

YOUR CONTENT MARKETING CHEAT SHEET

Tips, Best Practices, and Tools to Delight and Attract Clients and Customers

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Create Your Content Marketing Strategy

Before going on any trip, you need a map to get you there. Don't just dive into tactics without a strategy. [Your Brand Strategy](#) is the root of everything your business does and informs it all, but you also need a specific strategy for each function.

A content marketing strategy lives above any specific vehicles, topics or dates. It should drive all of your efforts.

The strategy includes:

- What are our content marketing objectives?
- What does our audience want? What do they need to know?
- What will we create?
- Will we have monthly themes and seasonal topics?
- Which vehicles will we use?
- How will we monitor and measure success?

Content Ideas:

Content marketing comes in many forms: videos, blogs, podcasts, newsletters, emails, social media posts, free guides, tip sheets and more.

You will decide which vehicles to create. But how do you determine what you should talk about?

- Survey your clients: What do they want or need?
- Answer common questions you get all the time.
- Comment on hot trends or current news and give your professional take.
- Share important advice that your audience needs to know.
- Interview other experts that may be of interest.
- Curate, don't just create! You don't have to create everything from scratch. You are also a trusted curator. Share interesting articles, community events, links to great resources.
- Poke around on social media or do Google searches and see what questions people are asking and for what they are searching.
- Build an editorial calendar to keep everything organized.

The Content Marketing Process

Great! You've built a content marketing strategy and everyone is on the same page. You know what to expect. Now it's time to get going.

1. Build Your Email List

- Most important asset: Warm leads
- Offer an opt-in incentive or simple *"Find out the latest news, information and tips to help you _____!"*

2. Choose Your Tactics

- Remember *The Rule of Three*: Pick up to three content vehicles or social media networks and do them really, really WELL. That's the only way to be effective and avoid wasting time, effort and money.

3. Create An Editorial Calendar

- Schedule out when you will talk about which topics so you can be more efficient and plan content ahead of time. To make things easy, pick monthly themes or seasonal topics.

4. Create (and Curate) your Content

- *Create*: Original articles, videos, podcasts, social media posts. Give tips, checklists, images, infographics.
- *Curate*: Link to trusted articles, resources, events, videos, interview guest experts, solicit guest posts or client-contributed content, such as photos, essays, or testimonials.

5. Share Your Content

- Send by postal mail (if applicable).
- Blast emails with a proper email marketing platform (such as Constant Contact, Aweber, MailChimp, Emma). *Never, ever send mass marketing emails from one person's work email. This will get you caught in Spam filters and blacklisted and also compromises recipients' privacy.*
- Promote through your social media networks.
- Highlight on the website.

Best Practices and Tools to Make Content Marketing Easier

Make Content Shareable

- Use Forward to a Friend, Social Share Buttons.
- Pre-write posts to share: ClicktoTweet.com.
- Use images and infographics.

Use Images



When people hear information, they are likely to remember only 10% of that information three days later.

However, if a relevant image is paired with that same information, people retained 65% of the information three days later.

(LifeLearn, 2015)



Visual content is 40X more likely to get shared on social media than other types of content.

(Buffer, 2014)

Optimize Images for Each Social Network:

Every social network has different image size requirements so remember to resize for optimal viewing. [Bookmark this page](#): The always updated image sizing guide for every social network.

Free Image Resources:

- [Unsplash](#)
- [500px](#)
- [Flickr Creative Commons](#)

***Be sure to add a photo credit, depending on rights agreement and terms.*

Free Image Editing Tools:

- [Canva](#): Get every template you need, pre-sized and with compelling imagery. They have templates you can use or you can upload your own images.
- [PicMonkey](#): Re-size images to any size you like and add eye-catching banners, effects, titles, etc.

Batch And Pre-Schedule Content, But...

- Batch content creation by doing several videos or blog posts in one sitting
- Pre-schedule content delivery in advance so you can set it and forget it:
 - Blogs: [WordPress](#) enables scheduling posts in advance
 - Email Platform: All of them have the ability to schedule in advance
 - Social media: Popular scheduling tools include [Hootsuite](#), [Buffer](#), [Meet Edgar](#), and you can use [Tailwind](#) specifically for Pinterest and Instagram
 - One caveat: If pre-scheduling to a Facebook brand page, only use Facebook's native scheduler, not a third-party tool. Otherwise, the Facebook algorithm will not show the post to as many of your fans.

...Set Aside Weekly Time For Live Engagement

- Social media is SOCIAL so make sure you are active within the platform
- Schedule 15 minutes per day to dip into social networks and interact, even if you pre-schedule content.
- Follow proper etiquette for each network
- Respond to comments, give shout-outs, thank people, share valuable content from other trusted sources, promote complementary businesses or organizations if applicable

Recycle and Reuse

- Spruce up old content for use again
- Repackage into other forms: A blog post becomes a media pitch; an article becomes a podcast or video. A series of blog posts becomes a free guide.
- Find at least three uses for every piece of content

Gather Continuous Feedback

- Monitor social media for questions, comments
- Provide mechanism to solicit content ideas
- Ask clients about your content efforts when they come in for appointment
- Poll your audience annually

How Do We Get It All Done?!

- Create a plan so it's easier to divide the workload
- Hire a full or part-time content marketing manager
- Hire a skilled freelancer on [Upwork](#) or [Fiverr](#)
- Hire a virtual assistant specializing in content marketing/social media from somewhere like Worldwide 101.
- Contact a local college or university and bring on an intern who is studying marketing, communications or journalism to build the plan and execute the content. You may be able to do this in exchange for course credit rather than pay!

Have Fun!

This is your opportunity to showcase your unique brand personality and voice. Get creative! If you've never done video before, experiment with simply using your phone. If you're a closet artist or photographer, create and capture unique images. The more you can have fun when creating content marketing, the more engaging the content will be to delight your clients, as well as attract new ones.

Keep Building Your Content Marketing Muscle!

Content Marketing Advice and Insights:

[Content Marketing Institute](#) is chock full of articles and stories about anything you need to know related to content marketing: tools, best practices, writing tips. Subscribe to their email updates or just browse their truly fabulous articles, such as these posts in particular:

[*10 Content Marketing Strategies That Will Make You A Better Marketer*](#)

[*5 Modern Content Marketing Best Practices for Getting Found*](#)

[*54 Content Writing Examples, Tools, Tips and Resources*](#)

[Convince and Convert](#) is another trusted resource full of videos, articles and the like on how to provide better content and effectively use social media to get results.

[Savvy Sexy Social](#) is a wonderful YouTube channel run by social media and content expert Amy Schmittauer. Her specific expertise is using video to attract more business but she covers much more. Her audience tends to be smaller businesses with limited time, budget and resources so her advice will be helpful. Plus she's very entertaining and practical.

Find articles to help you and your team become a better writer and content marketing creator at [Copyblogger](#).

Social Media Etiquette:

[Etiquette for Twitter](#)

[Etiquette for Facebook](#)

[Etiquette for LinkedIn](#)

[Etiquette for Instagram](#) (PS, this one is hilarious!)

[Etiquette for Pinterest](#)

Great Books:

[*Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook*](#) by Gary Vaynerchuk: A network-by-network look at what works and what does not in social media—including Before and After post makeovers. One of the most helpful reads out there for doing social media right.

[*Content Rules: How to Create Killer Blogs, Podcasts, Videos, Ebooks, Webinars \(and More\) That Engage Customers and Ignite Your Business*](#) by Ann Handley: A fabulous primer into all things content marketing and how to make every vehicle work. Once you choose which tactic to go with, you can use this book to guide creation.

[*Hug Your Haters: How to Embrace Complaints and Keep Your Customers*](#) by Jay Baer: Content marketing leaves you open to all types of public haters. This book covers why listening to your critics enhances your business, when and how to respond to the negativity—especially if posted publicly—and how to use those moments to either boost your brand or turn that hater into a raving fan.

ABOUT MARIA ROSS

Maria Ross is a brand strategist, author and speaker who believes cash flow and creativity are not mutually exclusive. As creator of Red Slice, she advises startups, solopreneurs and small businesses on how to craft irresistible brands. Maria is the author of ***Branding Basics for Small Business: How to Create an Irresistible Brand on Any Budget, (2nd Edition)*** and the newly launched eBook series, ***The Juicy Guides for Entrepreneurs***, as well as her powerful personal memoir, ***Rebooting My Brain***.

A dynamic speaker, she has delighted audiences ranging from The New York Times to the Chamber of Commerce to BlogHer and has appeared in and written for numerous media outlets, including MSNBC, ABC News, The Huffington Post, Forbes.com, NPR and Entrepreneur Magazine. Maria lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband, toddler son and their precocious Black Lab mix. Learn how to tell your irresistible story at red-slice.com or spark a conversation with Maria on Twitter [@redslicec](https://twitter.com/redslicec).

Sign up for my email tribe for insights and inspiration AND get a free brand guide to boost your popularity! Check out the details [here](#).



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