

The 4 Types of Content EVERY Business Needs for Success



Special Report

Brought to you by
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Content can be used for a number of purposes. Not all content is designed to draw people to your website or build your expertise. Not all content is designed to build relationships or earn a profit. There are four broad content areas that you're likely to use in any content marketing plan. Each is for a different part of the audience's journey with your business.

Awareness Content

Awareness content is the primary purpose of marketing. It is how a person first comes into contact with you. It's the first blog post or video they see of yours. At this point, they have no idea who you are. They're just looking for some form of information on the internet and they happened upon your content.

The goal of content at this stage is to pull the new person into your orbit. It offers a taste of the unique value you offer and encourages the person to follow you on social media, sign up for your list, check out your other content, or engage with you in some other way.

The way it does this is by being unique and helpful. Awareness content offers the information the person is looking for and stands out from all of the other information sources they can easily find. They're thinking, "This was good. Who is this person?"

The best content to bring people into your orbit is fairly general in nature and easily digestible in small chunks. For example, it might be a short video posted on YouTube or a blog post. It should be search engine optimized and designed to reach as many people as possible.

Lead Generation Content

People encounter your content for lead generation when they already know you and they're trying to find out more. This is where you start a relationship with the person. They're checking out what else you have to offer.

The goal of this content is to get casual visitors to your site or YouTube channel to commit to starting a relationship with you. This relationship begins when they sign up for your email list, start following you on social media, subscribe to your YouTube channel, download your report, and or take some other action. Now they're actively following you.

A common type of content to use here is a free report (such as this one) that the person downloads in exchange for joining your email list. It can be any kind of freebie, like a trial membership to your site, a free online course, an offline event or seminar, or a free sample of your service or product.

The important thing is that it's free and it gives your new lead a deeper taste of the value you offer. Through this content, you can then make other offers to them. For example, you might teach some basic social media marketing tips at an offline seminar you hold, and during the seminar, ask people to join your website, email list or social media group, where you can then build a deeper relationship with them.

Relationship-Building Content

Once a person is following you, you can start to build a deeper relationship with them. They've signed up for your email list or started following you elsewhere online. They know you quite well at this stage and they're expecting more high-value helpful content from you.

Content for relationship-building needs to be highly focused on your audience and their needs. You've already gotten their attention; now you need to offer personalized content that's exclusively for them. Market research is extremely important here. You need to know your audience well in order to offer the solutions they're looking for.

This is also the stage in the process where you learn the most about your customers directly from them. You should use this opportunity to get to know them more deeply and interact with them personally.

Content for relationship building can be much longer and more involved. It might include free courses designed specifically for your audience and available only to them; email content that goes straight to their inboxes; webinars focused on specific problems; products, product prototypes, beta versions, and new services to gather feedback; and anything else that's highly personal and exclusively for your audience.

Paid Content

Paid content is content that generates income directly. You need to have an established relationship with the person before they'll buy from you. Your free content works to attract people to you, turns them into leads, and builds a relationship. Now, you're actually making an offer. If they feel that you have unique solutions to their problems, they'll buy from you.

This content can be either content you directly charge for, or it could be promotional content that leads the person to buy. An example of the latter would be an email or social media post telling your audience members about a new product or service. It could be a piece that's promoting a paid course you're going to offer.

By the time you offer paid content, you know your audience well and they know you. Your audience members know that you're an expert worth trusting. If you make an offer, it must be good. The idea is to do the background work with your other free content well, and then your paid content will virtually sell itself.

Some content might belong to more than one of these categories, but each piece should have a single goal. For example, your content for awareness already starts building a relationship, but its main purpose is to draw people to you. The topics, format, presentation, and other considerations should all be focused on how to get people to see it first and foremost.

Content Marketing Tips and Best Practices

Know Your Audience Well

For every area and at every stage, you need to know your audience well in order for it to be effective. For awareness content, you need to know what people are searching for to find you. For lead generation and relationships, you have to focus on solving your audience's problems in a unique way. Paid content needs to be something your ideal audience member would buy.

Before you start planning your content marketing, take some time to conduct market research. Create a target market profile. This is a persona that describes the kind of person you can help with your expertise. You need not only demographic information but also psychographic data on their values, attitudes, behaviors, and buying habits. With this information, it's easy to come up with topics that would be interesting to them or products they would buy.

Create an Editorial Calendar

A comprehensive content marketing plan requires a great deal of content on a regular basis. The only way to keep all of the moving parts organized and stay on track is to have a detailed editorial calendar. Your editorial calendar tells you on what days you'll post what content, and includes each step along the way to creating that content.

Keep the Ideas Coming

Another challenge you'll face is that you need a constant steady stream of new ideas for topics. It's easy to brainstorm your first burst of content ideas. Just think of all the things you often help people with, or the areas of expertise you have that most people don't. You can probably make a pretty good list off the top of your head. But what about a few months from now when you've already created fifty pieces of content?

The key to constant idea generation is to have sources you can refer to for ideas when you run low. Find websites where people are asking questions such as Q&A sites or online forums. Follow your competitors or other content creators in similar niches to see what they're writing about. Use social media to see what new topics are trending. Stay in steady contact with your audience and elicit ideas from them. And keep an idea file where you hoard ideas for a rainy day.

Try New Things

You should aim to repeat your successes and stick with what works, but you should also regularly branch out and try new things. Try out new and unusual topics to vary your content and see what your audience likes. If you're blogging and producing articles, you might try branching out into video or podcasting. Regularly add new social media profiles or publishing channels to your repertoire.

Monitor Results

You should have goals in mind for every piece of content you create. Choose metrics to help you monitor how well you're doing toward that goal. For example, your awareness content needs to bring new people into your orbit. You might choose a goal, such as 30 new social media followers per week, and then you can measure exactly how well your efforts are working.

When you have a big success, look at the efforts that led up to it and figure out how you can repeat it. For example, one blog post gets more views than any other or converts at a higher rate. This means that you did something right with that post. Maybe it was the topic, or the humorous approach you took, or maybe even something as simple as the image you used. Figure out the secret ingredient and repeat it.

Likewise, study your unsuccessful content and figure out why it flopped; then, make sure you don't do it again. You might find that a certain topic doesn't really appeal to your audience or a particular content format doesn't seem to work for them.

Plan to Scale

If all goes well, your content will bring you the results you want. But this usually means that your content needs will grow in the future. You'll need content for new channels or deeper relationship-building. Your editorial calendar can become quite hectic and it can be hard to keep up.

When planning your schedule, leave room to scale. You might also want to consider options like delegating some of the work to someone else in your

organization, or going outside of your organization and outsourcing your content creation. As you plan, have long-term goals in mind so that you can anticipate this growth.

Start by choosing a short-term business goal, and then determine what kind of content you need to reach that goal. Then, you can start planning your content in the four areas above and put every step on your editorial calendar for an organized and effective approach to your content marketing.

My blog has several different types of content on it. You can find information on various business/personal topics designed to help you become a thriving entrepreneur and grow the business that supports your vision and lifestyle.

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