

farotech

Getting Started With **CONTENT MARKETING**

How to Build and Sustain Content Marketing in Your Organization



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Introduction

To “do” content marketing, you need to “do” content. But when marketers set out to actually build a content creation team, there’s the dream ... and there’s the reality.

Here’s what the dream looks like:

- Publish amazing blog content every day.
- Create long-form content for lead generation every week.
- Design beautiful, engaging images to share on social media.
- Newsjack in the blink of an eye.
- Be on the cutting edge of new content formats and ideas.

Here’s the reality:

- Publish blog posts when someone has time to write one.
- Plan to create long-form content for lead generation all month, crank one out before the end of the quarter.
- Maintain a largely image-free social media presence, except for the ones that get pulled in from the blog posts you put on your Facebook Timeline.
- Newsjack a few days after news breaks.
- Remain about 12 months behind adoption of new content trends.

Some - or all - of that feel familiar? What’s with the disconnect? Why can’t dreams become reality?

At the risk of sounding like a Disney movie, your dream of turning your company into a content creation machine can come true. Downloading this ebook that outlines Farotech own content creation methodology was the first step; reading on will show you exactly how to do it yourself, building your company’s content machine from the ground up.



Chapter 1:

Creating a Content Culture



“Everyone has a talent. What is rare is the courage to nurture it in solitude and to follow the talent to the dark places where it leads.”

- Erica Jong

A well-run machine is built with solid, high quality parts that are all working together to achieve the same goal. To become a content creation machine, you need to create a company culture that supports the goal of frequent, high-quality content creation. In a content culture, content is not an afterthought, a fluffy pursuit, or an optional expense. Companies that have created a content culture view content as the basis for running an inbound company - from Marketing, to Sales, to Services. In order to create this culture of content, we have four big tips to follow.

1. INVEST IN QUALIFIED CONTENT HIRES

Time to level. Content isn't free, and it's not easy to create. Historically, content creation has been relegated to free interns and content farms. The success you'll see from that method notwithstanding (hint: little to none), consider the message this sends to your team. The message is that content is not important enough for you to invest serious resources in.

Invest in bringing at least one excellent content creator into your organization. This person should know about your industry so he or she can write intelligently about the subjects that matter to your target audience. If you don't have the budget to hire one more employee, identify a current hire with writing chops and industry know-how, and adjust their job description to allocate some time toward content creation.

These steps set the stage for a strong content culture, because they show that you value content so much, you are willing to allocate budget and time to high-quality content creation.

2. MOBILIZE EVERY EMPLOYEE TO CREATE CONTENT

Everyone in your company should have the ability to contribute content. It's how you'll build a scalable content creation machine. To foster a culture of content creators, however, you need to reiterate - over and over - the concrete benefits to participating.

You should explain that:

- Being a regular content creator will help them move upward within the company. This must actually be true, ideally with examples you can point to.
- Content creators are often also thought leaders, and it will help them gain credibility with leads, customers, and even future employers.
- The content will serve as a built-in online portfolio they can reference years down the road.
- Content drives critical business metrics, like lead and customer generation. Using closed-loop analytics, you can demonstrate the actual dollar value of one piece of content to your business.
- Being a published author might lead to future opportunities, like speaking engagements, or quotes in high-profile publications.

3. INSPIRE EVERY EMPLOYEE TO CREATE CONTENT

You've explained why everyone in your company should create content. Now make them want to.

- **Reward it.** The authors of content that performs particularly well should be highlighted for their contribution. You can do this at your next team or company meeting, in an internal newsletter, or in a group email. Be sure to detail the specific results it drove for the business, like leads or opportunities generated, or customers won. Again, using closed-loop marketing software, this information is just a click away.
- **Make it a competition.** See who can create the best piece of content to move a specific business metric -- like the most leads generated from a post about a certain subject matter, or the most socially shared piece of content.
- **Lead by example.** Whether you're in an "official" leadership position or not, you can lead by example if you're championing a content creation culture. Be an active content creator yourself. Practice what you preach.

4. FOSTER AND ENABLE EMPLOYEES' CONTENT CREATION ABILITIES

You'll come across some employees that want to contribute content, but don't feel capable. To create a scalable content creation machine, it's up to you to enable their success.

First, remember that creating content shouldn't be reserved for just Marketing -- or even just a couple people within Marketing. Enable anyone in your organization to contribute content, from Sales, to Services, to R&D. This is beneficial because you're getting content that highlights different perspectives, and different areas of expertise, both of which make your content arsenal more well-rounded and able to address the needs of different buyer personas.

To make it easier for everyone to contribute, create guidelines they can follow to make it more likely their content fits your publishing standards. You can even have content specialists on your team, who train those extremely interested in contributing content, on the types of editorial guidelines the marketing team follows. These folks -- your marketing team's "editors," if you will -- can be the ones who brush up the content you receive, so everything that's published aligns with the tone, style, and other guidelines you've established for your brand. More details on how to do all this in coming chapters.

Bonus Tip From scoop it

SHOW EMPLOYEE WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM WITH CONTENT, IE THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

The key to unlocking employee contribution or advocacy might not be simply explaining the “what” or the “how” but also showing the “why.” Everybody has a personal brand to keep building over time to develop employability or create business opportunities. In our digital age, this brand is built online and through content. We are the content we publish; what’s true for your company on its blog and social channels is also true for your employees on their LinkedIn or Twitter profiles. Helping them demonstrate thought leadership through great content they have contributed to in one way or another doesn’t just help the company, it also helps them be more visible, trusted and reputable. Don’t simply ask them to be good corporate soldiers: empower them to be thought leaders. Your company and your brand will only be stronger as a result.



Chapter 2: Getting Past Writer's Block & Finding Your Rhythm



"All growth depends upon activity. There is no development physically or intellectually without effort, and effort means work."

- Calvin Coolidge

THE MORE YOU DO IT, THE EASIER IT WILL BE

Now that we're done fostering and enabling, let's get down to brass tacks. Nothing in this ebook about content creation will just happen. Reading a lot about it, and understanding the theories behind efficient and scalable content creation, doesn't get any content actually created. So here is the part of the ebook where we tell you ... JUST DO IT ALREADY.

This may be the most painful thing you have ever done in your marketing career. Or it may not be that bad at all. Either way, the more you do it, and the more you encourage colleagues and employees to do it, the easier and more natural and frequent content creation will become.

Think of it this way: content creation is like running. The first time you do it, you might kind of stink. But you got out and did it, which is better than not doing it at all. The next time you do it, and each subsequent time after that, it won't be as painful ... until eventually you're pretty darn good at it and it's actually pretty painless. Maybe even enjoyable.

You'll get your processes down pat. You'll get good at this. Content creation will be part of how you operate. You might even end up liking it. But you won't become a content creation machine if you don't just get started.

One the most common issues we see when it comes to getting started, is getting past writer's block. We've identified key problems we've heard time and time again, followed with our solutions for combatting each.

GETTING PAST WRITER'S BLOCK

Writer's block is a state of mind, and it's a very real, very debilitating malady -- even for the most prolific content creators. It helps to try and pinpoint the source of your writer's block outside of just "The blank screen is taunting me." Often it falls into one of these buckets.

THE PROBLEM:

"I don't know what to write about."

THE SOLUTION:

Fall back on your editorial calendar, where you keep a backlog of topics to write about. You can also reach out to people in Sales or Services and ask them to share some frequently asked questions they receive, which typically makes for excellent and quick blog posts.

THE PROBLEM:

"I can't find the words."

THE SOLUTION:

Write like you speak. Content should be free of jargon and business babble, anyway. If you write like you speak, it will be an easier writing and reading experience. Do not, however, write like you think. Our brains are jumbled messes. We filter ourselves for a reason.

THE PROBLEM:

"I don't know how to approach this topic."

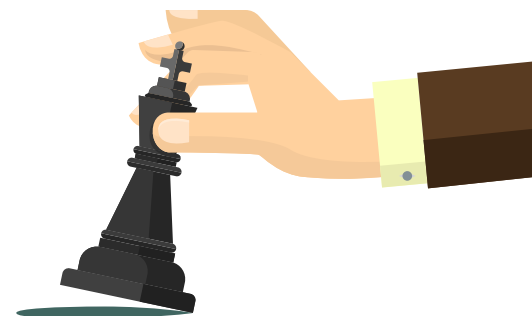
THE SOLUTION:

Your topic isn't specific enough. Refine your working title to say what you really mean. It doesn't have to sound good now; you can finesse it later. Just ensure it's clear, specific, and tells you exactly what the post is about.

BONUS TIP FROM SCOOP.IT

List the Top 15-30 Questions Most Often Asked by Your Prospects and Customers

Content Marketing is about answering these questions. By providing them the best answer there is, you're not only helping them but also building trust and showing your organization's expertise. That list should be constant inspiration for content: write initial answers as blog posts and then refine them over time as new blog posts or repurpose them as a new format such as an eBook, a SlideShare or an infographic.



HOW FAROTECH DOES IT

At Farotech, we encourage content creation from the very beginning of an intern or employee's career. Our rule of thumb is, "If you have nothing left to do, go write a blog post." And content doesn't fall on the shoulders of a few writers, or just the marketing team, we receive contributions from everywhere. We've had sales reps write posts about a topic they hope will attract the right leads for their quota. We've had executives write posts to help attract more C-suite audience. We even have customers contribute from time-to-time to share their external perspective on all things inbound marketing.



Chapter 3: Increasing Speed, Ease, and Efficiency



"Get 'er done."

- Larry the Cable Guy

Now that you've started exercising your content creation muscles, it's time do it better, faster, stronger. In other words, let's make your life easier and marketing results more remarkable -- yes, you can have better marketing and an easier life -- by enabling you to create more content, with less pain. This is where you transform from a content creator, into a content creation machine. This is where you become unstoppable. Now, let's jump into the tips.

1. QUICK CONTENT FORMATS

To become one of those companies that always has something great to write about, you have to embrace multiple content format types.

Some of them might take a long time to write -- such as the thought leadership pieces your favorite executives are writing, or the big research reports that required a ton of surveys, data slicing, and analysis.

You should create that kind of content.

But you should also make your life easier, and realize there are a ton of content formats that are extremely valuable to readers, drive serious business results, and don't take that long to put together.

Here's your quick content toolkit, from which you should draw every day:

How-To

If you know how to do something your readers would want to know about, it's easy to transfer your knowledge to paper -- or your computer screen. Remember -- just write it out like you'd speak it if you were telling a lead, customer, or colleague.

Top Lists

A tried and true content method, top lists are a mix between original content and aggregation. You aggregate the ideas, and write short blurbs about each. This is excellent content for a new writer, because each blurb in the list is quite short, and the post provides a built-in structure to work around.

Curation

Recognizing remarkable content from others is a core link and relationship building strategy, and requires a little original writing, and more aggregation -- perfect for those just whetting their writing chops.

FAQ

Think of the questions leads and customers ask you every day, and turn that into a piece of content in which you answer the common question. You could also pose a question on a social network, at an event, or during a webinar, and then respond to them in aggregate in a blog post.

Data

Whether you have your own data or you stumble across interesting industry data in your reading, take one or many data points and compile them into a post. Data makes very shareable content, and tends to say a lot in few words. Factbrowser.com is a good resource for discover and citing stats.

Excerpted Content

When you publish a gated piece of content (typically lead generation content that is gated behind a form on a landing page – such as a whitepaper), a quick source of content is an excerpt of that piece.

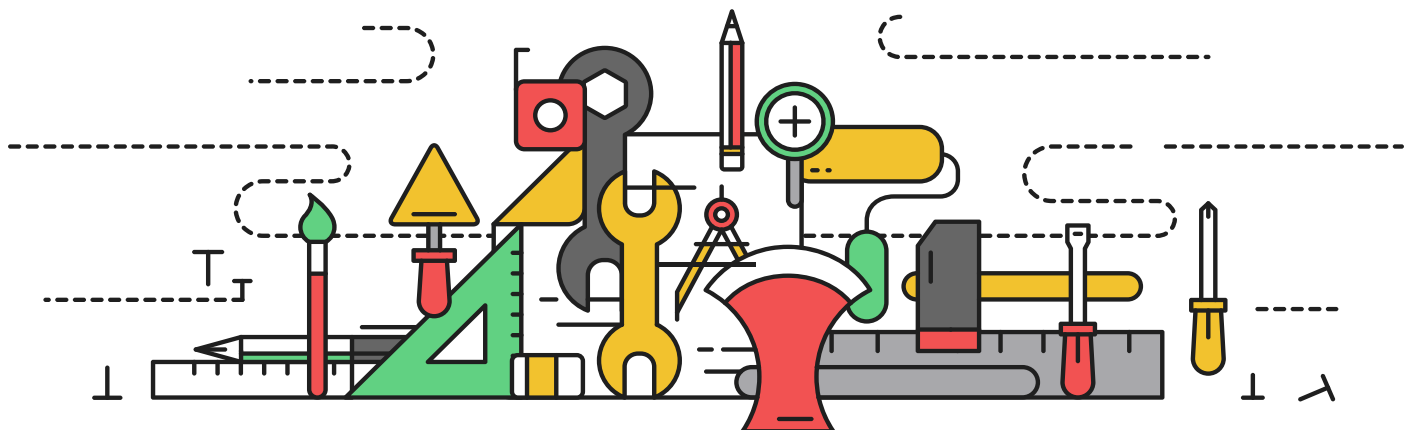
The excerpt also serves to promote the gated content, showing readers what they'll get if they download the full version. It's the same as when an author shares a free chapter of their published book.

Video Content

If cat's got your tongue, a video could be the way to go. Videos are excellent alternatives to how-to posts in which you talk through a concept like you would to anyone in-person -- no bells and whistles needed. You might also schedule an interview, another helpful video format that doesn't require a lot of investment.

Newsjacks

By their very nature, newsjacks are quick content formats. When a piece of news that would impact your industry -- or which you could find a relevant spin for your audience -- hits the press, hop on it like a rabbit in mating season.



BONUS TIP FROM SCOOP.IT

How to Craft the Perfect Curated Blog Post and Still Get SEO Benefits

As mentioned above, content curation requires less writing, builds relationship with influencers and adds credibility and trust to your brand. But if you're using the right approach, curated content can also add to your blog's SEO footprint. In **an independent experiment**, the Bruce Clay agency replaced an original blog post of their own by a short quote from a related third-party piece together with a back link and 200 words of added commentary. Because of that value-adding context, the resulting curated post, far from being seen as duplicated content, ended up ranking as well as or even better than the original one for the targeted keywords. And by using content curation software that integrates with your own CMS, you can **optimize** and scale that process while also keeping sure it follows all the best practice from an ethical standpoint.

2. SOURCING CONTENT INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY

Part of becoming a content creation machine is having a never-ending source of content, about a variety of topics. One - or even a couple -- content hires isn't going to get you there. Source content from content creators outside of Marketing. This taps into different areas of expertise among your staff, and creates a more robust topic catalogue as well as a higher volume of content coming your way. Additionally, consider a content creation requirement from certain employees; everyone on the marketing team should be required to contribute a certain volume of content each month to set a good example.

You should also be open to accepting guest blogging submissions from external sources, which have the added benefit of helping build a stronger link profile. Be discerning when accepting guest blogging submissions, only accepting the highest quality content from legitimate folks in your industry. As your domain gains authority, you'll receive more and more inquiries about guest blogging; it's important you sift through the content coming from shady SEO firms and link farms, and publish only good content from credible sources.

Centralize the flow of all this content, promoting at least one member of your Marketing team to act as the editor of any content that comes through. He or she will ensure any content that comes from internal and external sources is high quality enough to be published.

BONUS TIP FROM SCOOP.IT

Source Curated Content From Employees

While some employees won't contribute content in spite of your best efforts, you can still have them contribute in another way: as content curators. Writing or designing content can be overwhelming and time-consuming. But the good news is curated content is valuable to your content strategy and you might be **sitting on a content goldmine**. Think about it: how much time do your coworkers collectively spend reading industry-related content? Probably a fair amount, right? So they're already doing the hard part. And by using the right processes or tools, some employees will find it much more natural and accessible to contribute curated content to the corporate content effort than creating content.

3. REPURPOSING CONTENT

To squeeze more ROI from the content creation work you're already doing, it's important you get comfortable with finding new ways to use the content you've already created. This is your content repurpose toolkit -- even if you get time-crunched and content creation seems impossible, the following repurposing tactics should keep your machine from dying out.

Blog Bundle

Create a lead generation offer by bundling together the content you've created on your blog -- all around one specific topic -- into a longer-form content asset.

Presentation Slides

When anyone presents, whether in an internal meeting or at a public speaking event, consider whether those slides can be tweaked to be a SlideShare presentation, standalone social media images, or featured on your blog.

Persona Alignment

If you target multiple personas, rework existing, successful content targeted at another segment to speak to a different persona.

Internal Content

If you have an internal company collaboration tool, repurpose any industry insights shared there that might be interesting to your target audience.

Content Updates

Content that performed well in the past, but has since gone out of date, should be updated and relaunched.

Written Content, Visualized

How-to content can take visual formats if you strip down the copy, and reformat the headers into one sheeters or checklists. These are perfect for social media, particularly Facebook and Pinterest.



BONUS TIP FROM SCOOP.IT

Plan for Your Content to be Modular

Have you ever played with Lego building blocks? You can actually plan your content this way. Instead of planning a major ebook from scratch, start by writing an outline and then break it down into chapters that can all be first written as standalone blog posts. Assemble related curated pieces into a round-up post or email newsletter with your added commentary. By doing this over a period of time, **we managed to create a resource center without... added resources.**



4. CONTENT CROSS-CHANNEL AND CROSS-DEPARTMENT PROMOTIONS

For the most returns from your marketing content, it's important all your marketing channels are working together on promotion, and folks across your entire company know about the content in your campaigns.

Here's a sample scenario for you:

You've just finished writing a fantastic new lead generation offer -- such as an ebook -- that you'd like to email to a segment of your list. How can you better support that offer's success? First, promote it with a blog post; excerpt a chapter that can stand alone, and let blog readers know the excerpt they're reading is a small part of a larger ebook on the topic, which they can download via the call-to-action in the blog post. Then give social media a heads up that pages 2, 5, and 8 in the ebook have some interesting quotes that could be turned into compelling visuals to be shared on social media networks -- with a link to the landing page to download the ebook, of course. The image you choose for your blog post should also keep social media in mind, since you'll surely share that blog post on your social networks, and a compelling post image will help drive more engagement.

And since those that receive the email for the new ebook are probably going to be further down your sales funnel, and this might be the action that incites them to get in touch with Sales, it's a good idea to let your sales organization know about the latest ebook you're launching, and provide them with a short synopsis of the key points you touch on so they can carry on a productive conversation with new and existing opportunities. Your Services team would also like to know about the new ebook, since it might address the questions they answer on a daily basis. Finally, alert employees in all departments that a new offer is being released, and ask them to share either the landing page or the blog post on their personal social networks -- Twitter is great for this -- to benefit from the network effect of multiple people recommending a piece of content within a short time frame.

BONUS TIP FROM SCOOP.IT

Offer to Push Content Updates to Employees' Social Channels Automatically and Use Private Content Hubs

While employee advocacy is the single most efficient distribution mechanism you can leverage, we've seen many marketers become wary when seeing their coworkers simply forget to share their latest blogs. How many times should you have to ask Sales or Engineering to share that ebook? The problem is not that they don't get it but like everyone else, they lack the time or can forget about it easily. So here are two approaches you can offer them so that each and every piece of content you turn out gets maximum exposure through your team:

- First, you can offer to automate the process for employees willing to do so: use **software** that can integrate multiple social channels for your content distribution, including your employees. This will only work if your team trusts your company's content to be published on their own channels so it requires a bit of selling and trust building initially. But past the initial apprehension, you'll end up being able to schedule your new blog posts over 15, 20 or 50 social media channels at once, which will boost the visibility of your work.

- As an alternative or for employees not willing to contribute this way, use tools that automatically create private content hubs that your employees can easily refer to when available and willing to share content. Of course, your blog can act as one but having a private content hub enables you to add private context for your team that won't be public or mix your own content with influencers' content that you'd like your team to curate and share as well.

HOW FAROTECH DOES IT

Farotech does this by communicating offer creation with the entire company – from marketing to sales to services, and even product and support! We send out an offer notification email every time a piece of long form content launches, which includes short soundbites for marketing and sales. In addition, employees can also opt-in to receive notifications via a Google Group every time a new offer is created. The content team sends the offer, along with assets such as landing page, email copy, and social media images, in this email so subscribers can quickly access everything they need to know about every piece of long-form content the company publishes.



Chapter 4:

Refining Your Content Creation Processes



"It's the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen."

- John Wooden

You're creating a ton of quality, helpful, valuable content. You are an undisputed content creation machine.

But you're V1 of that machine right now.

How do you make your content creation machine the best on the market? You get rid of the hiccups that prevent you from running as smoothly as possible. This is the "cherry on top" stuff that makes your content creation machine the best in the biz. Here's how to make it happen.

1. INVEST IN EDITORS AND PROOFREADERS

Hiring, outsourcing, or promoting employees to be proofreaders and editors is the first step to upping your content creation game. To do it right, it's important you know the difference between the role editors and proofreaders play in the Marketing world.

Proofreaders are the folks that make sure there aren't typos in your content, look for comma splices, check to see if you put two spaces after a period or one, that type of thing. This is important for making your content look uber-professional, and can do a lot for your street cred. If you don't have the budget to hire a professional proofreader, fall back on a word processor with a spell- and grammar-check. Proofreading is a very hard job, and requires someone with superhuman attention to detail. Even if you fancy yourself an excellent proofreader, it's always best to leave proofreading your own content to someone else; you're too intimately connected to the content to be able to pick up on little errors that, to others, would be obvious.

Editors are the folks that identify what's wrong with content, and either communicate how to fix it with the writer, or fix it themselves. In the marketing world, editors sometimes also play the role of proofreader. It's very difficult to be a good editor, because they not only have to know something is "wrong" with a piece of content (that's relatively easy), but they have to be able to identify exactly what that is (that's unexpectedly difficult). Not only that, they have to articulate it clearly to the writer, explain precisely how to fix it, or be capable and knowledgeable enough as a writer to fix it themselves. This is an excellent career path for a great writer within your marketing department -- it's difficult to find good editors that aren't also good writers -- and a prime example of investing in a content culture at your company.

2. ESTABLISH YOUR STYLE GUIDE

Editors' and proofreaders' jobs are made much easier when you have an established style guide that everyone knows about, and has access to.

This enables content creators to reference things like:

- What tone should I use?
- Does the tone change for different personas?
- By the way, who are our personas?
- Do we welcome humor?
- What industry terms do we treat as proper nouns?
- How do we cite data?

Illustrating this in a document and periodically opening up teaching sessions to your content contributors so you can walk them through this and other protocol will help make your submissions better on the first try, alleviate pressure on editors and proofreaders, and decrease the number of required revisions.

HOW FAROTECH DOES IT

At Farotech, we have our own Style Guide on our internal wiki – a hub for sharing company information. We ask all our content creators – whether that's email copy, social media copy, or product copy – to bookmark this. The Style Guide was written by our blog manager and our product user experience writer. This allows us to have the same consistency in copy from notifications in our software, to posts on Facebook, to copy in ebooks and blog posts. You can [check out our Marketing Style Guide here](#).

3. CREATE AN EDITORIAL CALENDAR

An editorial calendar is just what it sounds like -- a calendar that details the content you'll be publishing every day. You can create an editorial calendar with varying levels of sophistication to meet your needs, but the benefit is the same: To elevate your content strategy from random publishing, to creating content with a purpose that's meant to serve a specific business need.

The most simple version of your editorial calendar can simply be with your blog. Schedule out content for anywhere from two weeks, to a month, to a quarter, and include topics, date of publish, and assigned author. Keep authors to a submission deadline that works for your editorial team, whether that means authors submit one business day in advance, or one week in advance.

You can elevate your editorial calendar by also incorporating other channels and campaigns. For instance, v2 of your editorial calendar might pull in content used to promote blog posts on social media, and might coordinate campaigns around new lead generation offers scheduled to be created. This is how you can facilitate other departments and sub-teams within your marketing department working together.

BONUS TIP FROM SCOOP.IT

Establish Goals to Measure and Maintain Consistency

Who would trust a newspaper that would be published randomly and not every day? Content Marketing is about becoming media, and being consistent should be your number one objective. Start by defining accessible frequency goals for your team, e.g. 3 blog posts per week, 1 ebook per quarter, etc... Then make sure these goals are clear within your editorial calendar so everyone is on the same page and can offer to contribute when it's needed. Over time, refine the process by increasing your content volume goals.

4. ALIGN CONTENT WITH STRATEGY

You're planning your content in advance now. This is where you get really good at creating content with a purpose, not content for the sake of content. Every topic you create content around -- whether in a Facebook update, a case study, a blog post -- should solve a business need greater than, "we need something to publish."

Because your rich content culture has made it so you aren't the sole person responsible for content creation, it's time to tighten the reins on what content you allow to go public. Whereas before you may have allowed contributors to write about anything that's relevant for your industry, now you should require contributors to run topics by you before they begin drafting. This saves them time creating content that doesn't align with your goals, and it's important you position it as such to ensure they don't feel their contributions aren't appreciated anymore.

So, for every piece of content you set out to create, ask yourself what business goal that piece of content helps achieve.

BONUS TIP FROM SCOOP.IT

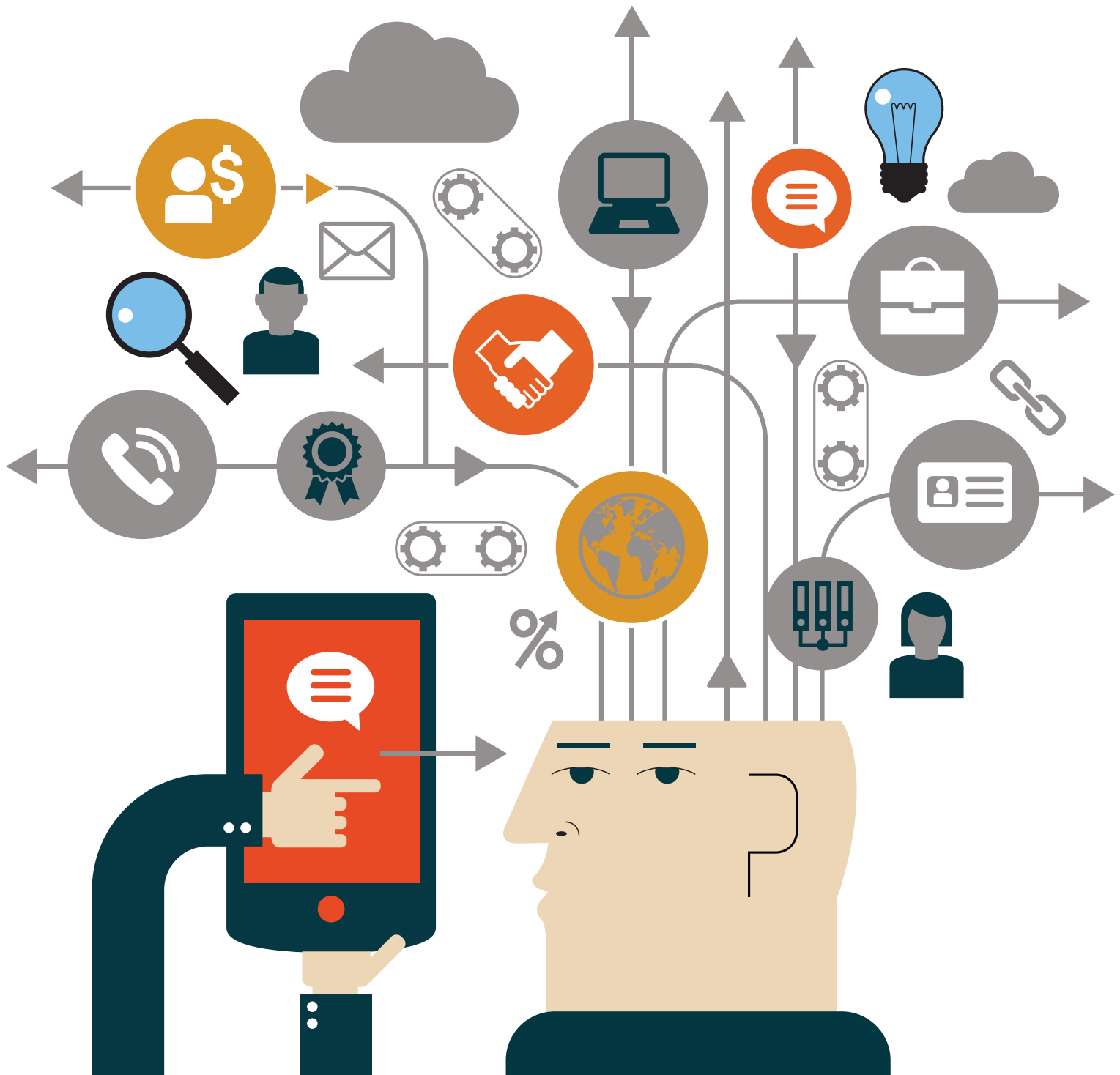
Establish Goals to Measure and Maintain Consistency

A great way to get started with content marketing and ensuring content is aligned with strategy is to list the top 15-30 questions your prospects and customers have the most often. Writing content that answers these questions will educate your prospects, make your customers more loyal and make them progress in your conversion funnel. As you do so, you'll realize you may have multiple buying personas as well as multiple funnel stages. Think of your content in the same way:

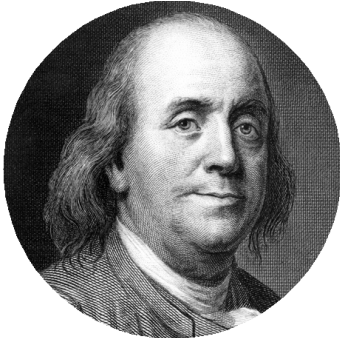
- First time visitors are more likely to have high level or introductory questions: publish Top Of The Funnel (TOFU) content for them and don't rush them to sales once they've read it as they're not likely to be ready. Instead offer them to subscribe to your email newsletter to receive blog updates on the same topic or suggest an eBook to download that might elaborate on what they just read.

- At the opposite of the spectrum, prospects ready to buy in the next few days will have much more precise questions such as pricing models, capabilities of your product or services, difference from competition, etc... publish Bottom Of The Funnel (BOFU) content for them and offer them to talk to sales, get a demo or schedule a meeting.

Not every piece of content can result in a sale. But by knowing who you create content for, how far they are from making a buying decision, what questions they have, you won't just create better content: you'll also be able to offer a call to action that matches with your customer's intent.



Chapter 5: Iterating, Improving, and Experimenting



"When you're finished changing, you're finished."

-Benjamin Franklin

New content formats and promotion channels emerge frequently, and you will not need to add every one to your marketing toolkit. The companies that have built unstoppable content creation machines, however, do know how to figure out what of the latest and greatest is worth investing resources into, and which ones to throw out.

1. EXPERIMENT WITH NEW TYPES OF CONTENT

Marketers that have the most prolific content catalogues provide a healthy mix of not just topics, but content formats. They are also typically agile marketers -- people that don't shy away from new technological advancements, love experimentation, work, adapt, and adopt quickly, and use measurement to determine whether a new content type worked.

Most importantly, though, they don't view an experiment's failure as a personal failure; it's just the cost of doing agile business. They've also mitigated the risk by investing very little resources into the initial experiment, instead opting to iterate on that initial piece of content to see how and if they can make the new content format, platform, etc. work.

Some examples of how you could do this include:

- **Trying out new social networks.** See if a new or underused social network is a good platform to share your content.
- **Adopting the content format of a particular network.** See if you can create visual content that works on, say, Pinterest, or short Vine videos for Twitter.
- **Creating videos.** Many marketers shy away from videos because of the initial barrier to entry. See if you creating a low-cost, low-resource video pays you any dividends, and if so, iterate from there.

2. MEASURE CONTENT PERFORMANCE

All content, whether part of an experiment or a regular guest in your content creation machine, needs to be pulling its proverbial weight. Measuring content performance allows you to assess whether a piece of content was worth the time you put into it, and whether you would do it again in the future. Here are the metrics you can track to evaluate the success of your content assets.

Landing Page Submissions

Look at the raw number of people that redeemed your content offer, and also look at the conversion rate to see the percentage of visitors to your landing page. Compare these numbers to old and new pieces of lead generation content you've created to see how they performed against each other.

New Contact Rate

This number tells you how many of the people that redeemed a piece of lead generation content were brand new to your database. Reconversions are important, but it's also critical your content is helping you continually fill the top of your funnel.

Page Views and Traffic

An excellent metric to determine the success of your overall blog and individual blog posts, this will tell you whether certain subject matters are more appealing than others, and help you inform your content strategy

Inbound Links

An indicator of content quality, inbound links also help you identify which content is helping you improve your SEO.

Social Media Shares

Social sharing is another indication of content quality, and also helps your organic search strategy. If you need to fill the top of your marketing funnel, identifying which content garnered a lot of social media shares and replicating it will help you score another success.

Conversion Rate

You can get a conversion rate on just about anything -- a landing page, a thank-you page, a blog post call-to-action. Measure the conversion rate across different content assets to see what correlation you see between content topics and formats, and the channel on which it lives. For instance, you could compare the conversion rate of a CTA promoting the same offer on a blog, versus on social media, to assess if one audience is more interested in the content asset than another.



BONUS TIP FROM SCOOP.IT

Set Up Your Analytics To Measure The Performance Of Each Individual Piece of Content

“Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don’t know which half.”

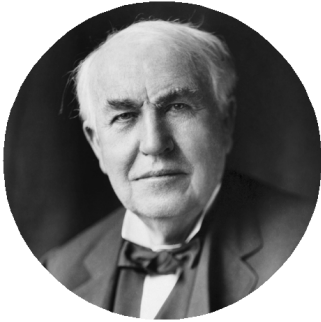
– John Wanamaker.

In this age of digital and data, it’s easy to get lost in reports and confuse vanity metrics with Key Performance Indicators.

In addition, using overall stats doesn’t tell you exactly what works and what doesn’t. Invest in analytics that give you a precise understanding of each individual piece of content’s impact not just on page views or social media distribution but also on lead generation.

At the end of the day, your content should drive business for your company. And while you can’t ask each blog post to generate a sale, you can always find something next for your readers to take action upon and that adds value to them. Drive them further into your marketing funnel by offering TOFU readers to subscribe to your blog updates by email or download an eBook that relates to what they just read. Offer returning readers interactive content such as ROI calculator that will make them understand their business problem better in return for their email. Define proper CTAs that align with your content depending on the reader’s stage. Measure conversions for each of your blog post or landing page and compare performance across your blog or resource center. Double down on what works, fix what doesn’t to prove and improve content marketing ROI.

Conclusion



"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."

-Thomas Edison

If you've made it this far, you might feel like you can attain some of this ... but you don't have the time, budget, or staff to create a content creation machine that can do all of this.

You're not expected to.

If your content creation machine is running on fumes, the tricks and tactics in this ebook will help you get up and running again. And when those tricks and tactics come to you naturally, you'll find you have a little bit more resource to invest in the next step up. You won't build an epic machine overnight, but discipline, and dedication and a little help from the right software tools will yield something amazing.

Next Step:

LEARN MORE ABOUT BLOGGING SOFTWARE WITH FAROTECH

Check It Out