



Content Tool Set

The content tool set is designed to help you develop an effective content marketing program. It provides the tools that allow you to:

- 1. Conduct Effective Research To Understand Your Audience**
- 2. Identify Optimal Content Topics**
- 3. Determine Viable Channels Of Distribution**
- 4. Stay Organized And Maximize Your Content Benefits**

These actions will ensure that you develop effective content that targets audience needs in the places that they look for information. In addition, it provides the framework to ensure you develop and publish the content when it's required.

The Content Tool Set Components include:

- » The Customer Persona Template
- » Audience Understanding of Capabilities Worksheet
- » Content Topic Checklist
- » Editorial Calendar

Use these tools and follow each step to formulate a successful content program.



A persona is a semi-fictional representation of your target buyer or audience. It includes details such as:

- » Gender
- » Age range
- » Education
- » Industry
- » Job Type
- » Pain Points
- » What Is Important To Them
- » Goals And Objectives
- » Information Sources

The purpose of developing the persona template is to define both your primary and secondary audience

Primary Audience

Your primary audience is the principal group you are trying to attract. They might be the largest single segment or one that offers the greatest potential. The audience segment is typically a job function or specific individual that is likely to make a decision on your product or service.

Example » A printing and packaging company looks at industrial and consumer manufacturing marketing departments as their primary audience. They target job functions such as VP, director, marketing manager, product manager and marketing coordinator.

A home health care company might consider a 45 - 65 year old, oldest female daughter, looking for care for a parent or older loved one as their primary audience.

Secondary Audience

Your secondary audience influences and may also use your products and services. As the name implies, it's the second most important target segment.

Example » The printing and packaging company looks at engineering and sourcing as important contacts that are involved in the purchasing process. A home health care company earmarks the senior citizen looking at care for themselves, a spouse or a sibling.

Now use the Customer Persona to define the details about your primary and secondary audience.



Customer Persona Template

Build your persona using the following template.



Name:

**Business/Geography
Other Segment:**

Job Type:

**Reporting
Structure:**

Education:

**Product/Service
or Selling Opportunity:**

**Buyer
Responsibilities:**

**Buyer Goals
and Objectives:**

**Information Sources
I Trust:**

Current Pain Points:

**What Key Features are
Important to Buyer:**

You may know your audience but don't skip this step. Defining this information will allow you to develop content that best targets the needs of your audience.

Content Tool Set - designed to help you develop an effective content marketing program.

Written by John Edmundson, InterEdgeMarketing Inc. © 2015 | All Rights Reserved

Audience Understanding

At What Level Does Your Audience Understand Your Capabilities?

The purpose of this exercise is to describe how well your primary and secondary audience understands the products and services you offer. Outlining their level of understanding will help you identify content topics that are most meaningful

When it comes to the products and services you offer, audience understanding varies significantly. A long time customer might be very knowledgeable while someone just learning about your product category knows very little. Typically your audience will range from novice to proficient.

Think about the following questions as you fill out the Audience Understanding Template.

Questions to consider:

- » Do they use a product or service similar to the one you provide?
- » What would cause them to consider looking for capabilities like yours?
- » Have they used your product or service before?
- » Do they understand the need for your product or service in their business?
- » Do they understand how it will benefit them or how it impacts their business?
- » Are they aware of the overall cost?
- » Are they familiar with competitor offerings?



Audience Understanding

For a company providing Web Strategy and Content Marketing your audience might look like the following:

Audience Type

Primary Audience - B2B Marketing VPs, Marketing Directors and Sales VPs

Novice User

The novice user knows that the internet and online channels have impacted their business. They recognize that they should evaluate their website. They don't have an in depth knowledge of the type of services they should consider, nor are they familiar with costs. Their website hasn't been updated in a few years. They may have used an outside company to design their site previously. Or it may also have been developed by internal staff. They may be unsure how an improved web strategy and content marketing would impact their audience. The website has limited content with either no blog or infrequent blog posts. A social media strategy is unlikely.

Proficient User

May have participated in a past web development process. They recognize the importance of implementing a more effective and consistent online program. They are familiar with digital services but need assistance to develop a web strategy that best supports their goals. They may have a blog and participate in some social media channels. Updates have been intermittent and they have had trouble sustaining an on-going content program. They don't have a large internal staff to support these efforts and will need outside services to help execute an effective program. They may be aware of other organizations who provide similar services but don't have an understanding of the overall costs.



Audience Understanding Template

Fill out the Audience Understanding template with details about your primary and secondary audience.

Audience Type	Primary Audience Description

Repeat this same exercise for your Secondary Audience.

Content Tool Set - designed to help you develop an effective content marketing program.

Written by John Edmundson, InterEdgeMarketing Inc. © 2015 | All Rights Reserved

Content Topics Grid

What is being written about your capabilities today?

The purpose of this exercise is to audit content published by organizations that serve your market category. These publishers might include associations, trade organizations, competitors and more. Identifying the content will allow you to uncover topics that are written about today and ones that aren't. Finding gaps in content coverage provides you the opportunity to fill that void

Self education is making up a higher percentage of the buyers purchasing journey. Research the content published today in your industry. Identify content that benefits your audience as they go through the learning process. Look for examples such as:

Category Education

- » Information that would assist a buyer as they learn about your type of capabilities for the first time
- » Basic training information
- » Information about suppliers that provide a similar range of services
- » Information about how users have successfully implemented a capability like yours
- » Best in class examples

Company Education

- » Learning more about a company's specific products
- » Determining if you have the ability to produce a certain product or provide a specific service
- » How a product or service can be used more effectively
- » How your products decrease costs or increase productivity
- » How your product or service might solve certain pain points they are experiencing

Content Topics Grid

Case studies

- » Technical Challenges
- » How to use the product more effectively
- » How to troubleshoot or correct a problem
- » Learning what type of product or service is best for a specific application

Implementation Information

- » How to find and select the right vendor
- » Learning about the overall costs both hard and soft costs
- » How to build a budget
- » ROI examples
- » Internal staff time requirements
- » How they might pay for your services
- » The pros and cons of your services

Depending upon the industry, the type of content categories will vary. Determine the various areas that are written about today or might make sense to communicate to your audience. Identify the information that's published and fill out the attached template grid.

The example below mirrors what a web strategy and content marketing company might find.

Compare Audience Understanding & Content Grid

The purpose of this step is to identify content that will benefit your audience and help you stand out from other publishers

Look at the amount of content published in each category and code it accordingly.

Red = Lots of content

Yellow = Some content

Green = Opportunity for more content

Publisher	Website Strategy	Search Engine Optimization	Content Marketing	Social Media Marketing	Implementation Steps	ROI	Cost
Industry Organization	×	×	×	×			
Trage Magazine	×	×	×	×			×
National Competitor		×	×		×		×
National Competitor	×	×					
Local Competitor		×	×				
Local Competitor		×			×	×	
Local Competitor	×	×	×	×			×

Then evaluate the information from the audience understanding template. Identify gaps in the information published and the needs of your audience. In this example, there's an opportunity for the web strategy and content marketing company to publish information that is unique and benefits their primary and secondary audience in the Implementation, ROI and cost categories.

Combining the information from each exercise allows you to develop a content plan that best targets your audience.

Content Tool Set - designed to help you develop an effective content marketing program.
Written by John Edmundson, InterEdgeMarketing Inc. © 2015 | All Rights Reserved



Content Topics Grid Template

Fill out the attached template grid.

Publisher	Content Category 1	Content Category 2	Content Category 3	Content Category 4	Content Category 5	Content Category 6	Content Category 7
Industry Association							
Trade Magazine							
National Competitor							
National Competitor							
Local Competitor							
Local Competitor							
Local Competitor							

Editorial Calendar

The purpose of developing an editorial calendar is to define the who, what, when, where and why for all content. It will become your roadmap that details all your content topics, purpose of content, publishing dates, channels of distribution and people responsible for writing, approving and publishing the information

These are the categories that should make up your calendar:

- » **Expected Publication Date** - The date you anticipate publishing the article
- » **Distribution Channel** - The channels you expect to use to distribute the article such as your blog, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.
- » **Topic or Title** - Either the exact title or the topic of the communication
- » **Purpose** - What is the call to action? Do you want the customer to opt in, read related content, request a catalog, respond to an email, etc.
- » **Nurturing Category** - Who are you targeting with the communication? Is it someone learning about the overall category, your specific company, a prospect or a current customer?

- » **Title By Channel** - The title may differ depending upon how the communication is distributed. Detail the specific title for each channel
- » **Keywords** - What are the most important keywords that connect with company capabilities and represent the content of the article
- » **Linking Strategy** - Articles or webpages that you should link to that will bring greater clarity to the content
- » **Complementary Content** - Pages within your site, previous blog posts or other resources that bring greater clarity to the content
- » **Writer** - The person responsible for writing the content
- » **Due Date** - The date the article is due to the approver
- » **Approver** - The person that will make the final evaluation and queue the content for distribution
- » **Publication Date** - The date the article was published
- » **Results** - Impressions and click throughs of the content

Use the Editorial Calendar template to build your content plan.

A defined plan will at times require altering due to an important new topic or unexpected event. With flexibility in mind, build a one year plan. But focus on the next three months. Plug in stories that you know will occur at certain times of the year, like news from an important trade show, a new product release or charity event. Revisiting your editorial calendar quarterly will allow you to effectively develop topics and provide contributors (even if that is only you) enough time to write the material.

Conclusion

By taking a strategic approach you can determine how to develop content that best targets your audience. This will ensure that you are spending time on the topics that they are most interested in learning about. By identifying gaps in content that's currently published, you can start to fill that void and elevate your company as a thought leader in the area. Detailing all the information in an editorial calendar will guide your efforts and maximize the success, and most importantly, the return on investment of your content program.