



BOP DESIGN[®]

YOUR CRASH COURSE IN B2B CONTENT MARKETING

We've heard it time and time again, "Content is King." You read about Fortune 500 consumer brands with million dollar ad budgets creating innovative, awe-inspiring content, and think that smaller B2B brands cannot keep up with the pace and quality.

We're here to tell you it's B2B's time to take on content—no excuses. No more saying, "My industry is too boring," "It doesn't tie to sales" or "I don't have enough money and staff."

In this guide, we'll outline content marketing from strategy to measurement—in addition to some modern day tactics appropriate for marketing budgets large and small.

Content
is
KING



First, What Is Content Marketing?

Content marketing encapsulates so much of today's Internet marketing strategies and can be difficult to explain succinctly. The Content Marketing Institute defines it as a marketing technique of creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience—with the objective of driving profitable customer action.

This only scratches the surface of possible tactics that encompass content marketing, which include:

- Blogging
- Social media
- Email marketing
- Brand journalism
- Native advertising
- SEO
- Video
- Podcasts
- Webinars
- Public relations

How to Devise a Strategy

Before you roll your eyes, we don't mean a strategy that you'll work weeks on only to never look at it again. Create actionable guidelines on how your content will be created and distributed. First and most importantly are the actual logistics of creating content. Here are some questions you should address immediately:

- Are you able to easily update your firm's website with blog content?
- Is your firm's website design appealing to your target audience?
- Who will be writing the content? One person, an internal team or outside agency?
- Who is responsible for editing?
- Who will schedule, post and distribute the content?
- Where should content be distributed?
- What content platforms will your ideal client be on?
- How frequently should you post?
- How far in advance should writing begin to accommodate the steps in quality control?
- What is the tone of your content?• Who are you writing for and why?
- What type of content is your ideal client interested in?
- Do we have an editorial calendar outlining content topics for each month?



Establishing Content Personas

We've all heard about buyer personas—profiling ideal clients to better understand their motivations and pain points. Take a similar approach to creating audience personas for your content. Determine their current job position, industry, business objectives and job responsibilities. Also determine what type of content and platform is appropriate for each stage in your firm's sales cycle.

Outlining a Holistic Content Process

Content team? Check. Strategy? Check. Editorial calendar? Check. But producing content is more than just pressing “Publish” on a regular basis. An effective strategy values distribution as well. The most difficult task is creating the content; you might as well maximize its exposure. Distribution spreads content across multiple platforms—which helps build brand awareness, drive ideal client personas to your website and convert into leads.

An example of a robust content distribution plan is illustrated in the diagram below.

The Blog as the Nucleus

For most B2B marketers, the content marketing implementation starts with the blog. A continuously updated blog is the most effective method to improve on-page SEO, increase web traffic and convert visitors. From the blog, blog entries can be repurposed and combined for a variety of different marketing and conversion platforms. .

Not every blog post has to be molded for all distribution channels. Easy-to-manage channels such as social media, article distribution and email newsletters can make up your firm’s inner circle. Following that first stage, look to other tactics that take longer to execute but are worth it for your audience (e.g. infographics, webinars, sponsored social updates).

Corporate Blogging Do’s and Don’ts

- DO research what is important for your clients.
- DO cross-link to other posts and pages on your site.
- DO be conversational.
- DON’T get too personal.
- DON’T get political.
- DON’T get too salesy.



What About These Newfangled Tactics?

We're glad you asked! Since the introduction of content marketing, a lot of marketing speak has gone from trendy buzzwords to entrenched, must-know tactics. Unsure where they fit within your firm's marketing plan? Let's breakdown some of those "buzzy" terms into actionable ideas:

Native Advertising

Native advertising seems like the new trendy marketing tactic, but many of the ideas have been in a marketer's wheelhouse for years. Heck, a TV infomercial is really native advertising! Essentially it's paying for placement, but instead of a traditional ad, branded content such as articles, product promotions and guides are pushed to the reader.

Utilizing your existing editorial calendar, determine a series of blog posts that can be combined to make up a "Premium Content Offer." This ranges from eBooks to tip sheets to guides—whatever format works best for the audience and the content. With this piece of premium content, native advertising could include a variety of marketing avenues:

- Paid social media promotion
- Brand journalism
- App integration
- In-feed advertising
- Paid search marketing
- Ad retargeting

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO isn't necessarily a one-off tactic, it's an ongoing process of content exposure and distribution to ensure your firm's website is prominent for targeted keyword searches on Google.. Yet so many marketers voraciously churn out blog posts without any thought as to how it can help their search engine rankings. While we don't recommend keyword stuffing and sounding like a robot, [writing with SEO in mind](#) ensures that your content audience will be maximized.

When conducting keyword research for blog posts, think of long tail keywords. These are phrases that fit a conversational search query of your ideal customer. For example, instead of trying to match for "financial brokerage," consider "financial advisor for business owner" or "accounting for construction firms in Portland." Using tools such as Google Keyword Planner helps search for new keywords and phrases based on existing ideas. Build your topics around these ideas but—most importantly—ensure your content solves that search query.

Infographics

You risk boring your clients with charts, spreadsheets and PowerPoints filled with written statistics. Unfortunately no one reads as much anymore! An infographic can convey an idea or process in a more attractive and user friendly way. Think of a theme that ties together multiple blog posts and supplement that idea with supporting industry statistics.

Infographics also work for B2B because the illustrative capabilities are endless. With the flexibility to transform and demonstrate ideas, here are just some ideas infographics can communicate effectively:

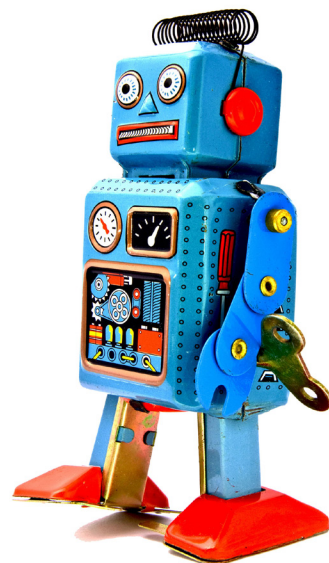
- Unique value proposition and client benefits
- New trends and shifts in your industry
- Demographics or buyer personas and their impacts on your business
- "Top 10" lists
- Explaining a success story or other noteworthy industry event
- Workflows and service delivery explanations
- Historical timeline about an industry
- Hierarchical information

Guest Blogging and Public Relations

While guest blogging is a [sensitive subject for some marketers](#), think of it instead as traditional PR revamped for the content marketing world. The strategy of influencer targeting, monitoring, engaging and ultimately building a long-term relationship has been in PR's expertise for years. Now that marketers see the value in informative, educational and helpful content—content that traditional PR originally pioneered—promoting your firm's thought leadership on other complementary sites supports marketing goals as well.

To name a few, guest blogging can help achieve:

- Brand recognition
- Off-page search engine optimization
- Website traffic
- Relationships with strategic partners
- Social media engagement
- Exposure to new audiences
- Thought leadership recognition
- Lead generation



Nothing Matters If You Don't Measure

You can put in the hours each week, but content marketing is nothing without regular measurement and strategy refreshing based on data. Since content marketing is all encompassing, it's difficult to manage the metrics under one umbrella. Here are some metrics you should be examining across all platforms to create a holistic picture:

Referrals & Engagement

Where are website visitors, sales leads and clients coming from? What is driving the most quality engagements? Here is some actionable data to optimize your content marketing strategy:

- Paid advertising click through rates
- Clicks and web referral traffic
- Pages per visit based on referral source
- Conversions per referral source
- Social shares by influencers
- Social engagement (e.g. “@” replies, comments, conversations)

Blog: Activity on Website

This is it, the hard part of getting ideal clients to your website is over. But are they staying on the page after reading? A blog's goal is to transform your website into a living resource center—educating a client on industry issues, best practices, your business solutions and incite them to contact your firm (or at least create a lasting memory for when the need arises). With that, the blog metrics to measure include:

- Popular blog posts based on sessions
- Average page duration
- Pages per visit
- Average time on website

There you have it—B2B content marketing in less time than it takes to finish your lunch. If you're hungry for more, visit our [Bop Blog](#) for more insights and trends specific to B2B marketers.

Pass along the knowledge! Click each icon to share with friends and colleagues.

