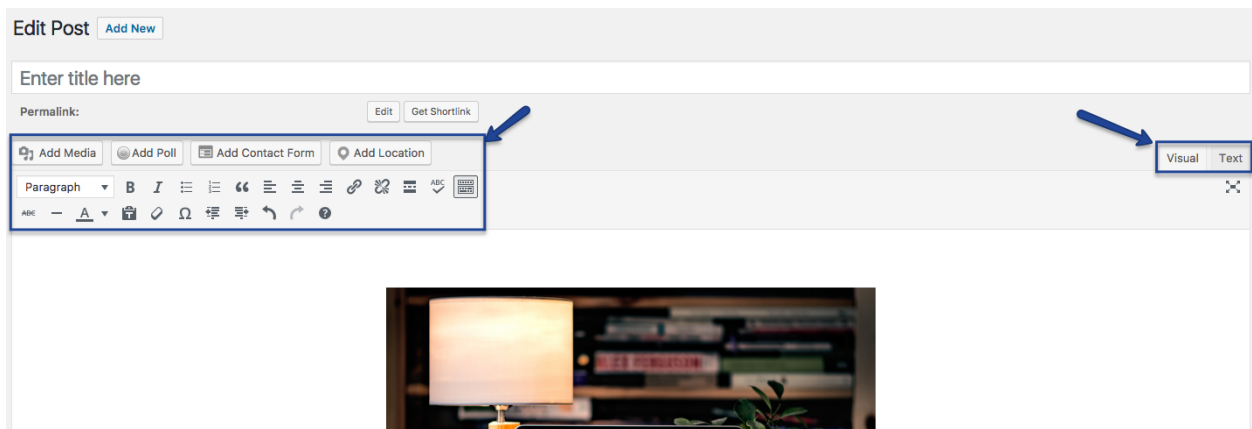
SEO friendly URLs

SEO friendly URLs enable search engines to navigate your website easily, which automatically increases chances for them successfully indexing your website. Here are good practices to follow when creating SEO friendly URLs:

- Make them readable
- Shorter URLs are the better
- Match the URL to the title
- Cut the stop words like *and, or, but, the*, etc.

- Limit the use of characters that are considered as unsafe because they turn into unusual symbols, series of numbers, etc. Unsafe characters include *empty space*, and characters such as *<, >, #, [,],* etc.

Extensions and plugins

While basic functions are already built into CMS platform, there are many extensions and plugins that are available on the internet to enhance or install new features. The main reason for this is to improve and boost the website performance.

From plugins to enable custom contact forms, feature related posts, to SEO plugins to optimize your content, advanced text editors and redirection plugins, there are thousands of extensions for you to choose and install. Make sure you choose only those that are relevant and that you can take advantage from.

Image: https://wordpress.org/plugins/

User and group functionality

Some websites will greatly benefit from this feature because they require registering and they have groups of website members that login, interact and post content. Even if you do not allow registered members' access, you will still need to create a couple of accounts for those who manage the website. When you have several people working on the project, you will have an option to create different users with different access settings to enable them to work independently, but still limit their access to the website.
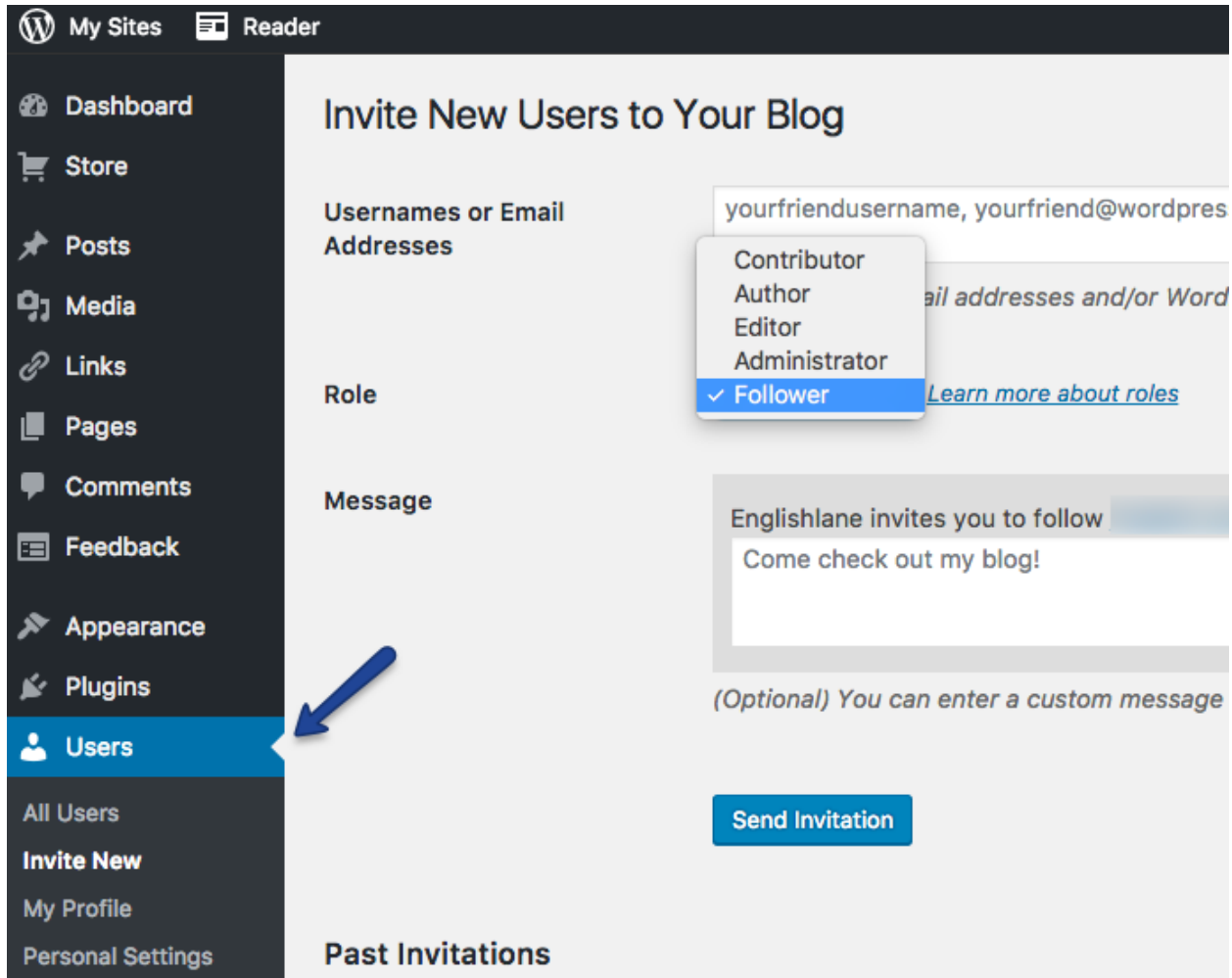
Customizable layout

A theme, template or layout is the way website's front end looks like. It is what online users will see and this basically presents your company and your products. This is why you want to make a presentation that really stands out. A good CMS platform should enable plenty of choices for a website template, and it should also enable you to customize the template according to your

needs. This way you can rearrange the fields or menus on the front page, use your own photos or graphics, etc.
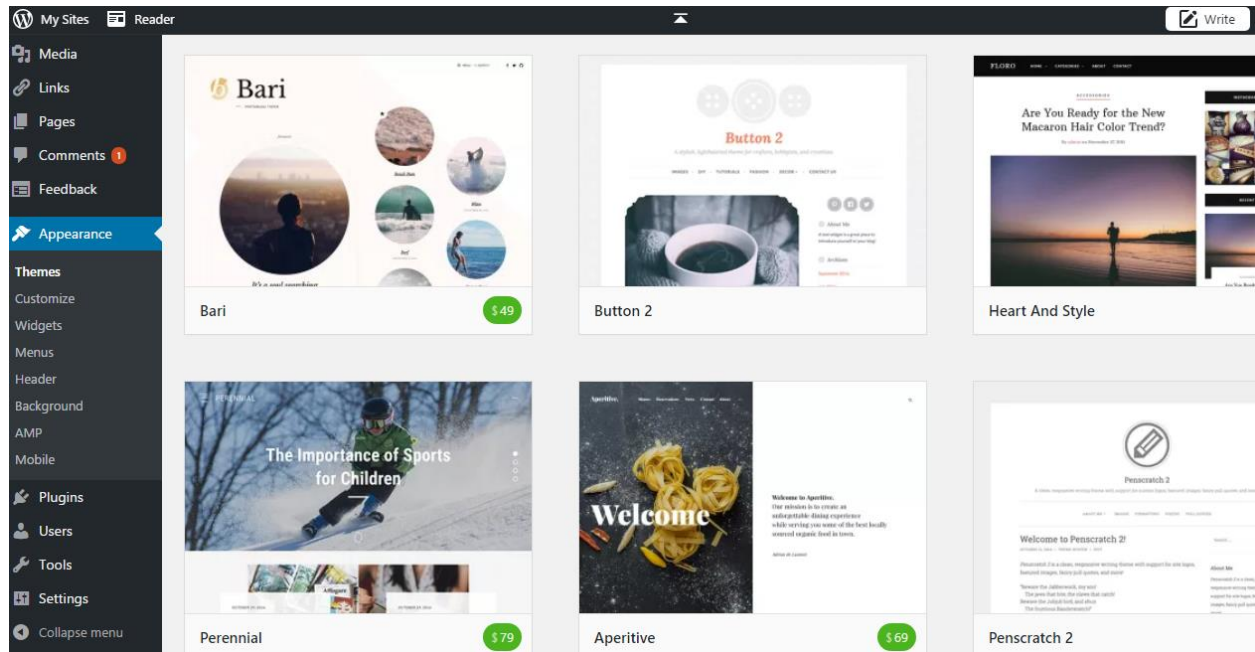
In conclusion, content management is the process that helps you make the content available to everyone, as well as a group of tasks related to the entire process, starting from creation to publishing.

The best way to start is by choosing the CMS platform first, which you can do based on the core features, based on your previous experience, a possibility for customization, as well as templates that are available to you. You should know that CMSs are constantly updated to keep up with the current trends. This means that new features will frequently be added, and the existing ones will be improved, which is why it is important to keep the CMS updated.

7

Content Distribution

7. Content Distribution

The production of digital content has slowly lead to the need to share this content, especially with the introduction of social media. This process of sharing involves different channels, starting from your own website to social media accounts and content sharing platforms. Collectively, this process is known as content distribution.

What is content distribution?

Content distribution represents the delivery of content to the online users. It includes all types of content and all channels that are available for online content sharing. When you distribute content online, that content can be streamed, in which case it is available upon user's request, or it can be downloaded, when a user stores the content permanently.

Having published the content, it is natural to expect visitors and feedback, but rather than keep waiting for those to come on their own, content distribution helps with sharing content with the internet users. This way you speed up the reach and the attention the content gains, and you boost traffic.

Channels for content distribution

Distribution of content is done through so-called channels for content distribution. Basically, these are the media used to share the content and you have several of them you could use when distributing content.

Email

Email is the most important distribution channel you should use, because it delivers the highest ROI. Not only is the email campaign the best way to reach those genuinely interested in your business (which is why they have subscribed in the first place), but email marketing is a type of marketing that has consistently been the most profitable strategy.

The success of distributing content this way is based on the quality of your mailing list, as well as on your skillfulness of communicating through emails. Firstly, a mailing list should include only the people who are really interested in receiving messages about your business. This ensures the highest open and click-through rates. It also means that the bounce rate and unsubscribe rate will be low. The second component of success is the way you communicate with your subscribers. You have to use a personalized approach, you have to optimize each email, to adjust the message to your target group and to constantly monitor statistics and

feedback. All of this helps you with writing emails that perform better and running campaigns that give results.

When it comes to using email as a distribution channel, make sure you use it for this purpose only when you have something really valuable to share with your subscribers. Even though it might seem tempting to use it to boost your traffic, email should be only for really great content, which is preferably tailored to the subscriber's preferences. What this means is that even if you publish two or three articles a day on your blog, you do not want to send an email about each of them to your subscribers. Instead, you could send an email once or twice a week with the latest scoop.

Social networks

One the other hand, we have social networks, where the content distribution is done more frequently. This means that once you publish new content, you are most likely to share it on social media. In fact, you will probably end up sharing more than once.

Social networks have become a very dominant part of people's lives, which is why most of the online users are active on at least one social network. Actually, social media is one of the trends you need to have in mind when developing your business strategy. In terms of business, this means that you can take advantage of this trend and use social media to interact with the users.

The most popular social networks, at this moment, include:

- Facebook
- YouTube
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Pinterest

The list keeps changing with new social networks being introduced and gaining popularity, but the first four have been at the top of the list for a couple of years now.

To start using social media as a channel for distribution, you will first need to create a profile or a page on the network. You should then optimize the profile with images, a description, links to your website or other social profiles, etc. This way you present your business and provide information on how to contact you, information about your product, services, current

promotions, etc. You will then work on building the group of followers and establishing your influence on that particular network by implementing a social media marketing strategy.

When it comes to social media content distribution, you should follow these tips:

Start with a strong message

You will need to grab attention with the social media post. A lot of people tend to simply copy the article's title and think they are all set. However, customized and personalized messages bring much more engagement. Users will already be able to see the title from the preview, there is no need to copy it in the status update as well. Instead, a post message should provide your impression, a witty comment, an eye-catching data or intriguing statement. This will all help with creating a post that users will want to click on.

End with a CTA

A call to action is a good strategy for encouraging social media followers to do a certain action, such as clicking the link, signing up, downloading something, sharing or following. To achieve these goals, you should end a post with an engaging CTA that invites the users to do the action you see as something beneficial for your business.

Optimize the content for each network

It seems quite simple to create a single message and post it on four or five social networks, especially when you do this with a tool that enables social media management from a single interface. Even though this is a time-saver, it might not be a perfect way to get the most out of your content. Social networks are different in the way they distribute messages, present visuals or the way interaction is done, which is why you need to optimize the content for each of them. This means creating a custom message to accompany the post and using recommended image dimensions.

Always provide value

Your goal with social media should be to gradually build influence and gain respect from the community, and a sure way to do so is by providing value. Your posts should be relevant to the users, helpful, problem-solving, etc.

Discover the perfect timing

There is no universally recommended time for posting on social media. Even though some researches have stated some guidelines in terms of posting, engagement depends on many factors, which include the type of network, the region, and primarily, the target group. To

discover the perfect time for your business, you should first think about your target group and when they are most likely to spend time on social media. For example, if your target group is stay-at-home moms, they will probably check social media late in the morning, while the kids are at school. The second thing you need to consider is the engagement on the previous posts. Check your profile and try to spot patterns when it comes to engagement. Is there a specific time or day when you gained more likes, comments or shares? Finally, when you know both the estimates and historic data, you can start experimenting to eventually find that perfect timing.

Don't share too many posts at a time

If you distribute content to gain visibility and engagement from social media, you should never share several pieces of content at the same time. As much as social media is time-consuming, and you might be tempted to post your latest articles once or twice a week, this approach is not a way to benefit from social media. Instead, focus on one post at a time. If you still need to optimize the time spent working on social media activity, use scheduling options, so you can distribute a couple of posts evenly throughout a certain time period.

Social bookmarking websites

Social bookmarking websites are online platforms that enable adding and sharing web pages as a form of a bookmark. Additional options usually include tagging and organizing bookmarks in categories. The ability to interact with other users is what gives that social character to bookmarking websites. People use these platforms to discover content that matches their interests, which is how this can help with distributing content. Amplifying your content through social bookmarking websites has great potential, especially in terms of traffic gained through these platforms.

- Reddit - The content shared here is mostly time-sensitive and updated in real time. Reddit stories are voted by the community.

- Delicious - The service owned by Yahoo, has lots of users who store links in their personal or public collections with tags to categorize everything.

- Digg - This is a news aggregator for sharing content.

- Pearltrees - This content curation platform is organized like a mind map.

- StumbleUpon - With its large user base, StumbleUpon offers a great potential for gaining traffic. The platform enables bookmarking, searching and voting for the content you find valuable.

- **ScoopIt** - Content curation service where you create topics and share scoops related to these topics.

These are some of the most popular social bookmarking websites, but as you browse online, you will find many more of those. You should not aim to be active on all of them, but instead, choose only those that could help you with content distribution. The websites mentioned above are some of the most popular, based on the number of users and links shared through these platforms. Most of them are either free or offer a free account with limited functionalities, in comparison to a paid account which includes some advanced content distribution features.

Some of these websites include do-follow links, which have a positive influence on SEO as inbound links, while some use no-follow attribute. Either way, the true value is in the traffic potential they provide, which goes beyond the attempt to gain backlinks. Your goal as a business should be to leverage this potential and use social bookmarking websites to distribute content to the communities that rely on discovery of new content.

Online communities and forums

Online communities and forums are also helpful with content distribution. However, with these communities, you should not be focused on the direct promotion of your content, but instead, you should try to become a member, the one who helps with useful tips, the one who solves problems, the one who answers the question. This is what differentiates communities from social media and social bookmarking websites.

The best way to take advantage of these websites is to join a certain community, start interacting with other members, participate in the discussions, etc. Gradually, over time you will get an opportunity to promote your own content and to share it with other members. Communities are also a great place to get feedback and new ideas that can show you how to improve your business.

Popular communities for content distribution:

- Quora
- Inbound
- Triberr
- GrowthHackers

Influencers

Distributing content can get tough, especially if you are only starting out and your audience is currently rather limited. You are not able to reach enough people, and your content might be performing poorly. To counter this, there is an option to work with influencers.

Influencers are renowned individuals in a particular sector, who enjoy trust and respect from a large community. Influencers already have a significant following, and they have the power to influence people by sharing their opinion, impressions, feedback, etc. Working with influencers is an amazing technique for reaching their audience and distributing content this way.

Paid advertising

Finally, content can be distributed through paid channels as well. The main advantage of this approach is that it is fast and easy to manage. Once the content is created, all that is left to do is to choose the method of advertising, set up the campaign, and monitor the results. This approach is particularly helpful for blogs and websites that are only beginning to build their presence online, and thus they are unable to use other methods for content distribution, such as an email campaign because they still do not have enough leads they would contact. Paid advertising can also be helpful for time-sensitive content when you need to boost its performance in a particular period, or otherwise, the content will become outdated and irrelevant.

The main drawback of the approach is the costs involved. The costs depend on the campaign, and since most paid advertising programs offer auction-type of advertising, you do not have a way to exactly predict the costs of such campaign. What you can do to plan this action is to set up a budget and use it as a limit. When setting up the campaign, make sure you indicate your limit, regardless if that is a daily, weekly or even monthly limit. This will help you stay within the budget you have available for paid content distribution.

Methods that can be used for paid advertising include:

Search engine ads

Search engine marketing is a great method to reach new users and gain new leads. Google AdWords and Bing Ads are two most frequently used advertising programs as two largest search engines. You have the option to create a campaign through the campaign manager and optimize it by choosing the target audience, keywords, location targeting, etc. You could also schedule the campaign to appear on specific days or period of the day. When it comes to Google AdWords, the option to set up and manage a YouTube campaign is also a part of the program, because this video sharing social network is owned by Google.

Social network advertising

Social networks also offer opportunities for advertising with sponsored posts and stories that are shown to the social network users while they are browsing the content. The ads are usually set up through a specific ad manager available by the network. Like with search engine ads, ads on social networks also offer plenty of optimization and targeting features to fully customize the campaign and maximize its performance.

Social bookmarking website advertising

Even though it is not an option as popular as the previous two, social bookmarking websites also provide advertising. Sometimes they offer this option as sponsored stories, but some social bookmarking websites also offer paid accounts with advanced features to promote and distribute content.

Content distribution strategies

Besides using content distribution channels that are available to you, there are a couple of more strategies you need to have in mind when it comes to ways you can distribute content.

Content syndication

Content syndication is the process of publishing content to third-party websites and then republishing the same content on your own blog or website. This includes publication of any digital type of content, a blog article, a video, a presentation, etc.

When you decide to use this content distribution strategy, make sure you think about these things first:

- Audience - The audience visiting the website where the content is going to be published should be relevant to you. Therefore, the audience should be one of the main factors influencing your decision to publish content on another website.

- Authority - The authority of the website is also important. In terms of SEO, publishing an article on a high-authority website with a link to your own website or blog is very helpful. Links are seen as votes of trust, which is why a link is a good signal to the search engine crawlers, who perceive links as a relevant metric for ranking the websites. This reputation extends to the online users as well, because

generally, you will earn trust and increase the following through a successful collaboration.

Since the process of content syndication includes publishing identical content on two different websites, it is only natural to bring the question of duplicate content. Duplicate content is the content on different domains that completely matches or is somewhat similar. This results in the same content appearing in the search results multiple times, a practice which disrupts the user experience, which is why it is unpopular among search engines and can lead to a URL being excluded from the search query.

To avoid such problems, you should follow these guidelines:

Use rel=canonical tag

This tag links back to original content. In case you publish the content on your website or blog first, and then republish it on an authority website, make sure the publisher on that website is using this tag to reference back to you. Using this tag is an indication to Google which content is original, and which should appear first in the search results.

Use NoIndex tag

NoIndex tag is used to indicate to Google that you do not want a particular page to be indexed. When you syndicate content, the authority website could use this tag. This way, their page will not be indexed and will not appear in the search results, but the authority website will still pass on so-called link juice to your own website or blog.

Include an attribution link

This third option is not the best but may help with solving the problem. It works like this. The publisher should provide an attribution link inside the article linking directly to the original article page. Search engines are often able to figure out which version is older, i.e. which version is the original.

If none of these attribution options are available to you, sometimes you might want to participate in the link syndication process just because the visibility benefits are so huge, that you do not really care about search engines seeing this as duplicate content. This is particularly the case when you have the opportunity to work with very influential websites that can help you reach a large group of online users.

Guest blogging

To a certain extent, guest blogging is similar to content syndication. In both cases, you collaborate with external websites where you want your content to be published. However, the main difference is that with content syndication you republish content on your own website or blog, and in the case of guest blogging you do not.

Guest blogging is a process of creating content to be published on another website or blog. This method is used by many bloggers and website owners, mainly to increase traffic. The process can also work in a reverse way. You could have another author write a blog post for your blog or website. In both cases, mutual promotion and visibility are the main reasons why websites decide to use this form of content distribution.

Writing a guest blog post

Firstly, there are situations where you are looking for guest blogging opportunities hoping to create content to be published on a certain website or blog. Through this process, you should focus on a couple of things:

Find a guest blogging opportunity

The first thing you need to do is to find an opportunity for publishing your guest post. There are multiple ways you can find these opportunities. Start with Google search. Make sure you type in the keyword (a topic you are interested in) and phrases like "submit a guest post", "guest post guidelines", etc. This will show you the websites featuring these terms. You could also use social media to look for influencers in your niche or you could check your competitor's backlink profile, to see who links to them.

Get in touch

Once you find a website or a blog you want to work with, you will have to get in touch. Firstly, make sure you prepare yourself. Before you get in touch, you should do the research and you should try to:

- Get to know a little bit about the website
- Get to know the website owner
- Take a look at the content they publish on the blog
- Think about what kind of content they would be interested in
- Think about what kind of content they would benefit from

You should also make sure that the email you send as a pitch is personalized. The best way to start is by addressing the blog owner by his or her name. You should also provide information about:

- Who you are

- What kind of content you specialize in

- Why this collaboration is something the blog owner should consider

You should also check out the guidelines for guest blogging if they are available because this will help you with shaping the pitch and creating the blog post that will get accepted.

Create a guest blog post

Once you get confirmation that the collaboration is on, you are ready to start with creating content for a blog post. In this case, you might want to consult the blog owner about any guidelines or specific requirements that are needed. In general, when creating a guest blog post, you are not supposed to use affiliate links or to openly advertise something. Another most common requirement is to format the post the same way the other posts are formatted on that blog.

Create guest biography

Now it is time to promote yourself. The purpose of the guest biography is to provide information about the guest blogger and this usually includes a short description of who you are and what you do. You should also provide links to the social media profiles where you maintain an active presence and your website/blog. This way, you provide information for readers to find you online if they like your content.

Track the results

Finally, when the article is all done and published as a guest post, you are ready to monitor the results. The best way to do so is using Google Analytics. Filter the results based on the sources and track the guest blogs URL to see how much traffic it brings to your own website and how this traffic performs, whether it brings conversions, high bounce rate, etc.

This will help you analyze the performance of this strategy and if this is something you should use again in the future.

Get guest bloggers to write for you

Since the process of guest blogging works two ways, you could also have guest bloggers on your website. To begin with, you will need a page for those interested in submitting their pitch. Offer a contact form for people to get in touch with you easily and send their own suggestion about guest blogging collaboration. You might want to indicate the topics that are likely to be featured on your blog because you are most likely to be interested in a particular niche rather than sharing content on all sorts of topics.

The main benefits you can see through this practice include:

- Keep your content fresh
- Keep your blog active
- Gain reputation
- Gain visibility
- Increase traffic

Repurposing content

When you create content in one format, you always have an option to repurpose the content by converting it to another format. Basically, this means that if you have written an article about a certain topic, you could create an infographic, a presentation or a video using the same content. The main reason why this strategy is used in content distribution is the fact that it helps you with expanding the reach and gaining new link-building opportunities. In the same time, you will not have to invest too much work because you already have content to use as a base. Besides gaining benefits, this approach is also recommended when you want to reuse the content that you might have published years ago, but one that is still useful and current.

Things to have in mind when repurposing content:

Make sure the content is current

Just because you have found an amazing article in your blog archive and you would like to use it to create an infographic, it does not mean that you should. Firstly, make sure the content you want to reuse is still current. The content needs to be evergreen to be reusable. It needs to deal with a topic that is still valuable and relevant months or even years after the content is published. This means that anything time-sensitive would not be considered as a good material for repurposing.

Take a look at what is popular

To help you decide which content you should repurpose, take a look at popularity as a reference. This means that you should check back to your Google Analytics and see which posts or topics have been the most popular. You should also explore Google Trends, to see if those topics are generally popular in online searches.

Updating might be in order

While most of your content might be evergreen, there still might be sections that are outdated or irrelevant, which is why you should start by reviewing the material completely. Think about this is a sort of a makeover and use it as an opportunity to make your high-performing content even better.

How to repurpose

Through repurposing content, you essentially change the format and the overall structure of the content. Most often you will change the content type, so here are some ideas how to reshape content into something else:

- Blog post → Guide
- Blog post → Presentation
- Blog post → Newsletter
- Guide → Ebook
- Guide → Course
- Podcast → Blog post
- Podcast → Newsletter
- Webinar → Blog post
- Interview → Blog post
- Internal data → Case study
- Internal data → Infographic
- Visual content → Presentation
- Video → Blog post

Republish (Medium, LinkedIn Pulse)

Republishing content on blogging platforms such as Medium and LinkedIn Pulse is another way to distribute content.
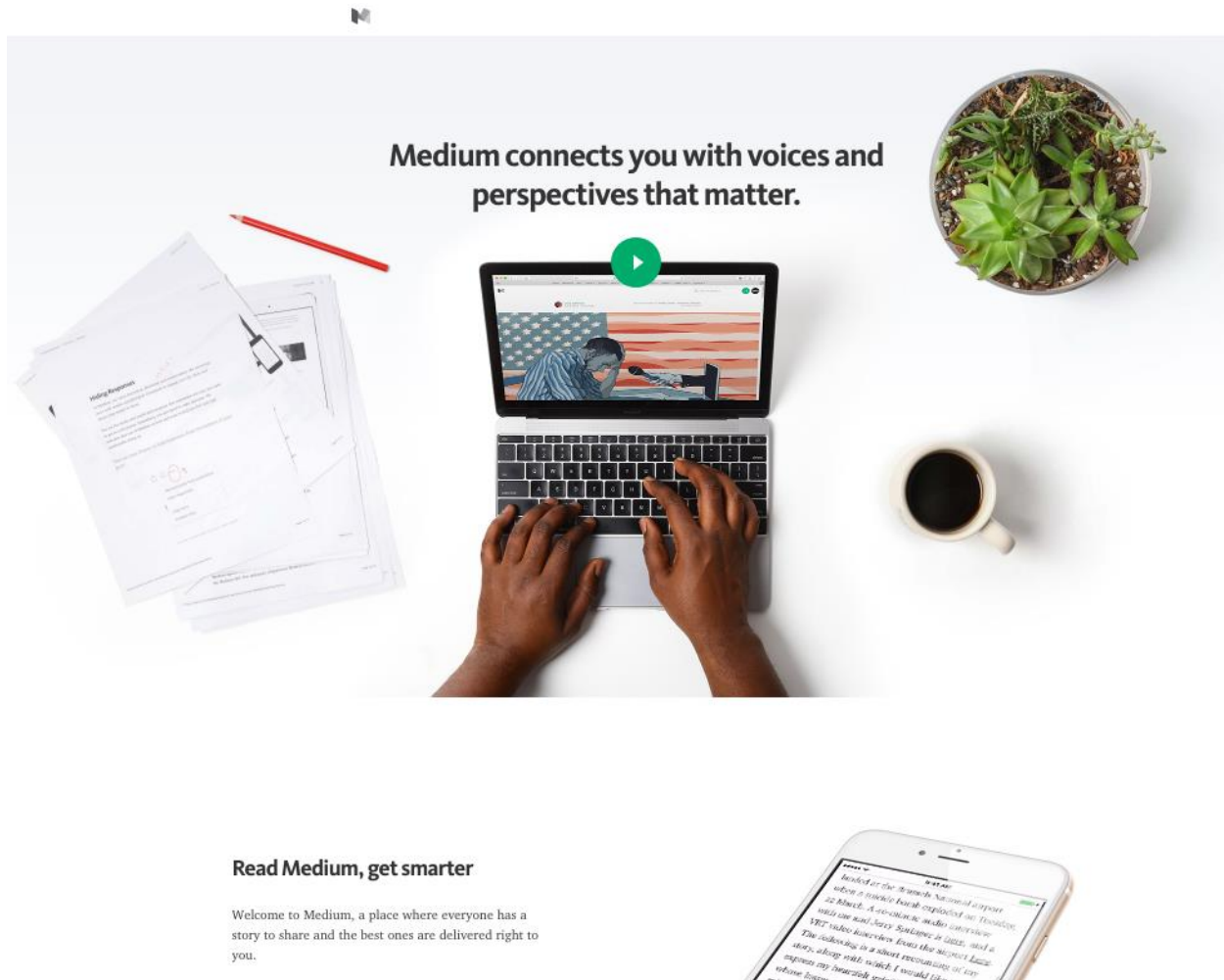
Basically, what these platforms offer is to publish or republish your content in order to reach the new audience. Besides writing and publishing features used for creating and optimizing content, these platforms offer social aspect that is integrated into the platform. This means that users can easily recommend, share, write comments, bookmark, etc. These kinds of open platforms are great places to creatively express yourself, get new ideas, but they are also popular for searching new content online. All that is done on the platform itself. The major benefit of publishing content through these platforms is to reach the new audience and to link back to your website where you want to attract the readers. With this goal in mind, here are a couple of recommendations that will help you get started with blogging for Medium, LinkedIn Pulse, and similar websites:

Make adjustments to the content

First, you want to adjust the content to the platform. You should not simply copy and paste the entire article from your blog. Instead, make necessary adjustments based on these suggestions:

- Have in mind the audience

The audience you will reach through blogging platforms is different from your website visitors. They probably still do not know anything about you, and they might not have an idea what kind of products or services you provide. This means that you might want to adjust the content while having the audience in mind.

- Adjust the title

The title is supposed to be enticing and engage your audience. The online users have to be intrigued to keep reading and you will achieve this with a catchy title. You could use a new title for the republished article to reduce the risk of duplicate content.

- Optimize the article to get click and leads

If lead magnets and CTAs were not a part of the content originally, make sure you optimize the content with these in mind to encourage online users to click on the links. Since the main goal of this strategy is to reach the new audience, by encouraging clicks and gaining new leads, you should optimize the article in such a way to achieve these goals.

Publish only a part of article

One way to attract traffic to your own website or blog is to publish only a part of the article with the link to the original article on your website or blog, where the users can read the rest. Of course, the snippet you provide should be interesting to encourage clicks.

Include links

Regardless if you decide to publish only a part of the article or the entire article, make sure you link to your website or blog. Also, if you have a certain offer available on your website or blog, such as a free download, make sure you include this if it is relevant to the topic.Apart from getting visits, links on these platforms are good for SEO because these websites generally have good domain and page authority.

Ask users to visit your website

Take advantage of a powerful CTA by asking users to follow more stories you share. Invite them to your blog or website, or to follow you on social media. This way you offer an opportunity for them to connect and become your followers.

Avoid the risk of duplicate content

Syndication, in general, has a risk of content being marked as duplicate. Beside the penalty, there is always a risk of losing traffic. Medium, LinkedIn Pulse, and similar websites probably have higher authority than your own website, which means that your blog or website might be pushed down the list of the search result, even though it is the source of the original content. However, the potential for reaching more people and gaining traffic is such an incredible opportunity for many websites to boost their traffic, in which case these risks are worth taking. Even though a risk is always a part of content syndication, there are a couple of ways to reduce the risk.

- Don't republish the entire article

Make adjustments to the content or republish only a part of the article.

- Don't republish every article

When you decide to publish a piece of content, make sure it is really something extraordinary, something that has the potential of going viral and attracting many visitors to your own blog.

- Wait for a couple of weeks

Once you publish the content on your own blog, wait for two or three weeks for search engines to index it, before you republish.

- Use rel=canonical tag if possible

This tag links to the original content which enables search engines to index the original versions first, giving it the priority it deserves in the search results. When it comes to Medium, rather than posting a new article, use "Import" option to share the story directly providing the link from your blog. You will be able to edit it before publishing on Medium.

- Hope for the best

Search engines have developed tremendously, and as stated by Google's experts, they are now able to assess which version is the original and give it the priority in the search results.

Advanced algorithms are used for this purpose giving them the power to show the version they find most appropriate for the users. Sometimes this may be the syndicated version, but sometimes they will give preference to the original version.

The importance of content distribution

Content distribution offers numerous ways to share your content online, from free social media profiles to paid ads and guest blogging. The choice of the method depends on the type of content you have to distribute and the type of business you run. There is no dilemma that this is a strategy that you should use, and mainly because you get:

- The opportunity to expand your audience

- To generate new leads

- To increase the influence of your brand

- The chance to obtain feedback from the online community

- To increase sales by indirectly promoting your business

- To participate in collaborative projects with experts in the sector

- The possibility to assess your entire content marketing strategy

- To gain authority by providing content that offers value

Content on its own has little chance of going viral and being seen by lots of people. The blog readership is usually limited, especially if you are still beginning to build your online reputation. To make the most out of the content you create and publish, make sure you explore the ways of content distribution and find the formula that works best for your business.

8

Content Marketing Metrics to Monitor

8. Content Marketing Metrics to Monitor

There are two main reasons why it is necessary to monitor content marketing. First of all, you will get the opportunity assess the influence you were able to make with the published content. This influence is reflected in numerous ways, including the number of sales, visits, leads, etc. Secondly, you will get to see how content marketing affects your business, how it implements with other types of online marketing, and whether this is something you should invest more into in the future.

Relevant metrics to evaluate content performance

Evaluating content is somewhat complex due to the numerous factors that contribute to its performance and due to the fact that performance can be measured only when you take all the metrics into account. This is why, with content marketing, metrics should be analyzed cumulatively.

Visits

The first metric you will need to monitor is the number of visits to the specific content you want to analyze. The best way to monitor visits is to have content hosted on your own website or blog. This way you will have access to the analytics data. One of the most commonly used tools for this purpose is Google Analytics. It is free and easy to set up, with a straightforward interface for monitoring and managing the data. Alternatively, you can use other tools for monitoring the statistics on your website.
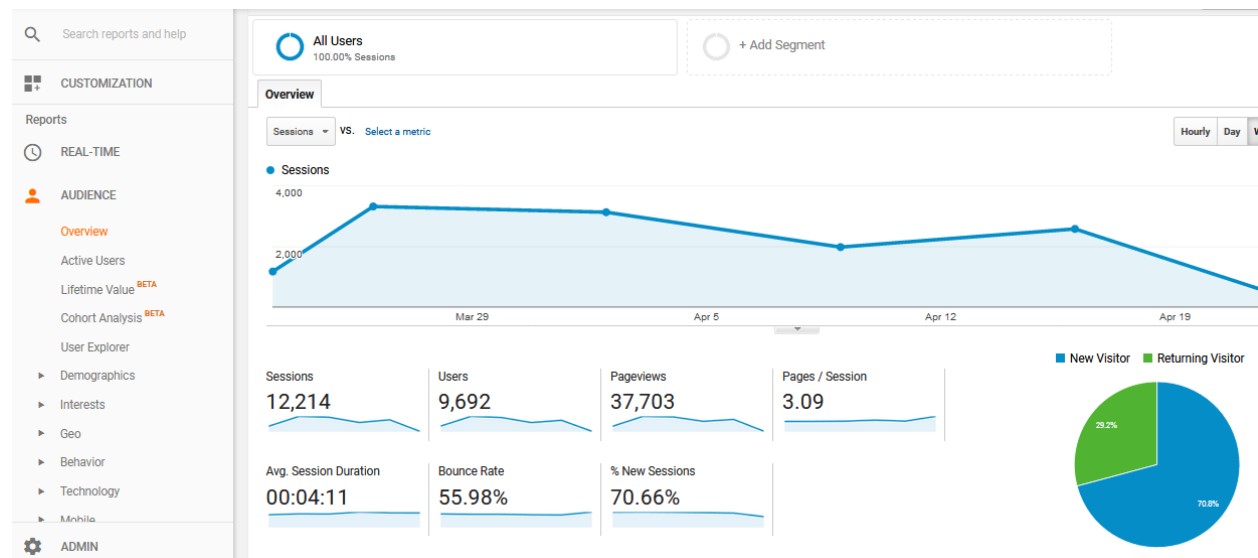
Even if you host content on websites such as YouTube or Medium, these platforms provide statistics for the published content.
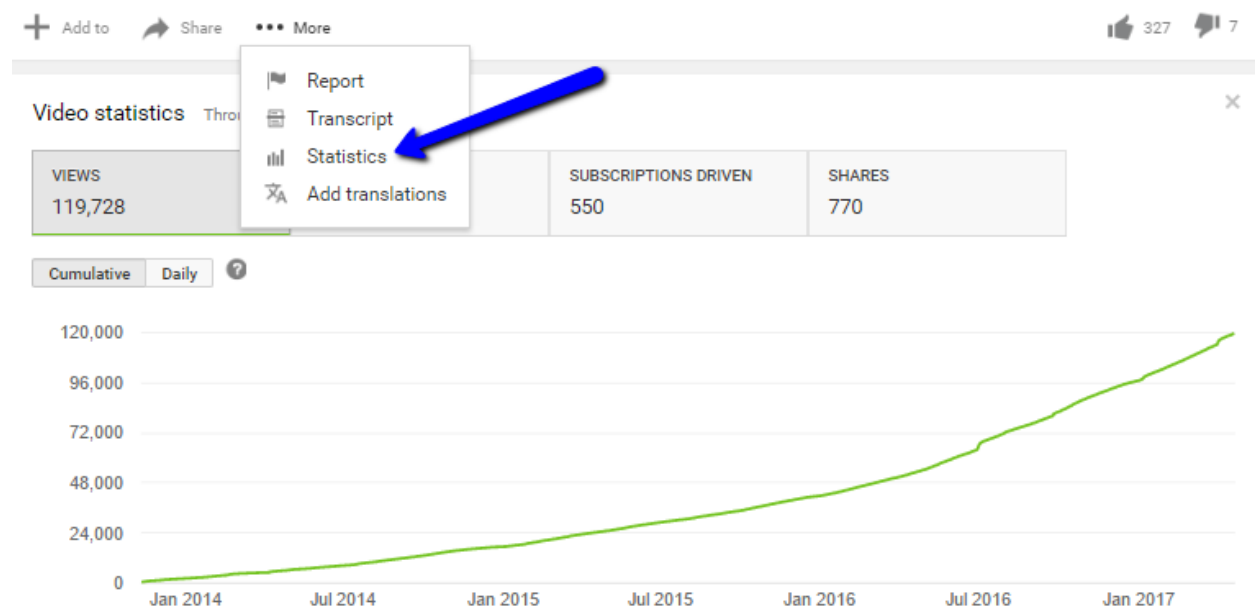
The main obstacle occurs when you write a guest blog post, in which case the content is published on another blog or website, and it is most likely that you will not have access to these statistics. Occasionally, the website owner might provide you with the relevant data.

What can the number of visits say about the content? The main information you get indicates the number of people who have seen the content. That is the number of people who took the time to click on the link. If the number is high, this means that the title and the accompanying text were engaging enough. If you notice a lot of organic traffic, this means that this piece of content is well-optimized in terms of SEO and that it is shown high in the search engine result pages. If there are lots of referrals, this could mean that an influential blog or website has shared your content, regardless if this is something you have planned to do or if they have done it on their own.

Negative statistics indicate that certain aspects should be changed. To analyze why the number of visits was low, you have to take into account all of the factors that make a good post, all optimization elements, etc. Sometimes you might even do everything right and the visits still will not go up. Maybe your timing was off, or perhaps you mistakenly believed that a certain topic is popular, when in fact, it is not.

The important thing with poor results is to try to detect the problem with lots of testing and comparison with other content you publish. If you believe that content is valuable, even though it got little attention, you could also try to repurpose content later on. There has been a lot of

success stories when the content was republished in another form, for example, a dull blog post became an exciting infographic.

When monitoring visits, try to detect the place the clicks are originating from. The link might get shared on social media, in an email, on another website or anywhere you might have posted the link. The link can also be shown in the organic search results or in paid ads. Analyzing the visits based on the source can help you determine which of the strategies shows the best results, which might offer valuable insights into how you should be changing and/or improving your content marketing strategy.

In terms of visits, there are several metrics you need to track:

Unique visits

The number indicates the number of visitors who have visited your website for the first time. This metric, in comparison with *Returning visits*, shows how likely you are to attract new visitors.

Page views

The metric shows the total number of pages the users have clicked on during a specific time period. Ideally, this number should be higher than the number of unique visits. If this is the case, it will mean that your content is engaging because the users are clicking on more than one page per visit.

Session duration

The time the users spend on your website is expressed through average session duration. Besides the overall average session duration, Google Analytics also enables you to see the visits based on the session duration interval. This will show you the number of visits lasting up to 10 seconds, the visits lasting between 11 and 30 seconds, and so on. The longer you keep the visitors on your website, the better are the chances to convert those visitors.

Bounce rate

A certain number of users click to visit your website and then leave immediately, without clicking on any other page. This is called a bounce rate, and the metric indicates poor engagement level, which is why you should aim for the lower bounce rate.
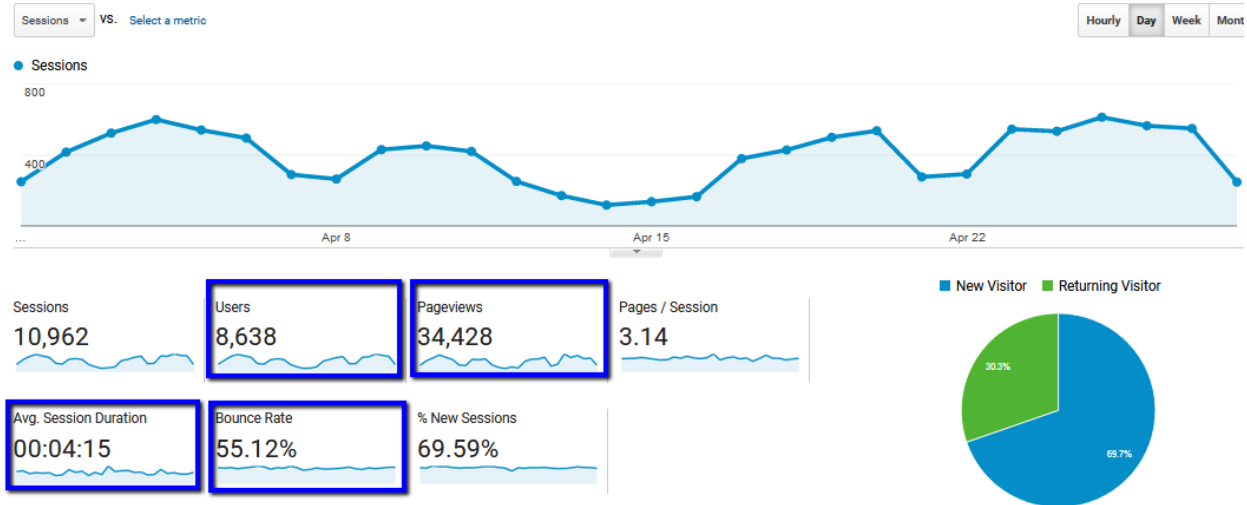
Traffic sources

The data about traffic sources show you how you generate new visits. It can be through organic search, direct traffic, referral or social. It is important to know about these sources as it can help you optimize and improve your business in order to boost traffic.
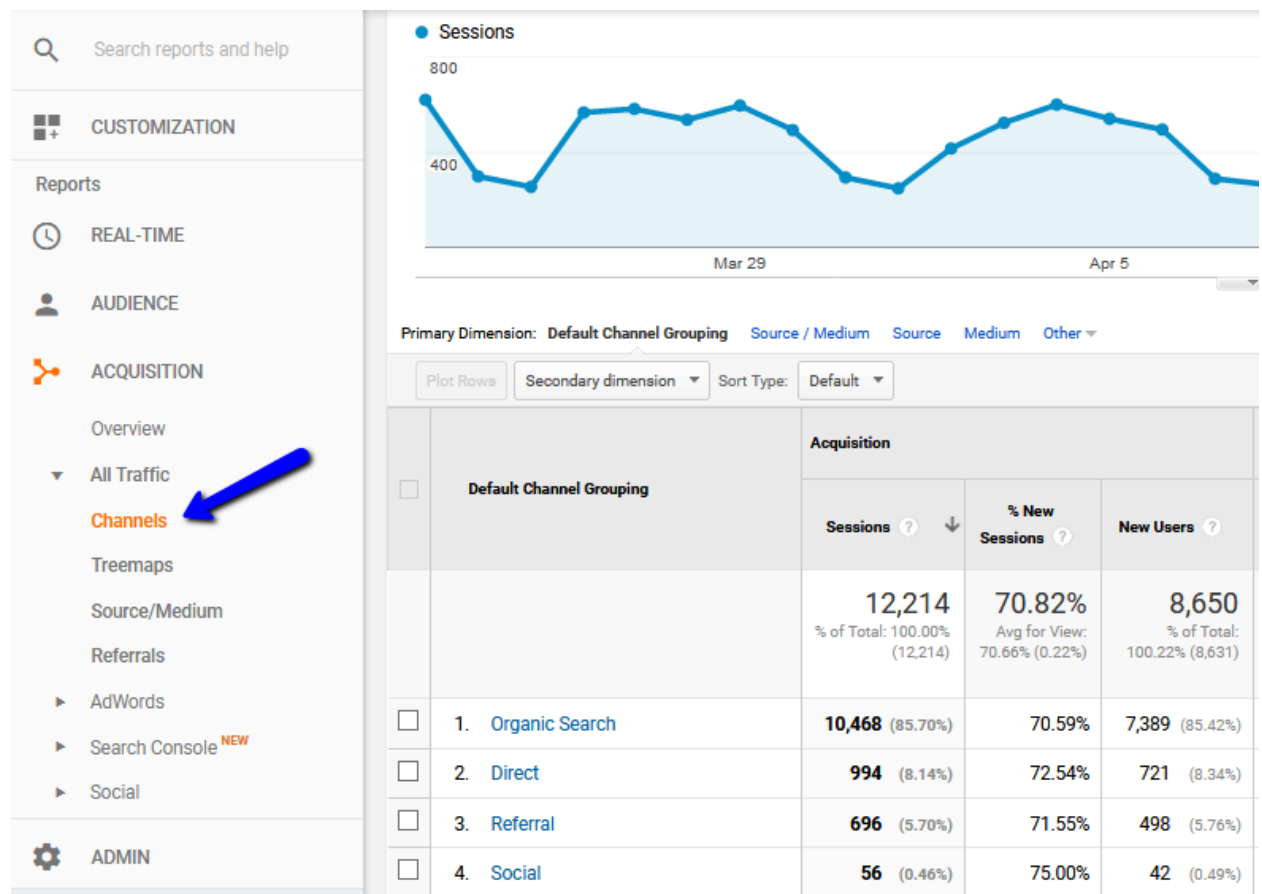
Knowing about the visits is one indicator of how popular and successful the content is, but in content marketing popularity of the content on its own is not the only goal. With your strategy, you want to achieve something, regardless if those are sales, new leads, social followers, etc. To learn how these visits actually affected those global goals, you will need to look into conversions.

Conversions

A conversion is a desired action, something you want online users to do from which you will benefit, such as liking your page, downloading your ebook, watching your video, or ultimately buying your product. Having in mind that each business is different with different goals, it is natural that conversions cannot be defined in general, rather than on an individual level. This means your business determines what conversion is for you. Ask yourself the question *"What do you want users to do when they get to your website?"*. Your answer is the action you will consider conversion.

Through the content marketing strategy, you try to reach conversions. For example, you publish a blog post about email marketing. You attract many visitors who are interested in this topic. At the same time, you sell an email marketing software, and naturally, you want them to buy the software. In essence, the content is a sort of a bait. You attract the relevant visitors with the high-quality content, and then you try to convert those visitors into customers.

To achieve conversions, you will first have to publish high-quality, engaging content which attracts the users you will potentially convert. The audience you attract should be relevant to your business, so make sure you use platforms and paid advertising targeting options that bring visitors that are interested in your business and could eventually buy from you.

You will then need to think about the actual post page. The page should be focused on the article, but to make sure the visitors stay and explore more, you will need:

Link to the homepage

This link enables everyone to go to your homepage and find out more about your business. Homepage link is essential to provide more information about your business, especially for the first-time visitors.

Links to other internal pages

When possible, provide internal links alongside the new content you publish. For example, you could provide a previous article as a reference or you could add related content suggestions. This will reduce bounce rate and it will help you keep visitors longer.

Link to the landing page

This link is the best way to increase conversions because it directly leads to the page where you can convert the visitors. The landing page will contain a brief description and a CTA that will encourage conversions. Sometimes the actual content can contain the CTA.

In order to measure conversions, you will need to analyze the conversion rate.

Conversion rate is calculated like this:

*(Number of people who completed the desired action ÷ Number of visits) * 100*

The higher the conversion rate the better because this indicates that you are creating truly valuable content that resonates well with your audience and is able to convert them. If you notice a low conversion rate, it is time to optimize your content strategy and think about a different approach to try to increase conversions.

How to monitor the metrics?

To evaluate the importance of content marketing for your business, you will first need the tools for tracking content published on your own blog, as well as on third-party blogs, social media, social bookmarking websites, etc. One of the most commonly used tools for monitoring the website analytics data is Google Analytics.

Audience overview

This is the page opened by default in the Google Analytics account. It shows the statistics for the chosen period, including the most relevant metrics to assess visits, such as the number of sessions, page views, average session duration, bounce rate, etc. The audience data also includes demographics and geo details, behavior of the visitors, the technology used to access the website, etc. All of this can help you a lot with evaluating how your website content performs.
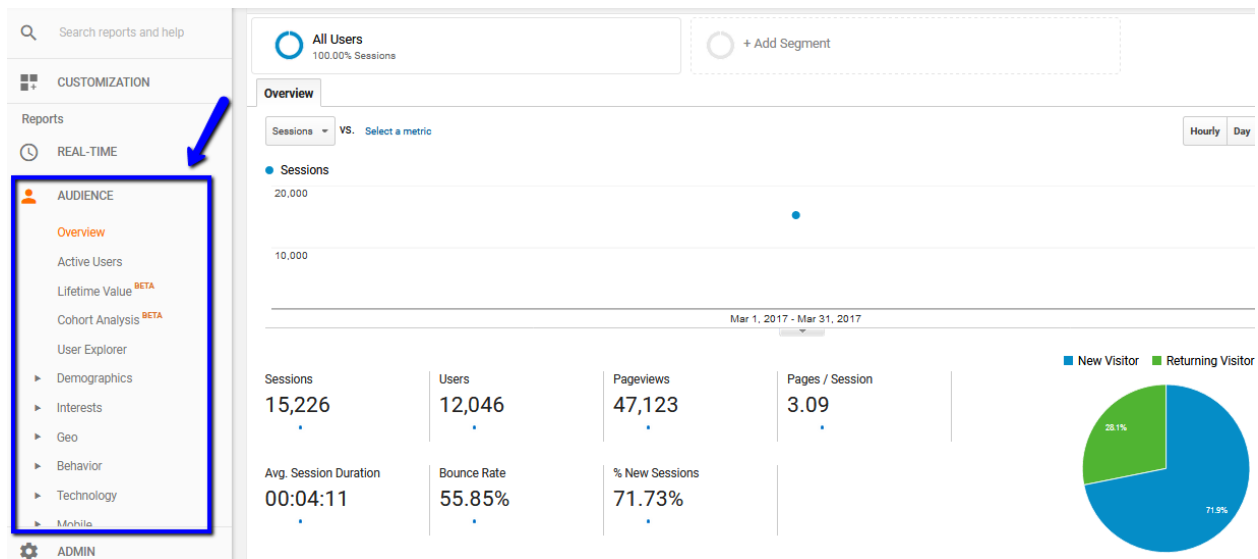
Goals

Goals are used for tracking desired activity through Google Analytics. By setting up a goal, you choose an action, such as the number of pages visited per one visit, visiting a specific page, a certain session duration, etc. This action will be a goal you want to achieve.

To set up a goal, go to the *Admin* section of Google Analytics (lower left corner) and click on the *View* you want to manage. Then find the option *Goals* in the menu shown beneath this view.
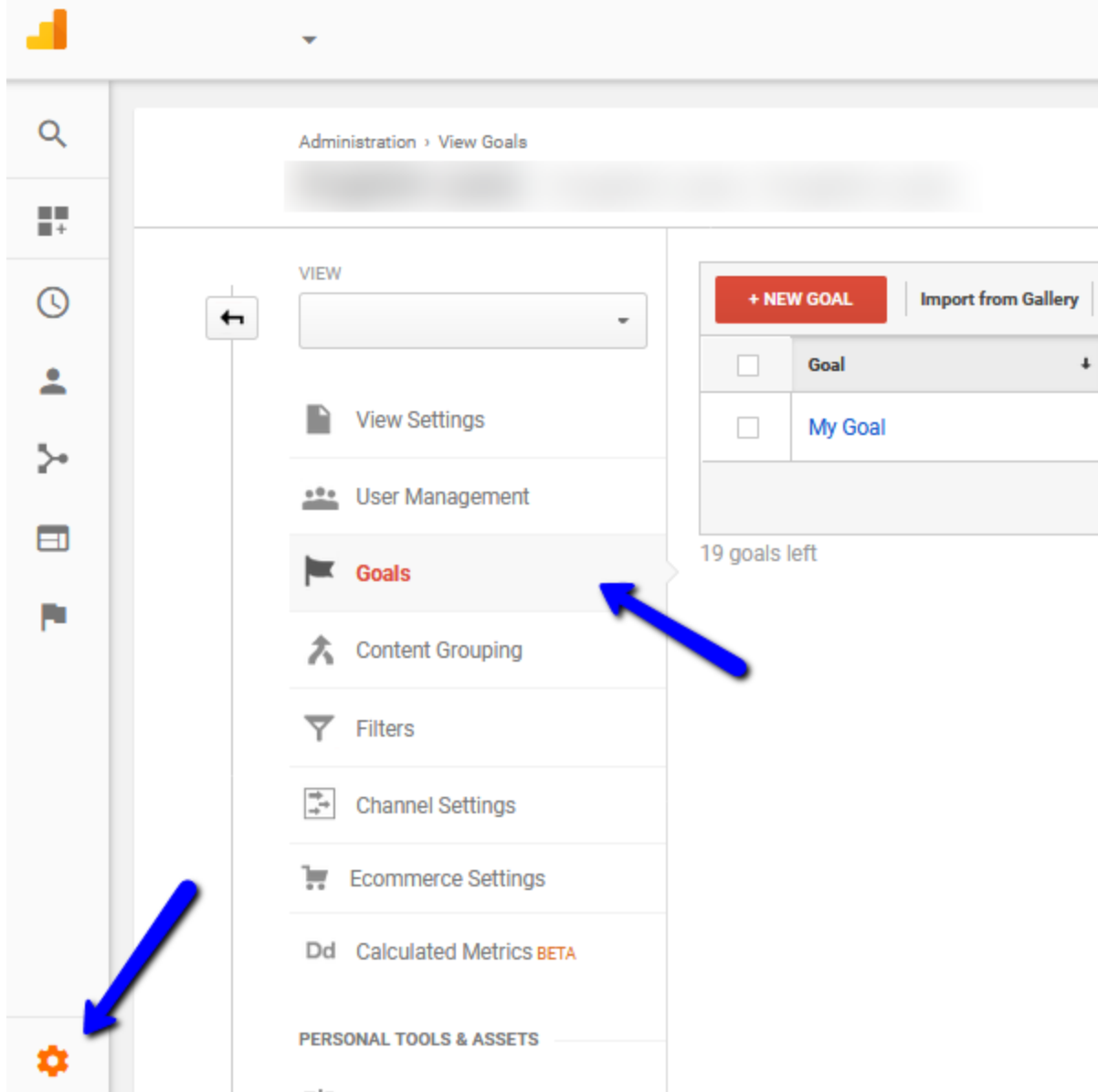
Click on the button *+New Goal* and fill in the details about the goal you want to track.
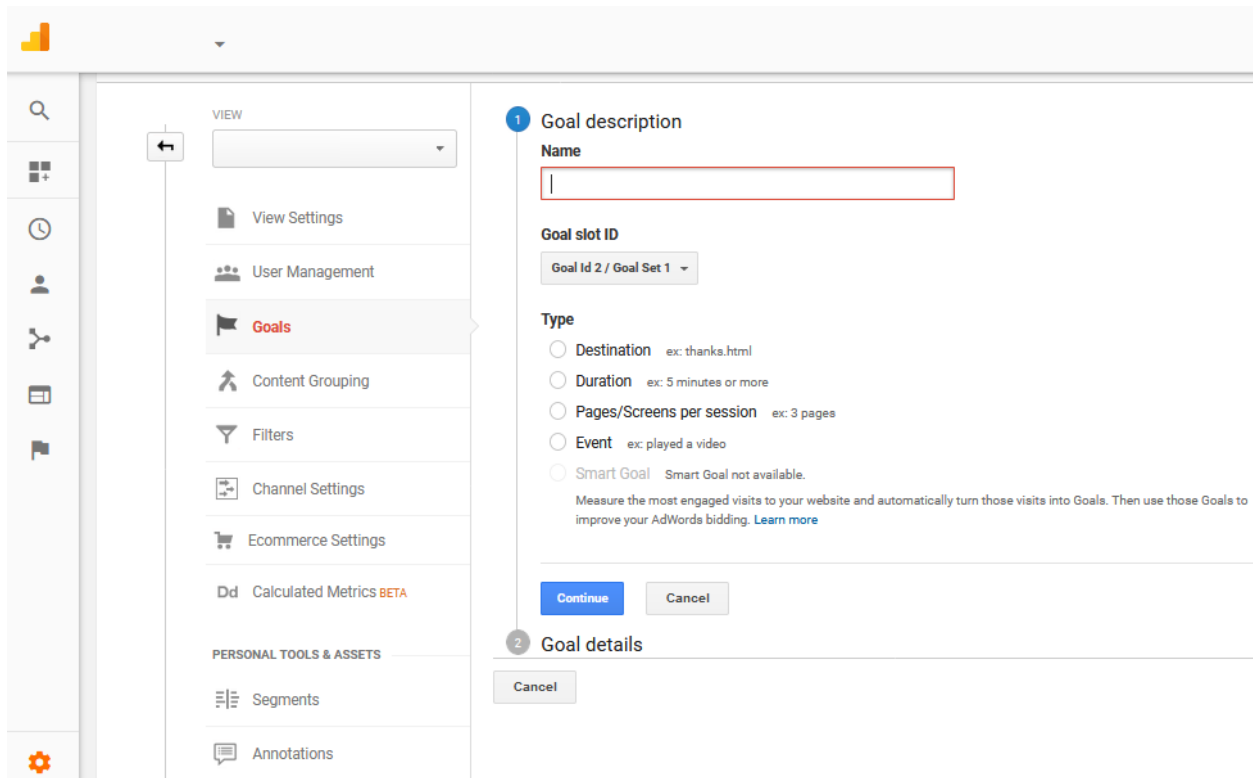
Once the goal is activated, Google Analytics will track all the traffic that resulted in goal completion.
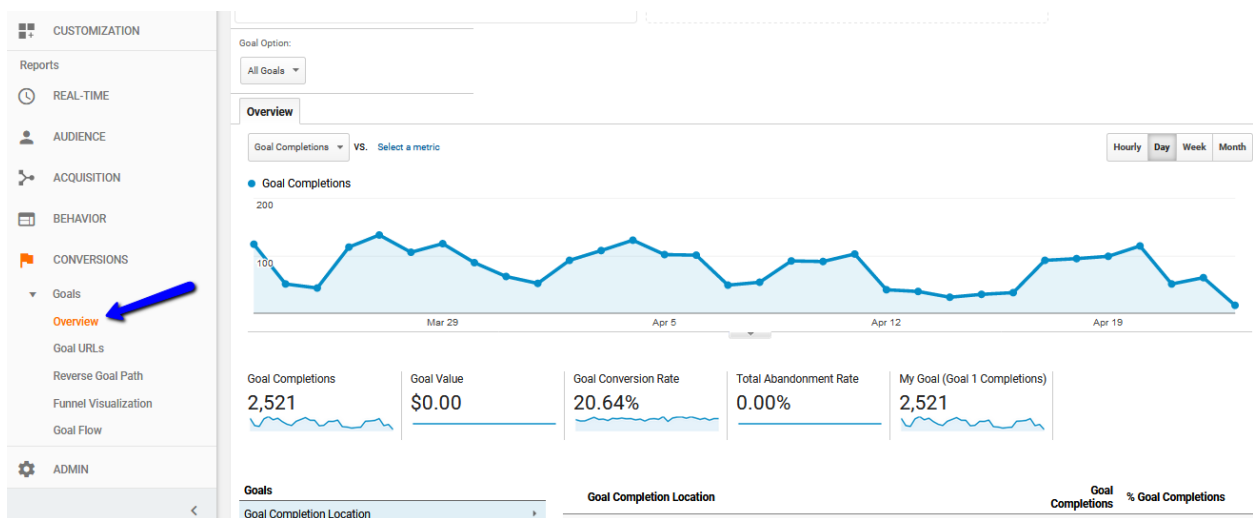
You will get additional data about the goal completion rate, sources, etc. This will enable you to determine which traffic helps with goal completion. It is also possible to assign a monetary value to each goal, in which case Google Analytics will also track and calculate goal value.

	Acquisition			Behavior			Conversions		
	Sessions	% New Sessions	New Users	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	Goal 1 Conversion Rate	Goal 1 Completion	Goal 1 Value
	12,215	70.66%	8,631	55.97%	3.09	00:04:11	20.64%	2,521	$0.00
1 ■ Organic Search	10,468			55.12%			21.25%		
2 ■ Direct	994			63.38%			16.30%		
3 ■ Referral	697			57.82%			17.50%		
4 ■ Social	56			60.71%			23.21%		

Advanced segments

Advanced segments are used to configure certain filters that create a customized view. Google Analytics still tracks all the data, all the traffic coming in, but for a segment, the data is limited by the filters you choose. This means that you might get to see only a part of the website traffic, which is relevant to the segment.

When it comes to content marketing and evaluating the performance of this strategy, advanced segments allow you to filter traffic by specific actions that help you understand the performance of the content you share online.

You will have to click on *+New Segment* to create a new one that will filter the data based on your criteria.

For example, use *Traffic Sources/Keyword* to filter traffic by a keyword used to reach your website, with both paid and unpaid traffic. On the other hand, if you want to focus on exploring the behavior and habits of mobile users, use *Technology/Mobile* option to filter the traffic coming from mobile. This way, you can click on the advanced segment and get the data about mobile users exclusively, which gives you insights into how they behave, what type of content is the most popular among them, what the conversion rate is, etc.

The criteria for segmentation include:

- Demographics (Age, gender, language, affinity category, in-market segment, other category, location)

- Technology (Operating system, system version, browser, browser version, device category, etc.)

- Behavior (Sessions, transaction, session duration, days since last session)

- Date of first session

- Traffic sources (Campaign, medium, source, keyword, filtering by session and filtering by users)

- Advanced segments (Conditions and sequences)

Campaign URL builder

Campaign URL builder is a very helpful tool for tracking content performance. It basically allows you to tag each URL based on different criteria, such as campaign source (search engines, newsletter, etc.), medium (banner, email, social media, etc.), campaign term, content, etc.

Campaign URL builder can then be linked to the Google Analytics account to show detailed information about each URL.

Shortening services

Another way to track the performance of the content is by using shortening services, such as [Bitly](#). These services basically allow you to track the content URL. You will create a custom URL through the service and then track its performance through the statistics that are available. You will get the data about the clicks, about geographic distribution, etc.
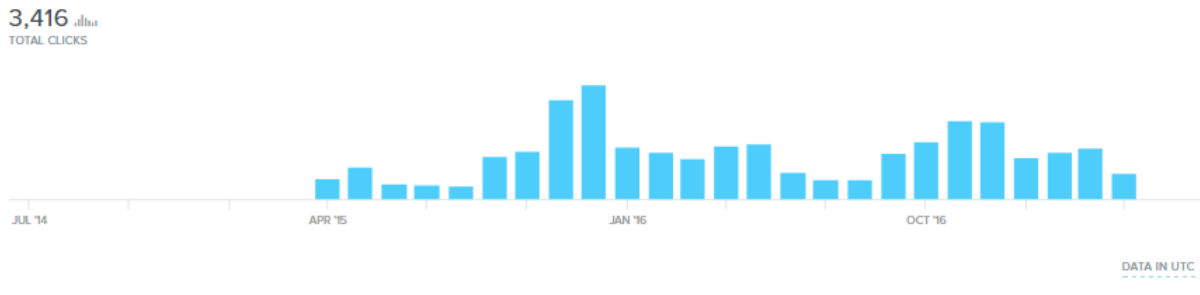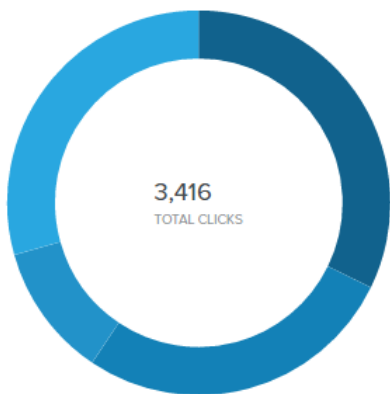
9
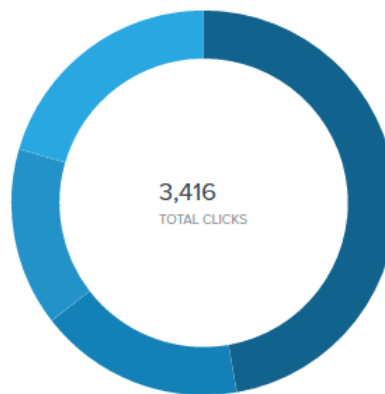
Content Marketing Strategy

9. Content Marketing Strategy

Once you know how content marketing works, how content is created, optimized, distributed and managed, you have the full picture. You get all the insights into things that make up content marketing, and therefore you get to design a strategy based on a deeper understanding of content and its role in marketing.

To make the best out of your content, to make sure that you benefit the most out of content marketing, start by developing the strategy, where you will determine the path you are going to take to achieve your goals.

Determine goals

You will first start with defining the goals. The goals in content marketing are often connected with the other types of online marketing, and with the mission you as a business have. When it comes to content marketing, determine how content helps you get to your goals. Here are some questions to help you with this:

- What do you want to achieve? (You want to increase sales, to generate new leads, etc.)
- How can content help you with this goal? (It will increase traffic, encourage signups, etc.)
- What kind of content would be the best to achieve this goal? (What your audience will appreciate, what they will find useful, etc.)

Choose the types of content

The second task is closely related to the previous one. When you determine the goals, you will also get to think about the types of content and which of them are the most suitable for achieving those goals. Analyze each type of content, how it is created and how it can be implemented online. When choosing the content type, always have in mind your own business and how you can adapt a certain piece of content in your business strategy.

Define your target group

Naturally, the next thing you will define is the target group. This should be done simultaneously when choosing the content type. The target group helps you create a strategy that is more personalized, more focused and thus more productive.

When you think about the target group during the content creation, this helps you create content that is focused on the end users. You get to think about what they would expect, need, appreciate, etc. You also get to think about how this content is going to make them feel. Will they be happy to read it? Will it be helpful or inspiring?

All these thoughts help you create content that resonates well with your target group and the main benefit is the fact that you get to connect with them. This kind of personalized approach creates that special bond between you and your audience. It helps you increase the level of loyalty and build your online reputation. It is what helps you acquire new customers and keep the old ones.

Start with content creation

Having finished with the preparation process, it is time to start content creation. During the content creation, as you go through the phases, always make sure you have your plan at hand to regularly look back on goals you want to achieve. This way, creating content will be more organized and you will be focused on goal completion.

Content tactics

The way people communicate has evolved over the years, which obviously affected the business world. During this time, businesses have been recognizing the emerging opportunities and how new ways of communication can be used to increase business success. The process of communicating with customers and gaining their attention has become a true challenge, and more and more businesses are struggling to get their message across. To make sure they overcome this obstacle, businesses have been introducing new strategies in the way they communicate with their audience. One of those is content creation as an opportunity to gain reputation.

As with any strategy, it helps to have a set of tactics you can use. These are techniques used to create content that is more engaging and generally performs better. The amount of content shared online gets bigger and bigger each year, and it is becoming more and more difficult to reach the online users and get them to actually read (or watch) your content. Fortunately, there are a couple of tactics that can help you with getting your content read (or watched).

Attention grabbers

Attention grabbers are statements, quotes or statistics that are used to attract the attention of the visitors. They are engaging, astonishing, interesting, funny, shocking, and their main purpose is to grab attention and "pull" the reader into the text.

Use the attention grabbers at the beginning of the text, preferably in the first sentence or the first paragraph. Add a statement that is shocking or provocative, stunning and surprising at the same time. The readers might agree or disagree, but this kind of statement will make them want to read and find out more.

Common attention grabbers are statistics, industry data, case study findings, controversial statements, and similar text that will get the readers interested in the topic and encourage them to read the rest of the article.

In terms of video content, a short snippet of the footage can be shown at the beginning as an attention grabber.

Questions

One of the reasons for using the search engines is to find a solution to a problem and you do that by asking a question. Search engines are asked a lot of questions each day, starting from *"How to use Google Analytics?"* to *"How to cook spaghetti Bolognese?"*. The best way to reach those users is to answer their question in an article, which will hopefully be ranked at the top of the search result page.

For content creators, this means that questions offer a variety of opportunities to create practical and useful content. The true value of such content is in the fact that with this content you get to help users solve the problem they have. If you understand your target group and if you are able to predict the problems and questions they might have, this gives you the edge as you get to prepare and make available the content they will find valuable. This kind of content performs well because it directly addresses the need online users have. As a matter of fact, you will notice quite a bit of articles, guides, and videos that start with a question word. Most common question word is *"how"*, followed by *"why", "what", "when"*, etc.

Storytelling

Storytelling is a process of sharing stories, embellishing the narratives and using them in the purpose of entertainment, education, or for business. It is the process of wrapping a message in a form of a story that is relatable and it brings out different kinds of emotions. Unlike promotional messages, storytelling focuses on the story and the emotion it creates, putting the promotional aspect into the background.

Storytelling stimulates imagination and creates a sense of community. These two features are the main reasons why storytelling has been so productive in the business world. In essence, storytelling connects the teller and the listener, creating a special bond which is built on a deeper understanding based on the story. Through the story, the teller tries to engage the

emotions of the listener, and this way that special bond is established. The story should inspire and persuade the viewers appealing to their emotions awakened by a compelling story.

In terms of business, storytelling is the process of developing a concept that promotes a story your audience can relate to. Instead of promotional language and direct persuasive activities to engage the viewers, a story is a subtle way to connect with them. Instead of being direct and promoting your brand, products or services, as a business, you develop a story that will attract the interest in your brand, products, or services you provide. You only need to get the audience interested using this story, after which you will use other techniques to convert the viewers into customers.

CTA

A CTA (call-to-action)is a link displayed as an image or as a text that invites the online visitors to take an action. The type of action can vary from website to website because the goals you have can be quite different, which means that the action you want to encourage can be as well. A CTA is clickable, so it is often referred to as a button. It should be engaging, concise, with a clear message for the user. Therefore, if you want the users to download your ebook, for example, make sure the CTA clearly says so.

The CTA takes the visitors to a specific page where the desired action is taking place. For example, if you want the users to fill out a form, the CTA will be linked to a page with that specific form. The text that is often seen on CTAs include:

- Download now
- Register now
- Get your ebook
- Sign up for exclusive access
- Get a coupon
- Attend a webinar
- Contact us
- Try it now

The purpose of the CTAs is to encourage a certain action, so here are some commonly used types of CTAs you could consider adding on your website:

Lead generation

This is a very common type of CTA nowadays. Basically, lead generation represents the process of gaining email addresses of potential customers, who are also referred to as leads. You do so by offering something to them for free. It can be an ebook, a guide, an audio file, a template, etc. Anything they can find valuable can be used in such an offer. To claim this offer, the users will have to provide their email address. Sometimes, instead of making the email address the only requirement for the access, you could add a form that will have to be filled out to claim the offer.

When asking for an email address only, the user gets access swiftly, and they are more likely to do so than filling a bunch of fields in a form. On the other hand, forms are great for getting to know the leads, which can be very helpful for email campaign segmentation.

Lead nurturing

Once you have generated leads, this means that you have gained new contacts, but this does not necessarily mean that you have been able to convert the visitors. To be able to achieve conversions, and to make sure you keep your customers engaged and loyal to your brand, you should nurture leads. This is mainly done through email marketing and the tactics used for this purpose include sending exclusive offers, enabling early access, premium features, etc. The concept is based on the interaction with the existing leads, and the CTA invites them to interact with you.

Read more

This is probably the most common CTA on a website. It is a read more button that invites the online visitors to click to access the full content. As such, it is often placed on the homepage, by which you invite and encourage the visitors to enter your website and explore content you offer. It can also be a part of email marketing. In this case, you would share a part of the content or an engaging description inviting the recipients to click on the read more button to check out the entire content.

Social sharing

Social sharing buttons on your website serve to encourage social sharing among your website visitors. This is a good way to improve reach on social media and work on word-of-mouth marketing because you expect visitors to recommend content they found on your website. However, make sure you post social sharing CTAs where it makes sense. This means that blog posts, tutorials, etc. are good places for these buttons. A subscription page or a page with a

form to fill are the places where these buttons would be a sort of intrusive and people are unlikely to share these pages anyway.

Plan content distribution

Content marketing does not end with content being created. One portion of traffic will come from organic searches, and you do have to be patient for such reach to happen. This occurs when online users look for search terms that take them to your content. Content distribution involves your effort for sharing and promoting this content online.

Various ways of content distribution are available, but to make sure you are taking advantage of them and optimizing your efforts, your content marketing strategy should include planning content distribution. The plan should include:

Distribution channels

The channels you have selected as the ones you will be using to share content. You will have to create profile/pages on those prior to starting content distribution. It is also recommended to customize each profile with images, description, links, etc.

Defined approach

You will have to define the approach you will be using, the way you are going to address your target group, and the plan you will follow when it comes to content distribution. What you need to do here is to define exactly how you are going to use channels to distribute content. Will your language be more formal or are you going to share funny GIFs and graphics as well? How is content going to be promoted? Are you counting on the organic reach or have you already planned a budget for paid promotion? These are all the questions that help you define the way you will use different distribution channels and tactics in the purpose of promoting your business and reaching new clients.

Schedule

It is helpful to have a plan of posting activity to keep you organized and on track with content distribution. You might want to post each day, a couple of days a week, or you might want to post only when you have new content to share. A posting schedule will be different from one channel to another. For example, you are more likely to share on Twitter a couple of times a day, while you are unlikely to do that on Reddit.

Promotions (Optional)

Promotions or contests can be a part of planned content distribution. This way you encourage users to share your content online and in return, they get to participate in a promotion and potentially win benefits, awards, exclusive access, etc.

Analyze the metrics

When everything is in place, all that is left to do is analyze. You should analyze each and every aspect of the content marketing strategy as you go on with the implementation of each phase. This will help you quickly learn about benefits and drawbacks of each action, and it allows corrective actions if necessary. As soon as your content is live on the internet, you are ready to start monitoring. Make sure you check the content performance before any promotion and distribution, and then compare the results after these tactics.

What is essential for good and productive analysis is the comparison. Lots of comparison of all the metrics that affect content performance guarantees that you find a way to maximize the efforts and shape your strategy in a way that gets best results.

The bottom line is that content marketing should be an organized and well thought through strategy. It should be a plan of activities you are going to conduct and how you are going to conduct them in a way that the strategy boosts your business and promote your brand among online users. A key to success is customization and using the approach that is perfectly tailored for your business. Perhaps a certain type of content might not be performing well on your website. Perhaps a CTA button is more effective than the link. All of these are the things you will learn along the way after you analyze the efficiency of the strategy and think about steps to improve it.

In the end, it is important to mention that content marketing should be integrated into overall business planning and business strategy. Since it affects and overlaps with other segments of business running, especially with online marketing, make sure you plan and analyze content marketing alongside with other strategies and how this segment can be implemented in a way that it supports other approaches and tactics you will be using in online promotion of your business.

10

Top Challenges of Implementing Content Marketing Strategy

10. Top Challenges of Implementing Content Marketing Strategy

On your path to success, you will encounter a lot of bumps. That is perfectly normal, regardless of the type of business you run. Being aware of the challenges that might await you, helps you prepare yourself and counter the negative effects these might cause.

Producing engaging content

Producing engaging content has been identified as the top challenge by a large group of marketers. Creating content might be easy, but creating good and engaging content is not. It requires a lot of time and effort. It requires research and devotion. Finally, it requires writing and editing skills. With all the other tasks and active campaigns, sometimes content creation can become a challenge.

One of the ways to overcome this challenge is to outsource content creation. Hiring someone to do this task for you will free up a lot of your time, which could be invested into different projects and assignments. Still, this imposes an additional cost for your business, which is why you have to be sure that this fits your overall business planning and budget. In this case, you will have to find a person who is able to deliver content of a certain standard.

Exploring different content types and tactics can also help with increasing the level of engagement. Your goal would be to explore metrics for each type and determine the formula that brings most benefits.

Measuring content ROI

Many businesses have difficulties in measuring ROI of their content marketing efforts. When analyzing ROI, there is a need to identify how each part of marketing strategy affected the return, and for this, you have to be able to quantify the exact return from the piece of content in question. This can often be quite difficult, as you do not always have the way of knowing which content results in a conversion.

The conversion path can also be difficult to track. For example, a user might find one of your articles, which got him interested, which is why he signed up for a newsletter. Later on, you send an email campaign, and after the same user clicked on an email link, he eventually bought from you. In this case, the conversion tracking will show that the email campaign resulted in a conversion, but in reality, it was the content that helped you gain a new customer. There are

more situations like these, where tracking conversion becomes an obstacle due to numerous factors, complicated conversion path being only one of them.

One way to increase the number of trackable conversions through content is to have a CTA in the actual content. This way, with that piece of content you immediately provide the link to the landing page, where you expect a conversion to happen. If the users click on the CTA in the actual content they have found, you will be able to track such conversions through the website analytics and in this case, you will be able to properly attribute the conversions to the content marketing.

When tracking is not possible, try comparing the overall influence the content has on your website performance. Compare the number of visits, signups and other metrics before active content marketing strategy and after that strategy has been implemented. Even though you still will not be able to calculate the exact ROI, you will get the insights into trends and tendencies affected by content creation and publication.

Producing content consistently

It is obvious that there is a tendency to publish content frequently, as all the research, white papers and case studies are showing that producing content consistently, such as once a day, does bring better results. Be that as it may, you will have to balance between quality and quantity. Keeping up with a busy publishing schedule might just set you out to fail. This kind of strategy requires lots of resources to keep the quality at the same level. Otherwise, the content quality will suffer.

In such a situation, one might be facing a real struggle. Is it better to keep up with the recommendations and publish once a day even if you are not completely satisfied with the content you have created? Or is it better to publish occasionally when you finish working on an extraordinary post? The answer is somewhere in between.

First of all, if you have the resources to keep the quality and quantity on a high level, then you should do so. Otherwise, try sacrificing quantity first. Instead of every day, go for one or two excellent posts per week. Then analyze the metrics and check the performance of the content. Once in a while, try to repurpose content to save time.

Even though publishing consistently at high standards is difficult, it is better to create truly amazing content occasionally than to publish low-quality content each day. Your audience will appreciate the quality over quantity because after all, it is better to interact with less content but to find that content truly worthy and useful.

Gaining visibility

Gaining visibility is another challenge that content marketers have. After you have spent so much time working on the content and after it is finally published and available for everyone to see it, it can be a bit disappointing and frustrating when there is no one actually watching. When you get no reactions, no visits, no feedback. This produces no results for the website, and even more importantly, it can influence you to start doubting your content, your ability to create content, etc.

For starters, have in mind that the amount of content published each day is astonishing. One look at the live stats, and you can see that there are more than two million blog posts published today and the number is going up by the second. This means that gaining visibility is a challenge most marketers will face.
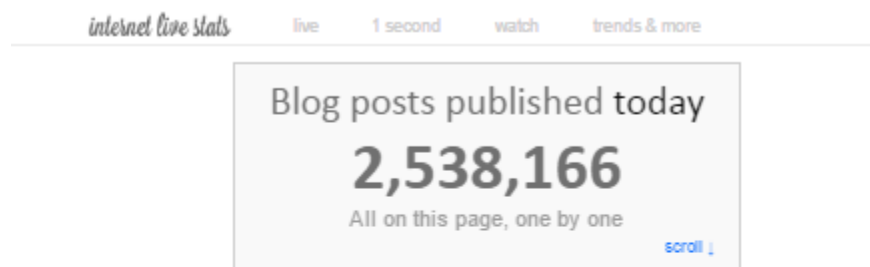
To combat this challenge, you will have to work on building your reputation. Gaining reputation online means that you get a group of followers who are loyal to your brand and who will interact with you through social media, emails, blog comments, etc. Quality is also a great way to work on your visibility because the content of high quality naturally earns links and shares, which also means that it will naturally work its way up in the search engine results.

Paid promotion

Another trend that has been taking over is the paid content promotion over platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. These are great ways to promote your content using advanced targeting options and getting the right people to see your content. It helps with growing your audience and it generally helps you with gaining visibility. However, the main problem with paid promotion is the budget you will need to prioritize for this form of advertising. For smaller companies, and sometimes even for the large ones, it can be a problem. When you also take

into account the difficulty of calculating the ROI, the budget for the content promotion sometimes just might not be a priority.

To overcome this obstacle, start by focusing on what you have to work with. Even it if is a tight budget, come up with a plan on how you can use it to maximize the efficiency of paid promotion. Set up your goals properly, and try to find the best way to reach them. For example, with a limited budget at your disposal, try using paid promotion on Facebook only, leaving Twitter and other social networks with no paid advertising. Another way to get paid promotion is to work with influencers. You give them your product to test and to review, and in return, they share their opinion online with their followers.

A good thing about being aware of these challenges is the possibility to prepare yourself. When you analyze each challenge and how it can actually affect your business in a negative way, you will develop a strategy that predicts the obstacles that might occur along the way. As a result, you will be able to prepare solutions for the obstacles if and once they occur. This allows you go along your path without disruptions while staying on track with content marketing strategy.

11

Content Marketing and Online Marketing

11. Content Marketing and Online Marketing

We have mentioned the connection between content marketing and online marketing on several occasions throughout this ebook, and now it is time to explore this connection in details.

Online marketing, also called internet or digital marketing, is the method of advertising products or services using online tools, strategies and methods. Unlike with traditional marketing, online marketing is completely oriented towards the internet and reaching the users online. Content marketing, as the method of using content for online promotion, is a part of online marketing. Just like search engine marketing, email marketing, and social media marketing, content marketing is one segment of online marketing that is focused on one particular aspect, in this case, content. Each of these segments is connected, and together they contribute to online marketing.

In fact, as you will see later on, content marketing can be seen as a base for all other parts of online marketing. It is a core of every online promotion, and it is where every campaign, paid or free, starts.

Content marketing and SEO

Content generates traffic. It is as simple as that. Many businesses have traffic generation as one of their primary goals when starting content creation. The reason why traffic is important is the fact that increases exposure and influence of your brand. It helps with expanding the reach which often results in gaining new leads or customers. Search engine optimization is focused on organic, also called free, promotion, which means your goal, in this case, is to reach users through search results pages and by naturally gaining links from other blogs or websites.

These are the primary goals of SEO, and content marketing provides a sort of foundation to achieve them. In both cases, with SERP or backlinks, you need the reason for your website to be shown or linked to. You need to provide some quality that will help you differentiate, that will provide the answer to the user query. You achieve this by creating content.

Content marketing and SEM

Even though SEO is a part of SEM, in this section, the focus is on paid advertising of search engine marketing, and how content marketing influences this part of your business. SEM includes promotion through search engines ads. Through this promotion, there is a tendency to directly advertise products or services and thus make them easily accessible to the online users.

This is a very productive sort of promotion, as it gives you full control over the campaign costs and allows you to monitor the ROI.

However, due to a large number of ads displayed every day, some companies are deciding to resort to a subtle kind of advertising and this is where content marketing comes into play. So, instead of directly advertising your product or services, you advertise content.

In order for this strategy to be a success, several criteria need to be fulfilled. Firstly, you will need truly extraordinary content. It has to be engaging, interesting, appealing and well-targeted. It has to be worthy of promoting it. You will also need a clearly visible CTA in the content, which directly leads to a conversion page where you get the opportunity to convert the visitors. Even though this is a subtle approach, and you do not want to be too promotional, this is essential to help you boost your profit and actually make this campaign pays off.

Content marketing and social media marketing

To be active on social media, you will need to post regularly. Sometimes you might share content published by different websites and blogs, but to make sure that you gain authority and build your reputation, you will absolutely need your own content. The format of such content can vary, but the main point is that there is uniqueness and originality to it. Of course, high quality is another characteristic crucial for building a reputation on social networks.

In that sense, content marketing provides the material to be shared on social media. Content marketing is simply a method used to achieve these goals you have defined within social media marketing strategy. Content enables you to engage the social media followers, to get them to comment, like or share, to provide feedback, to visit your website, to register for an event, etc. This means that content marketing provides the basis for developing social media marketing presence, regardless if you use status updates, images, videos or blog posts to achieve this.

Content marketing and email marketing

Email marketing represents the online promotion of products or services through an email campaign. It is the way of communicating with the subscribers through email messages in order to establish and improve the relationship with them. This communication has to encourage users to interact and take action, and for this to happen, for this communication to be successful, you will need content.

Content can be an actual part of the email campaign, where you share the snippets or key findings in the email message. It can also be linked to, in which case the email message is simply an invitation for the subscribers to access the content which is linked to. This form of content

distribution is particularly effective due to a high performance of the email marketing. It is also easily trackable, which helps you analyze the efficiency of such content promotion.

Content marketing and lead generation

The connection of content marketing and lead generation is actually directly related to email marketing. Lead generation is the process of collecting email addresses of online users who are considered potential sales contacts. This means that leads are contacts that are more likely to become your customers in comparison to other subscribers. You then contact leads through an email campaign in the effort to convert them. In this sense, leads are more valuable contacts, and lead generation often requires more effort than simply having a signup button on the website.

This is where content marketing comes into play. One of the most common strategies for lead generation you will encounter nowadays involves offering free content in exchange for an email address. Besides an email address, there might be a short form to fill in, which usually contains the fields that might be relevant for the website owner in terms of learning more about the audience, as well as for mailing list segmentation. The form can include subscriber's age, location, the size of the company, the role in the company, etc.

For this strategy to be effective, to make sure you attract only the quality leads, the content used in the process needs to meet certain standards:

- High-quality content - This is essential for any content marketing strategy. High-quality content is generally a content that performs better, which also helps with lead generation process.

- Designed for the target group - The content you share with your leads should be designed specifically for them. This ensures they will be interested in such content.

- Available - Make your content available to all the potential leads by featuring it on your website. The best place is near the top of the page, or even as a pop-up window.

- Easily accessible - You should not make it too complicated to access the content. Online users are impatient and when they need information, they want to find it fast. Supply a form to fill if necessary, and leave only the most essential fields to be mandatory when accessing the content. Also, have in mind the mobile users and make the content easily accessible to them as well.

Benefits of content marketing

Benefits of content marketing are numerous because this strategy, directly and indirectly, affects many aspects of business running, including other parts of online marketing. Some of the most commonly defined benefits obtained through content marketing include:

Gaining attention

This is the first part of getting people to know about your business. Content essentially helps you meet the new online users and if content provides value and sparks interest, it will be enough to attract the attention of the users and encourage them to learn more about your business. Regardless if the content is distributed through social media, email marketing or paid ads, gaining attention is the first step in achieving your ultimate goal, i.e. getting new customers.

Gaining reputation

While gaining attention is beneficial when it comes to attracting new visitors, content marketing has a more profound role. Through consistent content marketing strategy that is focused on providing quality content, relevant to your target group, you get a certain reputation. If you are constantly providing quality and useful information to your followers, you will become influential in your niche, thus you will gain respect from your followers. This can all help with promoting your brand and ensuring a certain level of loyalty in the long run.

Lead generation

Another, perhaps the major benefit for companies is lead generation through content marketing. Content is consistently one of the most used techniques for lead generation, which means content marketing has a huge impact on the initial process of acquiring new customers. At this point, the leads are only potential sales contact, but the successful communication will help you deepen this relationship.

Lead nurturing

Here is another email marketing method which is essentially used to establish and maintain a good relationship with your leads. The purpose of this method is to convert the leads into customers or to keep the existing customers loyal to your brand. This is another aspect where content marketing comes into play as the opportunity to share custom content designed for lead nurturing. By giving them exclusive access to such content, you establish communication and engage the recipients.

Sales

The sales cycle starts with the interest in your brand and it ends with the actual sales. Through this cycle, a customer goes through a couple of phases, where content has a crucial role. Content enables you to position your company in the search engine results pages, to gain reputation and to provide true value to your followers. It helps you engage them, and keep them loyal. All of this combined is going to boost the sales and affect your business in a positive way. Content indirectly leads you to increase profit you generate through sales.

In essence, content marketing can be regarded as a foundation of all your business efforts and strategies online. It is a starting point when first designing a website and it assists you until the sale is realized. Different types of content and different content strategies are used along the way, but ultimately, it is all done with one idea in mind - content marketing assists with overall online marketing efforts providing much-needed value to distinguish your business from many others on the market. Finally, the content becomes a sort of a connection between you and online users, becoming essential in the process of converting the online users, using all online marketing strategies that are available to you.

12

Content Marketing and Influencer Marketing

12. Content Marketing and Influencer Marketing

Development and expansion of content in online marketing and its usage in many aspects of online promotion have slowly led to the appearance of another form of marketing that can be seen as a part of content marketing. It is influencer marketing and the main reason why it is connected with content marketing is the fact that involves advertising through influencer's content.

What is influencer marketing?

Influencer marketing, also called influence marketing, is a type of online marketing focused on working with individuals who have a certain influence in a particular sector. The influence means they have the power to influence and persuade their followers. This way, an influencer is able to sway the audience and affect their buying habits.

The influence is built slowly over a course of time and it represents a cumulative effort of an individual to establish a name and an authority for themselves in a particular sector. Even though it is a long-term effort, creating influence opens up so many opportunities to influencers, especially in terms of business opportunities and chances to work with renowned brands from the industry they work in.

The characteristics of the influencers include:

- Being an expert in the industry
- Knowing the market and current trends
- Having the group of followers and supporters
- Earning their trust
- Knowing the group well and being able to address them directly

How to start with influencer marketing?

As seen, influencer marketing provides a lot of benefits, which is why you should explore ways you can promote your business through this kind of online marketing strategy. Since this is a planned campaign, there is a set of steps you should follow to help you when starting out with influencer marketing.

Identify the influencers

You will first need to identify the influencers you want to work with. To make sure you pick only those worthy of working with, and to make sure your campaign really is effective, choose the influencers whose target group matches yours. Since your business will be promoted to this audience, you need to focus on the specific target group who could actually become interested in your business. For example, if you provide email marketing software, you will need to find an influencer who is followed by those who could be interested in such software.

Another aspect you should have in mind when choosing the influencers, you want to work with, is whether your business is global or local. Considering this aspect will also help narrow down the list of potential influencers because this also has a direct influence on the campaign performance.

The best way to start looking for the influencers is to use the search engines. You can type the keywords you are interested in and check the search engine results to see which ones match your query. Sometimes adding a word "influencers" into the search term can help you find ready-made lists of influencers in that particular industry. Social media is another great place for searching influencers because every influencer uses at least one social media platform to interact regularly with his or her target group. Besides this manual searching method, there are tools that help you identify and rank influencers based on different criteria, such as the number of followers, blog authority, etc.

Rank the influencers

The reason why you should rank the influencers is the fact that you will probably identify a couple of influencers in the sector of your interest. Sometimes you might want to work with one or several influencers at the same time. However, all the influencers you identify might not make the cut, and you will actually end up working with selected few or even one. To make sure you select the right influencers, the best idea is to rank them.

There are two ways to do this process. If you are using a tool to find influencers, sometimes you will have an option to sort and compare influencers. This will basically give you a list of already ranked influencers. The other way to select those you want to work with is to create your own custom ranking system. Start by creating a table and then fill in the names of the influencers you have identified. Then try to fill in some of the following data about each influencer:

- Number of social followers (separately for each network)
- Number of subscribers
- Average monthly blog visits

- Have they worked with your competitors?

- Reach of similar collaborations organized in the past (social media shares, comments, blog visits, etc.)

Of course, it is not always possible to get all the data from this list, but it is recommended that you find out as much as possible about the influencer you are interested in working with, as well as about the previous campaigns the influencer has participated in. This all helps you evaluate:

- The influence that particular influencer has

- The planned outcome you could expect from such campaign

- How likely this collaboration is to happen

Determine the goal of the campaign

Once you know who you are working with, it is time to think about the campaign and how you are going to organize everything. For starters, take the time to think about the goals. The campaign goals help you evaluate the success of the campaign, which is why they are valuable metric to have in any strategy. Goals also help you shape the path and the approach you are going to take with the campaign, allowing you to choose actions and tactics that will help with achieving these goals.

Alternatively, you can think about the goals before even choosing the influencers if you believe that goals could actually help you with choosing the perfect influencer to work with.

Think about content

This is the point where you focus on the content you want to create in collaboration with an influencer. Firstly, there is a possibility to have your own content where you will use influencer marketing campaign to promote it. In this case, the influencer is not involved in content creation, but instead, it is simply the one who recommends it. On the other hand, you can have the influencer working alone on the content that is going to be designed in a way that it promotes your business, along with the products or services you offer. Some influencers find this approach more appealing because they have the creative freedom to design the content in a way that matches their style. In the end, the content creation can be a true collaboration, where you as a business will participate in content creation alongside with the influencer.

The type of content you are going to choose is determined by:

- Your business goals

- The influencer's idea

- The target group expectations

Get in touch with the influencer

Up until this point, it has all been about preparation and your plans how you want this collaboration to be conducted. Obviously, a great part will depend on the person you are working with, which you will learn once you get in touch with the influencer. The process is quite simple. You prepare the offer and you get in touch in order to pitch that offer. The best way to do is through an email which ideally should:

Be personalized

This approach is proven to be the most effective with email campaigns so there is no reason to avoid it when contacting the influencers. To get the recipient interested in the matter, use a custom and engaging subject line. Also, make sure you address the influencer by his or her name. The personalized approach shows that you have done the research and that you are familiar with the person you are going to potentially work with.

Explain the offer

The second part of the email includes the offer for collaboration. This is where you explain all the details about your plans and ideas. Make sure your offer is interesting and properly explained so that you get the influencer interested. Have in mind that yours is not the only offer the influencer will have, so your offer needs to stand out.

Highlight the benefits

To go a step further, highlight the reason why the influencer should work with you. Focusing on benefits of such collaboration will encourage the influencer to consider your offer.

Provide contact details

Finally, you want to get a response from the influencer, as well as feedback about the offer you proposed. This means you should provide a method for an influencer to contact you, and preferably, you should provide a couple of methods, such as a phone number, an email address, social media profiles, etc.

Major benefits of influencer marketing

This strategy has been popularized greatly in the recent years, and it is a trend you will need to look out for, but to understand how your business can actually benefit from working with influencers, here are some of the main benefits of influencer marketing.

Expanding reach

When you decide to work with influencers, the most obvious benefit is the possibility to reach their audience. This kind of campaign is oriented at the audience that does not necessarily have connections or know about your business at all. In this case, you have the opportunity to expand your reach, which usually results in expanding the number of leads, customers, website visitors, etc.

Targeted campaign

Choosing to work with an influencer is a process that involves going through several criteria, but one of the most important ones is choosing the influencers based on their target group. When you choose an influencer whose target group could really be interested in your business, you get to organize a highly-targeted campaign, and such campaign is most likely to get good results.

Boosting sales

Since influencers have the ability to affect their audience and their buying habit, it is only natural to expect to boost sales through such actions. To make sure you are able to track these sales and actually account them to influencer marketing, make sure you use trackable links for the products mentioned by the influencer.

Increasing the influence

Unlike sales, which are usually easier to track, gaining influence is a benefit you will find more difficult to measure. However, this benefit is obviously a result of such campaign, because a recommendation from an influencer will have a positive effect on your business and on the reputation you have among the online users. In this sense, working with influencers actually, helps you build your own influence and authority online through this recommendation.

Influencer marketing is not an absolutely necessary part of online marketing, but a strategy that could be quite effective for some type of businesses. It is important to recognize the opportunities it can provide for your company and whether it is something you should focus on.

Rather than being an ongoing strategy, influencer marketing is actually a strategy you should use occasionally when you notice a possibility to promote your business through such form of online marketing. In the end, all that matters is your business, and if you believe that working with influencers could help you take your business to the next level, this is a strategy you want to further explore and determine how to organize it to get the most out of it.

13

Tools and Apps to Help You with Content Marketing

13. Tools and Apps to Help You with Content Marketing

Carrying out tasks in content marketing gets easier with the right tools. There are tools for each and every segment of the process, but this does not mean that you need or have to use all of them. What you need is to choose a set of tools and apps that really do make your job on day-to-day basis easier. You should feel comfortable using these tools, and preferably they should save time and make things easier for you.

While we will suggest a certain part of tools and apps you will find beneficial in content marketing, most of them have alternatives. This means that you need to focus on features the tool provides. Then explore different versions and similar tools that are available on the market, and choose the one you prefer. Some of the tools are free, while some require a payment to gain access. Some offer a limited amount of features for free, with a paid upgrade to gain full access. With paid tools, there is usually a trial period during which you enjoy a free access to all of the features for a limited period of time.

When it comes to small businesses, starting out with free versions is a great way to explore the options that are available. At this point, the number of needed features is not as extensive, which usually means that free versions will suffice. You also have to be able to recognize the growing needs of your business and when it is time to upgrade and move on to a more complex, and often more expensive, tool or app.

Content creation tools and apps

The following list of tools will help you with different aspects of content creation. It includes tools for written, visual, and audio/video content.

Writing

[Headline analyzer]

This tool shows suggestions on how to write a better title. For each title, you get a score, and the score changes as you modify the title. You will see how the tool helps you choose the optimal title or even get some new ideas.

[Title capitalization]

If the rules for title capitalization are a bit blurry, here is a tool that does the work for you, without the need for you to remember the rules.

[Evernote](#)

Evernote is an organization tool that helps you keep track of all your writing projects, notes, ideas, and files.

[Hemingway App](#)

This tool helps you improve your writing by focusing primarily on the style. It highlights complex or confusing sentences and it shows word alternatives to make the text more readable.

[Grammarly](#)

Grammarly is another tool to improve your writing skills. The primary focus of this tool are grammatical and spelling mistakes, for which you are offered suggestions on how to fix them.

[Write Well](#)

If you need inspiration along the way, take a look at this resource that offers a set of writing templates which you can customize based on your own business.

[Keyword Planner](#)and [UberSuggest](#)

You will need to use keywords when creating content, which is where these two tools can help. Basically, they give you keyword ideas related to the keyword you enter into the search box. Besides content creation, these keyword suggestions are also helpful for SEO and SEM campaigns.

Designing

Since visual content can greatly improve the performance of written content, here are a couple of tools to help you with designing images. These are quite handy even if you are not a professional designer.

[Jing](#)

Jing allows capturing and sharing images and video. It also provides some basic visual elements, such as adding text, arrows, etc.

[Nimbus screenshot and screencast](#)

This tool is the alternative to a previous one. It comes as a software to download or it can be used as a browser extension. The key features include capturing screen as images or videos, which can be very helpful with content creation.

Skitch

Skitch is Evernote's app that provides the tools to share ideas and collaborate on projects. It allows adding shapes and text to the existing or captured images, adding annotations, etc. It is linked to your Evernote account, where you can store design projects alongside writing projects and notes.

Canva

Canva is an extraordinary tool for designing your own images and graphics using plenty of ready-made templates, shapes, and layouts. It uses drag-and-drop method to combine elements and a set of tools to customize each image or infographic. It is quite straightforward and versatile, a perfect tool if you want custom designs.

Infogram

This tool enables you to make infographics and charts using predesigned images, icons, and layouts which you can customize.

Stencils

Stencils offers tools and features to create engaging images. The features include more than 960,000 background photos (including royalty-free ones), over 200,000 icons and graphics, numerous templates, Google web fonts, etc.

Wordle

You can use this tool to create the word clouds. You simply paste the text or words you want to appear in the cloud and the tool does the work.

Image Color Picker

Matching colors is an important part of image design, so here is an awesome tool where you basically upload an image, click on the color on the image, and the tool shows you the color code.

Placeit

Placeit is a great place for product mockups. All you need to do is provide a screenshot or a URL and the tool will generate the mockups across different devices.

[Haiku Deck](#)

If you want to create presentations, this tool is a good choice with lots of features to polish and style your presentations. Templates are available, as well as access to free creative commons images.

Photo sharing websites

Photo sharing websites offer free or paid images that can be used for visual content marketing. This option is very helpful when you are not able to make your own images. Here are several websites that provide images and graphics to download.

[Gratisography](#)

[Pixabay](#)

[Freepik](#)

[GettyImages](#)

Audio/Video

The purpose of the following tools is to help you with audio and video recording and editing.

[Audacity](#)

Audacity is a multi-track audio editor and recorder.

[ScreenFlow](#)

Screenflow is a software for Mac that enables screen recording, screencasting, and video editing.

[Camtasia](#)

Camtasia enables easy video editing, with a drag-and-drop editor. Besides importing and editing videos, it also enables screen recording.

[Audioblocks](#)

A subscription-based resource, Audioblock offers royalty free music, sound effects, and loops.

[Audiojungle](#)

This community offers over 500,000 tracks and sounds to download.

Content optimization tools and apps

Within this group, you will find tools and apps that enable content optimization. These are mostly SEO tools because one of the essential parts of search engine optimization is optimization of content.

[Smallpdf](#)

In case PDFs are part of your daily work, you will find this tool quite useful. It offers features to convert from Word to PDF, JPG to PDF, Excel to PDF and vice versa. Other features include merging, splitting, rotating and compressing PDF files.

[Remove'em](#)

Over-optimization of the anchor text can be an issue and it may have a negative impact on your SEO, which is why you will benefit from this tool. It basically identifies the anchor text diversity and it shows if and where your website is at risk of anchor text over-optimization.

[Word to Clean HTML](#)

Convert the Word documents to HTML using this converter. It strips the text from the invalid or proprietary tags, leaving you with clean HTML.

[Copyscape](#)

Copyscape is probably the best-known tool for analyzing a text for plagiarism. This helps you check the originality of the content before it is published.

[Varvy](#)

Varvy is a great SEO tool to assist with complete website analysis, including pagespeed, accessibility, etc. When it comes to content optimization, this tools can detect the issues such as the validity of HTML, image optimization, page headers, etc.

[Schema](#)

Search engines have created structured data called Schema. Schema.org provides the vocabulary of formats necessary to add information to your website content. As a result, this enables you to markup your pages and make them better optimized for search engines.

[Yoast SEO](#)

The tool provides real-time content analysis with features to optimize your WordPress website and the content you share on the blog.

[Broken Link Checker](#)

This is a plugin that detects broken links in your blog posts, pages, comments, etc. Since broken links have a negative influence on SEO, this tool can help a lot with optimizing your website. It also detects missing images and redirects.

Content management tools and apps

When it comes to content management, you will need tools to help you organize your content creation activity, as well as to monitor content performance. Management tools and apps offer a lot of interesting features including automation of certain tasks, scheduling, the collaboration between team members, etc.

[Basecamp](#)

Basecamp is a tool to organize your projects and communication with team members. Features such as to-dos, chats, scheduling, file exchange, etc. are all helpful with project and content management, especially if those involve a collaboration of several people.

[Divvy](#)

Divvy a platform that supports content creation and workflow. It helps you stay organized, streamline the process of content creation and collaborate across teams.

[Mintent](#)

Mintent is a content automation platform which helps you with content management providing tools such as content workflow automation, project management, measuring content production, targeting messages and customers in the buying cycle, etc. It integrates with commonly used platforms such as WordPress, Drupal, Google Analytics, social media, etc.

[Curata](#)

Curata is a CMP platform that assists with content management, analytics and measuring content impact. It also supports curation software which enables you to find, curate and share great content to completely define your social media strategy.

[Gather Content](#)

Centralized content production, especially if you are working with a team, is the best way to stay organized and keep up with the clear workflow. This software enables such collaboration. Planning, organizing and managing content creation is much more productive with this kind of management tool.

Content distribution tools and apps

Content distribution is the process of sharing your content online through different channels, and the most important tools you will need here should support publishing content simultaneously on several platforms and scheduling. These are real time-savers when it comes to content distribution.

[TweetDeck](#)

TweetDeck assists with management of Twitter account or multiple Twitter accounts. It contains columns to display specific content such retweets, messages, tweets that contain a specific word or phrase, etc.

[Hootsuite](#)

Hootsuite is a leading platform in the realm of social media management. It provides a dashboard for managing the social profiles, as well as analytics to monitor trends and how content shared through social media is performing. The premium plans support numerous app integrations, custom branded URLs, contests, and many other features that can help you fully master social media and take advantage of the possibilities this kind of content distribution offers.

[Buffer](#)

This is another social media management platform you can explore in the attempt to optimize your work online. Besides integrations for the most popular social networks, post scheduling, link shortening and tracking, other features include timing tool, social analytics, calendar, etc. All of this combined helps you manage and monitor your presence on social media.

[Social Pilot](#)

This platform's main features include social media scheduling, social media calendar, analytics and team collaboration. These are all perfect for optimizing content distribution and making content marketing strategy more efficient

[Storify](#)

Storify allows creating and sharing stories within an app that support features such as drag-and-drop re-ordering, social sharing, commenting. Advanced features include custom CSS styling, SEO optimization, automated content curation, content approval workflow, etc.

Tools to find influencers

As influencer marketing can take part in your content marketing strategy, you will benefit from the following tools used to look for influencers. Through these tools, you basically search for people who are associated with certain keywords.

Buzzsumo

When you search for a specific topic, you get the list of influencers and bloggers related to the topic ranked based on the metrics such as page and domain authority, the number of followers, retweet ratio, etc. The platform also offers some advanced features such as assistance with outreach, filters, and reporting tools.

Followerwonk

This software helps you search for influencers on Twitter. It allows sorting the influencers using different filters as well as comparing them using "Compare Users" feature.

Keyhole

This is the hashtag and keyword tracking tool that helps you find relevant content and influencers.

Klout

It allows analysis and measurement of the individual's influence on social networks, which is expressed with Klout score, a numerical value between 1 and 100.

Kred

This tool uses an algorithm to calculate two scores called "influence" and "outreach". Twitter and Facebook activities contribute to the score and are measured to calculate the influence.

How to choose the right tools?

First of all, explore the options you have. Sometimes you might not even be aware that there are tools that can be of great assistance in your daily work. Explore the tools based on the different section you need help with, and check out the most common features they include. Think about how you can benefit from these features. Think about which features would you consider must-have. Your goal is to optimize your work by saving time and getting some valuable insights into the performance of the content you create.

Many tools that are mentioned in this ebook, as well as their alternatives which might not be mentioned at all, offer similar features. In this case, choosing one over the other might just be

based on your own preference. The good thing is that most of them do offer a free trial. This is the best way to make sure a tool is right for you before you decide to purchase a particular plan. Make sure you explore features that are available with a free plan or a free trial, and check if the particular tool is something that you can use in your daily work.

Not using any tools can mean that you are missing out on many possibilities and opportunities to grow your business. On the other hand, using too many of them might be a sign you are wasting your effort and budget on the tools you do not actually need, nor is your business gaining any benefits from those. Ideally, you should focus on a selected few. For example, select only one content management tool and take a look at how you can use it in a way that it optimizes content management for your business.

14

Content Marketing Glossary

14. Content Marketing Glossary

1. Affiliate marketing – Affiliate marketing is based on reaching visitors and customers through the network of affiliates who promote the product for you. It is a performance-based marketing because the affiliates are paid based on the achieved goals.

2. Algorithm – It is a set of rules and instructions followed by a computer program. Search engines use an algorithm to rank the websites and show the most relevant results to the users.

3. B2C – B2C (business to customer) is the exchange of information and transactions between a company on one side and the customers on the other.

4. Backlink – A backlink is a link from one website to the other web resource. Backlinks are used as one of the factors that influence Google ranking system.

5. Backlink profile – Backlink profile is the collection of websites that link to a particular website.

6. Bing Ads – An advertising program that enables advertising through Bing search engine.

7. Bookmark – It is a URL that is stored and can easily be accessed later.

8. Brainstorm – To brainstorm means to gather ideas that spontaneously come to your mind. This is a technique that helps with developing creativity and problem-solving.

9. Brand – A brand is a name, a term or a product design that is associated with a particular product or organization which make them recognizable on the market.

10. Broadcast – To broadcast means to make public. In the online world, it refers to publication through internet media, such as a podcast, a video, etc.

11. CMP – Content marketing platform, used for content management, distribution, etc.

12. Crawler – A web crawler, also known as a spider, is an Internet bot. Its purpose is to find and index content on the internet so that the content can be included in the search results.

13. CTA – Call to action is a button or a link that invites users to take an action.

14. Curation – This term is used in reference to content curation and it includes activities of gathering and publishing information related to a specific topic.

15. Domain authority – Also abbreviated DA, domain authority is a score developed by Moz, that shows how well a website will rank in the SERP. It ranges from 0 to 100.

16. Email spam filter – These are tools developed by email service providers to sort between wanted and unwanted email messages.

17. Email marketing – Email marketing is a part of online marketing focused on establishing the connection with the online users and promoting a business through email communication.

18. Engagement – Engagement is the ability to encourage a certain action, to inspire online users to do something you see as relevant for your business.

19. Extension – Extensions are downloaded and added to a website to add new features. They are also called plugins.

20. Follower – A follower is a person who supports you, and this support is usually expressed by following a social media account or joining the mailing list.

21. Google AdWords – The advertising program enabling advertising through Google search engine.

22. HTML–Hypertext Markup Language is a standardized system for tagging text files.

23. HTML editor – The editor inside CMS platform enabling you to access and alter HTML code.

24. Inbound link – An inbound link is a so-called receiving link. It means that someone has linked to your website.

25. Index – To index a page means that search engines crawlers have been able to access the page and make it available when a relevant search query is conducted.

26. Keyword – Keyword is a word or phrase that is associated with website content.

27. Landing page – A landing page is an entry page where the online users access the website. It can be a click-through page, after which the user continues the visit, or lead

generation page, also called as a lead capture, in which case the conversion happens on this page.

28. Lead – Leads are contacts that are potentially interested in becoming customers, due to the fact that they are within your target group.

29. Link building – Link building is an SEO process that involves a set of activities to earn links to your website and specific pages on the website.

30. Link juice – This term is used in SEO to signify power a website has that can be passed to a website it is linking to. It is seen as a vote of trust because if you link to a source, it is as if you are recommending it, so your authority passes on to that website. This is one of the factors that influences ranking in the search engines.

31. Metric –In online marketing, a metric is an instrument to measure something, usually related to the website analytics.

32. Niche – In terms of online marketing, niche refers to a segmented topic that is narrowed down and targeted at the relevant audience.

33. NoIndex – It is a tag that instructs the search engines not to index a specific page of the website.

34. Off-site optimization – This is the process of improving website positioning through actions that are hosted on external websites, such as the process of gaining inbound links.

35. On-site optimization – It includes a set of actions to optimize a website and its content to improve the ranking in the search engine results.

36. Online marketing – Online marketing, or internet marketing, is the method of advertising products or services using online tools, strategies and methods. It includes different media for such promotion, which is why there are subtypes of online marketing, which include content marketing, email marketing, social media marketing, etc.

37. Organic reach – It includes the number of people who were shown your content using unpaid distribution channels. It is also called natural or free reach, as opposed to paid reach.

38. Organic search results – Organic search results are those that appear based on the relevance in the search engine results pages, as opposed to non-organic or paid search results.

39. Page authority – Page authority (PA) is a Moz's score that predicts how well a page will rank in the search engine results pages. It ranges from 0 to 100.

40. Performance–The performance represents the accomplishment of given tasks. When it comes to content, performance is used to describe how content is accepted, whether it is generating visits, social shares, etc.

41. Plugin – A plugin or an extension is installed to a website to introduce new features.

42. Positioning – In marketing, positioning refers to the place a company or a brand has in the mind of consumers. In terms of SEO, positioning is expressed through a rank the website has in the search engines.

43. Publishing platform–It is a platform or software used for publishing content online.

44. Ranking – In SEO, ranking refers to the position a website has in the search engine result pages.

45. Reader friendly – It means that it is adapted to the online users and adapted so that they can easily skim through and read it.

46. Referral–This represents the traffic that comes to your website through other sources, for example, from other websites.

47. Rel=canonical – It is a tag, an HTML element, that helps with preventing duplicate content. When you use this tag, you will provide "canonical URL" which means that URL will be a preferred version of the web page.

48. ROI – Return on investment is used to compare the profitability of a strategy by comparing the profit and the investment.

49. Segmentation – This term is usually used in email marketing where segmentation refers to dividing something, such as email subscribers, based on different criteria.

50. SEM – Search engine marketing (SEM) is a type of online marketing. It includes promoting and advertising a website, or specific website pages, through the search

engines using either paid reach (such as Google AdWords or Bing Ads) or organic reach (search engine optimization).

51. SEO – Search engine optimization (SEO) is a part of search engine marketing. The goal of SEO is to optimize and promote a website through organic, also called natural or free results.

52. SEO friendly – If something is SEO friendly, it means that it follows SEO guidelines. In terms of URL building, an SEO friendly URL is the one that is short, descriptive, readable, and without unusual characters.

53. SERP – A search engine result page (SERP) is a list of results shown by the search engines as a response to a search query. SERP can contain organic results as well as paid results (search engine ads).

54. Server – It is a computer that hosts and manages a website. It delivers the data to the online users.

55. SMM – Social media marketing (SMM) is a part of online marketing. It includes promotion of a business through social media platforms. In order to achieve this goal, you will need to create social media profiles or pages through which you will then interact with social media users.

56. Software – A program or an application used by a computer.

57. Spider – Search engine crawlers are also called spiders. They are programs used to discover and index website content so that this content can be shown in the search engine result pages.

58. Subscribe – Subscribing means to express an agreement to be notified about future updates through the email address provided when subscribing. Online users usually subscribe for blog updates.

59. Toggle – Toggle means to switch from one setting to another. In terms of text editor, you can use Toggle option to switch to an HTML editor.

60. Traffic – In online marketing, traffic or web traffic is the amount of data sent and received by the website visitors. It includes both the number of visits (unique and returning) as well as the number of pages visited.

61. Transcript – Transcript is a material presented as written text or printer friendly version. This material is originally presented in another format, usually audio or video.

62. User experience – The term user experience (UX) includes all the aspects of the interaction between the online users and a company. When it comes to online marketing, the user experience on the website is one of the metrics that affect website positioning.

63. Visibility – Website visibility is the term used to describe how likely a website is to be discovered on the internet through the search engine results. Ranking high in the search engine result pages ensures high visibility because the top results get the most visits.

64. Vlog – A vlog is a blog which is in a form of a video.

15

Questionnaire

15. Questionnaire

Questions

1. Content marketing is focused on:

a) Creating and distributing content that directly or indirectly promotes your business

b) Creating and distributing video files exclusively

c) Creating and managing a WordPress blog

d) Distributing third-party online materials

2. What do you need to think about when creating content?

a) Organic and paid reach

b) Search engine result pages

c) Social media marketing

d) Audience and niche

3. Which of these is a type of written content?

a) Podcast

b) Ebook

c) Infographic

d) Live chat

4. When writing content, you should think about:

a) Writing for both the people and the search engines

b) Writing only posts that have more than 1000 words

c) The data from the Google AdWords

d) Social media guidelines

5. When using images, it is important to:

a) Make your own photos

b) Have the permission to use the image

c) The image is irrelevant but funny

d) Use only images downloaded for free

6. What are keywords?

a) Headers and titles on the blog

b) Words used for the infographic

c) Words or phrases that are associated with the website and its content

d) Irrelevant terms that are part of visual representations

7. One of the most common references in content marketing is Bill Gates's essay titled:

a) Content is Dead

b) Content is the King

c) Content is the Future

d) Content is Old News

8. The statistics show that:

a) Visual aspect boosts the performance of content

b) SEO is a part of content marketing

c) Shorter articles perform better

d) Companies that use content marketing do not have good results

9. Online marketing is also called:

a) Internet marketing

b) Social media marketing

c) Content marketing

d) Email marketing

10. A CTA is a link that can be displayed as:

a) A goal

b) An image or a text

c) A tool

d) A landing page and a lead

11. How are content marketing and SEO connected?

a) SEO uses content to increase organic reach

b) Content is used in paid advertising only

c) Content marketing promotes your brand on social media

d) They are not connected

12. An infographic is:

a) An audio representation of the data

b) A visual representation of the data

c) A written type of content

d) The most commonly used type of visual content

13. Which of these is a type of blog post?

a) Newsletter

b) Graphic

c) List

d) Live chat

14. Successful content creation strategy requires:

a) Content that is written for search engines only

b) Using guest blogging as a preferred method

c) Using only one type of content

d) Content to be up-to-date and relevant to your target group

15. The success of the email marketing campaign is based on:

a) The number of social media users and skillfulness to communicate the message

b) The quality of the mailing list and content that is shared through email campaigns

c) The quality of the mailing list and the SEO

d) The bounce rate and click-through rate

16. An influencer is:

a) A person who is proficient with using Google AdWords

b) A competitor

c) A person who is an expert in the industry with a loyal fan base

d) A person who is working for the company

17. To make sure your social media post gains as much as visibility as possible you should:

a) Post every day at the same time

b) Not include visual elements into the post

c) Not share too many posts at the same time

d) Post at generally recommended time for posting on social media

18. Which of these is a channel for content distribution?

a) Social media

b) Google Analytics

c) Bounce rate

d) Landing page

19. What is the first step in starting with influencer marketing?

a) Rank the influencers

b) Identify the influencers

c) Get in touch with the influencer

d) Boost sales

20. What is a conversion?

a) Links to the internal website pages

b) Landing page that contains a CTA

c) The number of users who visited a single page on your website

d) A desired action you want website visitors to complete

21. What is a bounce rate?

a) Links to the home page

b) The time one user spends on your website

c) The number of users who visited a single page on your website

d) The number of unique visitors

22. How can you monitor content performance metrics in Google Analytics?

a) Using goals and advanced segments

b) Using bounce rate and landing page

c) Using shortening service

d) Using the CTA

23. A popular community for content distribution is:

a) Quora

b) Delicious

c) Twitter

d) Influencer

24. Which of these are paid advertising methods for distribution of content?

a) Search engine ads and social network advertising

b) Google AdWords and Google Analytics

c) Email campaign

d) Search engine ads and email campaigns

25. How can you calculate the conversion rate?

a) (Number of unique visitors ÷ Number of visits) * 100

b) (Number of people who completed the desired action ÷ Number of visits) * 100

c) (Average session duration ÷ Number of visits) * 100

d) (Page views ÷ Number of visits) * 100

26. Quality digital content is:

a) Short and concise

b) Relevant, shareable and engaging

c) Entertaining and short-lived

d) Broken into segments without any visual elements

27. What is niche?

a) A topic you are focused on which also corresponds to the target group interests

b) A type of influencer marketing

c) A method in the process of content distribution

d) Organic reach

28. What does content distribution represent?

a) The best way to generate ROI

b) The high-quality content

c) The process of delivering content to the online users

d) The process of tagging content

29. Knowing about your audience when creating content helps you to:

a) Create SEO friendly content

b) Predict what kind of content they would need

c) Distribute content on social media

d) Use affiliate marketing

30. What problem might occur with content syndication?

a) Duplicate content

b) Content distribution

c) Authority

d) Guest blogging

31. Content marketing metrics allow you:

a) To increase the influence of your brand

b) The chance to obtain feedback from the online community

c) To gain authority by providing content that offers value

d) To assess your content marketing strategy

32. Which of these are content creation tactics?

a) Social media and email

b) Bounce rate and page views

c) Attention grabbers and storytelling

d) Advanced segments and goals

33. What are the benefits of accepting guest posts on your blog?

a) Duplicate content and content management

b) Increasing sales and leads

c) Getting the pages indexed and shown in the search results

d) Keeping your blog active and fresh

34. SEM refers to:

a) Social media reach

b) Social media engagement

c) Search engine marketing

d) Search engine optimization

35. Which of these can be used to monitor metrics relevant for content marketing?

a) Goals and segments in Google Analytics

b) Content distribution channels

c) Target group

d) Attention grabbers and storytelling

36. What is the top challenge in content marketing?

a) Producing engaging content

b) Paid promotion

c) Content distribution

d) Email campaign

37. Influencer marketing is focused on:

a) Social media marketing

b) Working with influential individuals on content creation projects

c) Gaining visibility in search engine result pages

d) Using both organic and paid reach in SERP

38. Unique visits is a metric indicating:

a) The total number of times one visitor visits the website

b) The total number of visitors who visit the website for the first time

c) The total number of pages that the users have clicked on

d) The average number of pages visited per one visit

39. Which of these is a benefit of content marketing?

a) Producing content consistently

b) Producing engaging content

c) Lead generation

d) Content management

40. How to avoid duplicate content with content syndication?

a) Use guest blogging guidelines

b) Use rel=canonical and NoIndex tags

c) Use the HTML code

d) Work with authority websites

41. What are the benefits of working with the influencers?

a) Expanding reach and increasing the influence

b) Content management

c) Producing engaging content

d) Ranking the influencers

42. Why is email marketing the most important distribution channel?

a) It is the best way to reach new customers

b) It is the easiest strategy

c) It delivers the highest ROI

d) It helps with lead generation

43. What is a CMS?

a) Content media strategy

b) Content management system

c) Content marketing strategy

d) Content management strategy

44. An SEO friendly URL is:

a) Long

b) Full of unusual symbols

c) Complex and long

d) Readable and short

45. Which of these is a practice to avoid when optimizing content?

a) Adding headings

b) Image optimization

c) Alt text

d) Over-optimization

46. The main advantage of using paid advertising in content distribution is because:

a) It is the cheapest way to reach new leads

b) It helps with social media influence

c) It is fast and easy to manage

d) It increases organic reach

47. Which of these is considered over-optimization?

a) Website comments

b) Placing too many keywords in the footer

c) Video optimization

d) Alt text

48. What does image optimization include?

a) Resizing the images and using alt text

b) Placing keywords in the footer of the website

c) Over-optimization

d) Editing and proofreading

49. What are some of the goals you can achieve through content marketing?

a) Optimize the website

b) Get more visits and increase leads

c) Work with competitors

d) Explore social media metrics

50. Why should you analyze the source of visits on your website?

a) To optimize images and video

b) To use the CTA on the landing page

c) To gain reputation

d) To compare them and determine which distribution strategy brings success

Answers

1. a	18. a	35. a
2. d	19. b	36. a
3. b	20. d	37. b
4. a	21. c	38. b
5. b	22. a	39. c
6. c	23. a	40. b
7. b	24. a	41. a
8. a	25. b	42. c
9. a	26. b	43. b
10. b	27. a	44. d
11. a	28. c	45. d
12. b	29. b	46. c
13. c	30. a	47. b
14. d	31. d	48. a
15. b	32. c	49. b
16. c	33. d	50. d
17. c	34. c	

16

Conclusion

16. Conclusion

As we have taken you to this journey of what content marketing is and how implements into a business strategy, we can now go back to dwell on the statement "Content is the king" with a deeper understanding of that statement. What Bill Gates predicted back in the days when we could hardly grasp what the internet is, let alone where it will take us, is proving to be so true nowadays.

Content has indeed taken over the internet and has become a way to express yourself, a way to reach new people, to show off your creativity and talent. Ultimately, it has become a way to reach customers and new opportunities to grow your business.

This means only one thing. Content has to be considered as one of many business strategies, and as such it has to meet certain standards. It has to be personalized and customized according to a target group to reach its full potential. It has to be original and trustworthy to gain a loyal readership. Finally, it has to be engaging and informative to grow your audience and reach more people.

Even though content marketing has its challenges, when we think about successful content marketing we often associate it with these qualities:

Content requires customization and personalization

These two qualities are what differentiates great content from average content. Writing in general and trying to reach everybody hardly ever brings any result. So does lack of personalization. To make sure that content truly achieves its purpose, you have to make sure it resonates well with your target group.

You will achieve this with customizing and personalizing your content. Customization here refers to choosing different content types, finding the right approach and technique, etc. When it comes to personalization, it has been concluded that content that is personalized tends to bring more success. This means that people tend to respond better when they know that there is a person behind the content. It also means that the response rate is higher when you directly address your group in a way they can identify with.

Quality is the norm

Quality as a requirement in content creation has never been more important than now, mainly because a large amount of content being published. Quality has become a sort of a way of differentiating things on the internet. People are now aware that the content that reaches

them does not always meet this requirement, which is why they have become more selective of things they interact with.

For businesses, this means that content marketing requires more work and dedication to create content that really meets these high standards.

As content creation goes through phases, it is essential to keep uniqueness, relevance, and accuracy. These all contribute to creating content of high quality, content that will generally perform better and bring better results.

Understanding management and optimization

Just because you publish content it does not mean you should expect instant success. One of the ways you surely can improve the performance of the content is skillful management and optimization. Despite the fact that these are a bit more technical aspects of content marketing, they are still important for the overall performance of the content. Therefore, you will need a deeper understanding of the process involved in management and optimization to make sure the content meets the standards, and that it is discovered and indexed in the search results.

Using content distribution to advantage

Content distribution has a huge role in reaching the end users. There are lots of distribution channels that are available, and choosing the right ones is solely based on your content marketing strategy. It depends on your target group and their habits when it comes to online presence. Choose the channels that are most likely to help you increase the reach of content you publish and make sure you monitor the performance. Also, keep up with the trends. If you notice a new social network or bookmarking website that is gaining in popularity, you should get on the bandwagon and start building your presence immediately.

Analyze the data

In the end, you get to analyze everything. An analysis helps you make things better, it helps you perfect your approach and adjust the strategy in a way to bring better results. What you need to focus on is how the content performs, which content has the best performance and what might be causing such great performance. Sometimes a paid promotion can increase the virality of a great post, or sometimes working with influencers can prove to be more effective.

When you analyze both the metrics and the feedback obtained from the community, you will get better insights into your content and how it contributes to achieving the company goals. After all, the content is a part of online marketing, which means that a successful

implementation of content brings to successful online marketing with all its benefits for your company.

The trends are still supporting the fact that content has such an important role when creating an online presence, that to begin an online strategy without thinking about content sets you to fail. In fact, various studies confirm that most marketers agree about the importance of content in establishing an online presence. Even though there might be obstacles along the way, overcoming those obstacles will help you explore the true potential of content marketing. One of the trends that particularly stands out is the significance of visual and video content and how these types of content tend to perform better.

Content marketing is and it will remain to be an essential part of forming your online presence. Regardless if you are a small-sized or a large company, regardless if there is a team of experts working on content marketing or if one person handles all of the tasks, the potential that content can gain is always there. It can gain visibility, it can help you earn reputation and promote your business. Eventually, it can bring customers and increase sales, which is what most marketers are trying to do. This is why content marketing is a strategy you should focus on and explore options that can help you define an approach that will bring most benefits to your company.