

Drive Sales with Content that Converts

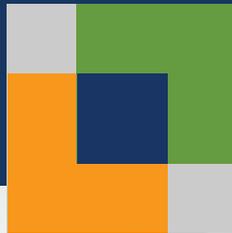
5 Steps to a Successful - & Realistic - Content Marketing Program



PRECISION
marketinggroup

The attention span of your prospects and customers is getting shorter and shorter, but they're consuming more content than ever. Everywhere they look, click or go, marketers are trying to engage them with streaming video, post-it note ads, social media requests and more. They can't even ride an elevator or fill their gas tanks without some demand on their attention.

This strategy, known as content marketing, has one major objective: **to create, optimize and distribute branded content that's relevant, valuable and easily consumed by a business's target audience.**



3 Must-Haves in Content Marketing

Relevance:

- Speaks to your target audience and their needs

Value:

- Solves a current challenge or problem with practical, doable advice
- Provides useful information that will make some aspect of their life better
- Offers data to make an informed decision about something relevant

Digestibility:

- Produced in short, easy-to-consume bits
- Available in a variety of media (video, tweets, status updates, etc.)
- Is memorable thanks to accompanying creative or pithy, memorable copy



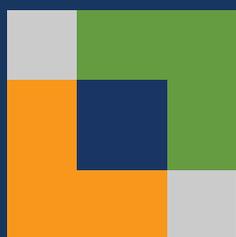
Why should you care about inbound and content marketing? Because your peers, partners, and competitors do. According to HubSpot's *State Of Inbound* Report, inbound marketing is the preferred marketing strategy across all business types. In fact, 3 out of 4 marketers throughout the world prioritize an inbound approach to marketing. And when you know that content marketing generates 3x as many leads but costs 62% less than traditional outbound marketing, the advantages of implementing an inbound strategy are hard to ignore.

It's this substance-heavy strategy that makes up the core of inbound marketing. Unlike traditional outbound marketing techniques (which aim to push products, services or brands), modern inbound marketing seeks to **educate, engage, and entertain**. Keeping within that goal set, content marketing allows businesses to build relationships with their prospects throughout the sales cycle. Sales is still the priority here – marketing has to make money, after all – **but content marketing accommodates sales cycles of any length**. It doesn't push. Even if someone doesn't buy right away, your business remains top of mind, which comes in handy when the buyer reaches the point of purchase.

We know, we know. Who has the time to create all this content? Who reads it all? How can you do this and still keep up with all the other things you're doing? Can you really make money with all this stuff?

More than most, SMB owners and marketers appreciate the need to be smart with their time, practical with their approaches and productive with their marketing. That's why your content marketing program needs to be realistic, cost-effective and successful.

Here are 5 steps to creating a content marketing program that delivers in sales.



5

1

Identify Your Goals so You Can Optimize Content Appropriately

So what do you want to accomplish with your content marketing?

Think about it as you would any other marketing program – if **lead generation** is the goal, for example, decide how many qualified leads you want to bring to your door through each initiative. If your goal is getting **more business** from existing customers or **retaining clients** over time, you'll want to think about the things they have already demonstrated an interest in. When your objective is to **build your brand** or position your firm's subject matter experts as thought leaders, it's important to think about presenting topics in a unique, innovative way.

For all of your different goals, we suggest coming up with the topics and **keywords** that will drive your content marketing efforts. What topics do you want to become known for and, more importantly, what versions of words or phrases do people use when searching online for these topics?

Example:

Your business provides commercial cleaning services for local offices, schools, churches and temples. You want to be found when people in these spaces want to contract for weekly cleanings. The first step is to decide what you want to be known for, e.g. "commercial cleaning services" or "commercial cleaner." Next, do some research to find all the variations on these terms and how many *monthly searches* occur for each one, as well as how *competitive* the terms are.

You may discover, for instance, that "commercial cleaning services" is such a popular search phrase that it would be very difficult for your content to rank highly for it. But maybe a term, called a **long tail keyword phrase**, like "what to look for in a commercial cleaner" has fewer searches but – with the right content – higher opportunity for your business.



2

Decide on Distribution Channels, Formats and Schedules

Now it's time to think about how you will present and deliver your content. You'll want to do this *before* you dig into creating content because the distribution channel and format will drive content creation. For example, creating web videos requires different content (as well as style and tone) than a white paper series or weekly blog.

Start where you should always start when creating content - with your audience. What do they read, watch and listen to? Are they heavy mobile app users or do they still subscribe to their industry's print publications? Are they likely to share your content if it's valuable and relevant? What kinds of topics, information, education and entertainment will they respond to? How often do they want to hear from you and how?

Getting to know your target audience, which should include prospects, current clients and, in some cases, the press, will help you choose the most appropriate formats. You can also check out the popularity of the content your competitors are producing for hints on what resonates with your audience.

Format Ideas to Get You Rolling:

- eNewsletters
- Blogs
- Social Media (everything from FB, Twitter and LinkedIn to Instagram, Flipboard or Pinterest for more visual content)
- White Papers and eBooks
- Surveys
- Webinars
- Explainer Videos
- Podcasts

3

Define a Content Creation Plan

Now it's time to dive into the content creation. This is where many small businesses can get overwhelmed. Who will write, film, design, and take photos? How will the schedule be coordinated and executed so it stays on track? What content do we have now that we can leverage?

It's critical at this point to assign a point person to head up your content marketing program. Many larger firms are hiring chief content officers, but that's just not realistic for most SMBs. **So think about an internal person, an outsourced option or a combination of resources that can lead this effort in a cost-effective way.**

Start by doing a content audit of all the materials you currently have. Maybe you've started blogging or you've been publishing a company newsletter. Perhaps your website has a robust resource section you can leverage. Do the same for all of the photos and videos you may have completed by this point. Being able to *repurpose* content is key!

Next, you'll want to **create your plan** for each piece of content marketing. For example, maybe you're going to start with a monthly webinar series designed to drive leads and strengthen client relationships. Decide on your topics, speakers, webinar tool and schedule. Once that is done, you will be surprised at how much other content you can create from this single initiative.

Example:

One of the webinars your sales consulting firm creates is called "5 Things Your Prospects Are Telling You Without Saying a Word." You now have 5 blog posts, 5 newsletter articles, a podcast and a presentation to pitch to conferences.

Other Best Practices for Content Creation:

- Build your content around your [target buyer personas](#).
- Follow the 80/20 Rule (80% value-added content, 20% promotions).
- Include clear Calls-to-Action in every piece.

4

Commit to Listening and Engaging

Imperative to your success will be a **commitment to respond to all comments, reactions and ideas you get from your audience**. Because all great content allows for interaction, make it as easy as possible for your users to engage with you.

Include Q&A sections in your webinars, invite comments on your Facebook company page, ask questions in your blog posts and newsletters, and encourage sharing of your content on all social media sites.

Not everyone will agree with or even like your content, and if they tell you that – great! Never hide negative reviews or comments, but respond openly and honestly to them. And always thank people for speaking up and sharing.



5

Measure and Refine

The beauty of marketing today is that essentially everything can be tracked and measured. You have the power to know how many people view a video, open your newsletter, download your white paper or retweet a tweet.

Take full advantage of these metrics to see how well your content is working to achieve the goals you set for it. Is it increasing traffic on your website? In time, you'll start seeing major positive changes. And with more qualified traffic, comes more leads! Google heavily values inbound links, social sharing and regularly updated website content when it comes to populating the search rankings. So keep that valuable content coming!

Again, don't leave your content to sit around and collect dust. Make refinements regularly to ensure you are creating the most valuable, engaging content for your audiences, the kind that ultimately leads to sales. Take a look at what content drives the most engagement and do more of that, while refining the pieces that lack shares, comments or views. Remember: quality, not quantity, will be more beneficial for you in terms of content in the long run.

Content marketing gives you the unique opportunity to show off in a way that is mutually beneficial to your prospects and clients. While we know that implementing an inbound and content marketing plan takes a lot of time and energy, there's a reason why so many people are making the switch. *It yields results.*

Now that you have a clear 5-step process to create, execute, and measure your content marketing plan, you can more effectively start leveraging what you know and use it as shareable insight. You can excite your prospects, inform your clients, and generate leads with higher visibility on search engines.

As always, if you have any questions about content marketing or simply need help to get your plan started, PMG is here. We've got plenty of inbound and content experience, and we're more than happy to help!



About Us

Could your company benefit from some great marketing? Precision Marketing Group, LLC offers topnotch outsourced marketing services to B2B organizations, with a focus on inbound marketing that drives qualified leads. As a HubSpot Certified Platinum Partner, PMG has the capabilities to serve its clients with the absolute best in integrated marketing strategies and services that deliver real business results.

Of course, our team of experts enjoys providing B2B marketing strategy and execution to companies of many different sizes and types. Mixing it up keeps life interesting! However, we've found our sweet spot to be teaming up with privately held businesses with a complex sale – most often, companies in the manufacturing, technology and professional services industries.

Interested in receiving your own B2B inbound marketing assessment? Send us a message or call today! For more information, visit PrecisionMarketingGroup.com or contact us at **508.656.0291**.

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