



7 Steps To Jumpstarting Your Content Marketing



The Savvy B2B Manufacturer's Content Creation Checklist



Is your industrial manufacturing firm lagging behind the curve when it comes to content marketing? If you're feeling this way and you're not really sure about what to do next, you're certainly not alone in your industry.

According to Content Marketing Institute's *B2B Manufacturing Content Marketing – 2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends* report, a whopping 50% of manufacturing marketers describe their organization's content marketing maturity to be in either the "First Steps" phase or "Young" phase, where they are just starting to make content marketing a process or going through the growing pains and challenges of creating a cohesive strategy and measurement plan.

What's more, only 18% of those surveyed report their content marketing efforts are actually effective!

Because content marketing is now the go-to approach to attracting, engaging and retaining a clearly defined audience of prospective buyers, it's important to get your process right. **This guide outlines the first seven steps you should take in order to get a successful content marketing program flowing for your manufacturing business, ultimately helping you bring in more qualified leads you can nurture and convert into customers!**

1. Identify Your Target Buyer

The first step to building a successful content marketing program is to know exactly who you are trying to reach! Despite that most B2B manufacturing companies sell in niche industries, many of the same content rules apply. **For instance, a one-size-fits-all message *doesn't* work. You must segment your target audience members before creating content that appeals to them.**

To whom are you marketing your products? Engineers? Production managers? Technology developers? Each type of buyer wants different things and consumes content in different ways. What's more, who is actually doing the research when looking for your solutions? Your marketing message should resonate with both the searcher and with the decision maker – so it's important to understand their needs and incorporate this information into your content collateral, creating different pieces for each influencer in your sales cycle. Moreover, identifying your target buyer will also inform the channels you use to market your products and publish your content. Wherever your audience is “hanging out,” you want to be there, too.

★ PRO TIP

Interview some of your top customers (but also be sure to pick the ones who will be most *honest* with you). Ask them about where they conduct market research and what type of content they're looking for. What are their challenges – and the business conditions that triggered the search for help? What excites them? What do they like to see in a website? And how would they describe your solution in a few words? Talk to enough customers and you'll start to notice patterns – and use these insights to help you connect with similar prospects!

2. Determine Priority Keywords

Like everybody else, B2B manufacturing buyers often begin their research process online, typing in specific terms and phrases into search engines like Google. Generating content about topics relevant to your target buyers – and incorporating these terms and phrases into that content – increases your chances of showing up in your buyer’s search engine results.

There are a number of free keyword planning tools out there that can help you determine what’s actually being searched for in your market – [Google Keyword Planner](#), [Soovle](#), and [SEMrush](#), just to name a few. **The best keywords are phrases that have a relatively high search volume and relatively low competition.** Simply put, competition refers to your chances of ranking for a keyword based on who else is currently ranking for it. Google provides you with this data. Though Google’s search algorithms are constantly evolving, and the weight it places on on-page SEO fluctuates, it will always help if you correctly position keywords to optimize your page for organic search. [Check out this post for more detailed optimization tips!](#)

Keep in mind that as B2B manufacturers, the keywords you find may return low (or even very low) search volume numbers. However, due to the nature of your industry, the prospects using those keywords are likely more qualified buyers – and sometimes all it takes is one successful search result!

★ PRO TIP

Start out your keyword research process with Google’s Keyword Planner. It’s free if you have a Google account (sign in with your @gmail address). When you dig into the tool, you can forget the “Ad Group ideas” – that’s the paid part of the application. Pick a few starter terms and click on the ‘Get ideas’ button, select the “keyword ideas” tab, and download these ideas to an Excel spreadsheet. You can sort by monthly search volume or competition and look for optimal combinations. To be frank, some of the keywords will be junk, but you’ll likely find a lot of great (and new) ideas that pertain to your business, product or industry.

3. Take an Inventory of Your Current Content

Half the content marketing battle is just getting started – and the idea of writing pages of new material may be daunting at first. If you think you don't have much content to work with, you may actually be surprised. Instruction manuals, sales presentations, FAQs, and other documentation you've created as you've been selling and servicing customers can be modified and repurposed into resources, white papers, eBooks, blog articles or infographics that you can use to drive qualified traffic to your site – not to mention engage site visitors, convert visitors to leads and nurture leads to close. Perhaps even an email you sent as a response to a client question can be reworked into a short how-to piece!

Take the time to tailor content to each stage in the buyer's journey – for *each* of your target buyers. When taking your inventory, establish which types of content can be recycled for prospects at the top of your sales funnel (who perhaps haven't even heard of your company and want general advice or insights about a particular topic), the middle of the funnel (who are assessing their need for a solution like yours) and the bottom of the funnel (who are looking to buy a solution, potentially from you!). This will make your lead nurturing process more fluid, as you'll have helpful content to offer your prospects as they get closer and closer to decision time.

★ **PRO TIP**

It's important to consider how your content will all work together. When you're just beginning a content marketing program, keep it simple. For each of your target buyer segments, assign one piece of content for each of the three stages. Mapping out what you already have provides you with a bigger picture, enabling you to see the holes you need to fill in with additional new content.



4. Talk to Your Company's Experts

So you're in charge of your manufacturing firm's marketing. Why should you be asking other "non-marketing" people for help? The answer is simple. Your colleagues are on the front lines every day in some capacity – whether it's in sales, production, customer service, etc. – so they understand your prospects and clients in different ways, as well as the problems they're trying to solve.

Asking these folks a few basic questions will help you generate new content ideas. Plus you'll potentially receive more material to add to your inventory.

Have your sales reps encountered a lot of the same inquiries during calls with prospects? Did your customer service team help resolve a particular issue for a client? These mini stories can be converted into blog posts that showcase your organization's industry expertise, as well as your company's values and personality.

★ **PRO TIP**

One quick way to produce a noteworthy blog post is to publish a Q&A session with one of your team members that addresses a hot-button industry topic. Come up with 7 or 8 questions and talk through them with the subject matter expert, transcribe the interview, tighten it up and BOOM. There's your next bite-sized article!

5. Create a Content Marketing Mission

It's critical to know what you are looking to achieve with your content marketing efforts – and to state it clearly in order to guide your plan and process. Content Marketing Institute reports that 45% of the most effective manufacturing content marketers actually have a documented *content marketing mission statement* to support their strategy. In this statement, you'll want to articulate your own company goals from content marketing, but it's just as important (if not more so) to create a mission statement that is reflective of what you want your prospects and customers to get out of the content.

All content you produce should align with your mission. **The core of your content marketing mission as a B2B industrial manufacturer should be about which problems you solve for your target buyers and the type of content you will deliver to help your buyers solve them. *Solve, don't sell!***

According to CMI's content expert Joe Pulizzi, your mission statement should cover:

- **The core audience target:** the type of person you can help most with your content
- **Deliverables to the audience:** the types of information you will provide through your content, and how your story is different
- **A desired outcome for the audience:** things your audience will be able to do once they have consumed your content – what's in it for them?

★ PRO TIP

We suggest incorporating your own goals into the mission statement, as well. Though you're just starting out, it's important to keep business objectives top-of-mind – and to establish some benchmarks and KPIs to help you measure your success once your content marketing program is really up and running! Some examples of goals could include:

- Drive more traffic to your website
- Increase brand awareness
- Generate sales qualified leads
- Convert more leads into customers
- Improve customer retention and drive upsell



6. Craft Content Full of Facts, Not Fluff!

Audiences researching industrial manufacturing solutions want the facts from a trusted, credible resource. They don't want all the bells and whistles, the buzzwords, the cheesy slogans – or what we call *fluff*. **The best content will focus on providing valuable information with data, testimonials, and certification badges and seals to back it up.**

Yes, your content can still be delivered in a fun, engaging way. Of course, a manufacturing audience doesn't want to be bored to death by stale writing and a lack of personality. But for buyers in this industry, the substance will have to be there in all instances. So be a resource, not a sales pitch.

To tie your content together, make sure each piece you craft is accompanied by a next step, as well as a Call-to-Action. Your audience should have a clear actionable takeaway from each piece of content. And once they're finished reading/watching/listening, they should be introduced to the next piece of content that will guide them along your sales funnel.

★ **PRO TIP**

Not everyone is cut out to be a writer. Even with a strategic mind and an eye for analytics, the best marketers in the manufacturing field may need to recruit a freelance technical copywriter to help produce meatier pieces that strike a balance between informative and entertaining content.



7. Promote Your Content

It's not enough to simply publish your content on your website. The promotion step is absolutely essential. Organic search is only one way your prospects can find you – and when you're new to the world of content marketing, you can't solely rely on "being Googled" to be found.

Where are the members of your target audience finding information and reading their industry news? On which social channels are they most active? Promote your awesome content through social media and paid advertising, in a company newsletter, via print or offline promotion, through traditional online banner ads, on your partners' websites and via content curation tools and platforms like [Medium.com](https://medium.com) or on [LinkedIn Pulse](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse). You can also try pitching an article to an industry publication, providing an inventive angle to the editor accompanied by the reasons why his or her audience should be reading the content *right now*, as opposed to down the road.

If you have visual content to share with your prospects, YouTube actually has the highest effectiveness rating among all social channels B2B manufacturers utilize. And [SlideShare](https://slideshare.net) is quickly gaining ground in the content marketing world, too!

★ PRO TIP

To make your content work hard for you, you'll need to identify the best social channels to promote it. When in doubt, LinkedIn Advertising is a paid option that offers excellent targeting options so you can get your content in front of the buyers you really want to reach. Particularly for promoting links to eGuides and webinars, we've seen success in the manufacturing space when leveraging this tool.

In Conclusion

Now that you have seven clear steps to follow, you can start more effectively leveraging content marketing as a tool for your manufacturing business.

Producing content may seem like a lot of work, but we hope this eGuide helps you simplify and streamline the process – as it's well worth the time you put in. Here's one more important stat for the road...

According to GlobalSpec's *2013 Digital Media Use in the Industrial Sector*, **56% of industrial professionals don't contact a vendor until they evaluate their options by comparing supplier website content!**

So remember, though B2B manufacturing buyers are surely a busy group of people, they still want to make the best purchasing decisions for their company, and they often make those decisions by consuming your content, learning about your expertise, and developing a relationship with your business.

Please reach out to our team if you have any questions about getting the content marketing ball rolling. We've got plenty of experience in the industrial manufacturing world to share, and we're always 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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