

How to Create a Content Marketing Strategy

Now, more than ever, creating an effective content strategy is an important task for any business that's serious about attracting and converting visitors.

Your visitors want engaging and useful content and Google's algorithm demands it. Now is the time to develop a strategy for engaging your audience with content.

The Pillars of Any Content Marketing Strategy

You've got to start with a solid foundation if you want to build a successful and sustainable content marketing strategy. And to do that, you need some core foundational elements. These are universal and should be considered with any content marketing campaign.

1. Answer Your Customers Questions!

It sounds so simple. And it is! Your current and potential customers want information, but not just information about your company's latest product launch, or latest acquisition, or your CEO's latest news interview. In fact, they rarely want that kind of information at all. What they really want is information that helps them. They want information that answers their questions.

Your content should help solve their problems. It should identify their pain points and teach them how to overcome them. No matter your industry, your customers have questions that you can answer. And these questions should be the first pieces of content you create in your new content strategy.

This is a very simple concept, but one that is so often missed. So many businesses are afraid to address their customers' questions and concerns. They treat their proprietary information like it's gold and keep it under lock and key, only to be revealed after the customer has handed over the dough. But what if you are different? What if you're the one site in your industry, or region or niche that actually does address those questions? Then you're going to show up in the SERPS for those commonly asked questions. You're going to bring visitors to your site. And you're going to gain the trust of these visitors b/c you are the only one willing to address their questions.

If they want to know how much your products or services cost, tell them! If they want to know how long your services will take, tell them! If they want to know who the best company for ABC service is, write a top 5 list (a list that doesn't include you). And you don't have to give away everything. Just address their concerns.

Ryan BeMiller – Shopping Signals

If you sell landscaping services, you can't give an exact price for the cost of your services...each client is different. But you CAN address the question and write about the price range of your services, and how costs are calculated.

If you have an ecommerce store that sells widgets, they may want to know how your widget compares to XYZ's widget. Write an ABC Widget vs. XYZ Widget blog post. Simply and honestly compare the features and benefits of each.

This approach of answering your customers' questions is an easy way for nearly any website to develop content. Let's review.

- a. Brainstorm a list of questions and concerns that are common to your customers and prospects.
- b. Rank this list, starting with the most often asked question, and working your way down.
- c. Begin writing, starting at the number 1 ranked question.
- d. Each question should be answered with a single blog post.
- e. Branch into comparison type posts when all key questions have been answered.
 - i. Comparison type posts can include: VS posts, top 5, 10, etc., Best XYZ Product, Best ABC Service in X city, etc...

2. Structure your blog titles and posts for SEO Effectiveness

No matter what you've read or heard, SEO isn't dead. As long as Google is ranking search results with an algorithm, SEO will live on. Utilizing SEO only strengthens your content's reach and visibility. Why wouldn't you want to optimize your content so it has the best chance of being found by Google? That's what I'm talking about with regard to SEO.

I don't recommend tricks and tactics to game the system. I recommend proven and tested techniques for identifying the keywords that are actually being searched for, and optimizing your content to give you the best chance at ranking.

And you don't need to overthink the SEO part. Don't worry about keyword density, meta keywords and junk like that. First and foremost, make your content attractive to humans. Then optimize it for the search engines.

You really just need a few key SEO elements for an effectively optimized page:

1. The Page Title – here I'm referring to the <title> tag. This is what shows up on search results pages, and is the most important on-page SEO factor, according to [MOZ](#), apart from the actual content of the page of course.

Ryan BeMiller – Shopping Signals

- a. Try to keep it to less than 70 characters, including spaces. You can go over that amount, but Google won't consider or display it in their SERPS.
 - b. Structure your title as a person would search for the keywords. So if you're optimizing for say, "Best Fishing Knife", think about how people would search for that. Things like "best fishing knife resource", "best fishing knife", "what's the best fishing knife" or "how to choose the best fishing knife". So, if you're optimizing for this phrase, and it's for your home page, you might use a title like *The Best Fishing Knife Resource You'll Find | Your Company Name*. And if you want to write a blog post for this phrase, you might title it "How to Choose the Best Fishing Knife" (this one's only 36 characters, and that's okay). You don't want to include the Company Name in every page title, that's duplicate content...we don't want that.
2. The Page Heading – This is the opening headline on your page. The title of your post or article, if you will. Best practice dictates that every page should use the <H1> tag for the primary headline.
 - a. Keep your headline as short as possible, but make it interesting and enticing to the reader. It must draw them in and get them to read further.
 - b. Use your targeted keyword phrase in the heading if possible, but not at the cost of harming its attractiveness to the reader.
 3. The Content – The meat of your page. The text, photos, and illustrations that actually addresses the question.
 - a. In terms of SEO, you really just want to sprinkle in the keyword phrase two or three times throughout the body of content. Always make sure it's readable and flows as it should. Never overdo it. Err on the side of less is more here.
 - b. Toss in a couple of related keyword phrases **if it makes sense and strengthens the content**.
 - c. Included graphics and photos that help tell the story or illustrate a point. Be sure to use your "alt" tags and include keywords where applicable.
3. Promote Yourself and Your Content

So you've addressed a pressing question or concern, and structured it perfectly for the search engines. You've got this great post that is waiting to be discovered. Now you just have to get it out there. Here are some very effective ways to get the message out:

Social Networks – in all of these cases, you're sharing a quick thought or picture, then linking to the actual post on your site.

- Share a quick synopsis and maybe a photo on Facebook and in groups
- Do a targeted post to your followers on LinkedIn
- Post a blurb on your Twitter feed with an applicable #hashtag

Ryan BeMiller – Shopping Signals

- Post the photo(s) from your article to your Pinterest board.

Reformat and repurpose – Depending on the type of content, you may find that it lends itself to repurposing. If so, you can increase the reach of your content by distributing it in other formats like videos or presentations. Some options would be:

- Create a powerpoint presentation for Slideshare
- Save it as a PDF and upload it to Scribd
- Record a video and post it to YouTube

Be Social - As always, be social and join the conversation. Hopefully, you're already active in some online communities that relate to your industry. If so, there are generally opportunities to comment on posts, or forum topics, and inject a link to your helpful post. I don't recommend using this tactic too frequently...only when it is really adding value to a conversation.

There are many more ways to get the message out there for your new post. Be creative, think about the audience and how they would typically find and interact with this kind of content. You'll be sure to find even more ways to promote your post.

If you'd like my list of content promotion ideas, shoot me a message:

<http://m.me/ryanbemillery>

So go for it. Get cracking and develop a killer content marketing strategy that gets results!

[Join my Facebook Group](#) to be part of a growing community of ecommerce business owners who are passionate about growing their businesses! >> [Join now!](#) <<