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# Content Marketing Strategies

FOR  
**DUMMIES**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

## Learn to:

- Analyze customer data to understand the buyer's journey
- Use social platforms to develop channel promotions
- Create and curate intelligent content that earns action
- Build on success with closed loop analysis

**Stephanie Diamond**





# *Content Marketing Strategies*

FOR  
DUMMIES<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

**by Stephanie Diamond**

FOR  
DUMMIES<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

## **Content Marketing Strategies For Dummies®**

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# Foreword

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**T**raditional advertising is in turmoil. Online advertising is increasingly expensive, and consumers are becoming cautious of what they click next.

The reality is that today's customers will make a buying decision only after arming themselves with research that gives them enough confidence that they're making an intelligent decision.

Educational-based marketing (a.k.a. content marketing) is the new driver for online sales. It's also proving to be the most effective technique in engaging an audience with your brand early in the purchase cycle — so much so that thought leaders in online marketing have said, "Content Marketing is the only marketing left."

The growth of content marketing continues to revolutionize the way that we communicate and engage with existing and perspective clients. It is the only form of marketing today that capitalizes on educating customers and actually addressing customer problems by publishing relevant content.

Content marketing is about publishing interesting media that is of high value to your readers. Through quality content, this marketing positions you as an authority in your market, building trust and loyalty that translates into lifelong customers.

Content marketing is complex, which makes deciding where to start challenging. There are many moving parts, which makes learning it quite difficult. This book simplifies all the key elements and lays out strategies and formulas that take you through the process no matter what level or size of organization.

Combining this strategy with the right tools enables you to build and scale a marketing plan that works well with your business.

When Stephanie approached me about her writing this book, I could not think of anyone more suited. She not only is experienced in the field but has also already cowritten the successful *Social Media Marketing For Dummies* book in several editions. With her deep knowledge of the topic, she has managed to distill a complex subject perfectly for readers of all kinds, small businesses, brands, and newcomers.

Paul Clifford  
CEO & Founder, Kudani.com





# Introduction

---

**M**uch has been written about content marketing in the last few years. It's a hot topic that continues to attract attention. If done correctly, it can help grow your business and add revenue to your bottom line. But very little has been written about how to develop the underlying content marketing strategy that is crucial to your success.

The quality of the questions you ask yourself about your business will determine how well you serve your customers and your community. So the first question you need to ask yourself is, "How do I create a content marketing strategy so that I can serve my customers?" *Content Marketing Strategies For Dummies* is written to help you answer this and many other crucial questions about content marketing.

## About This Book

Content marketing is how you provide your customers with the information they need to make decisions and solve problems. So why are so many content marketers falling short in this critical area? More specifically, what problems hold you back from creating the content you need you?

According to several reports, including the 2014 B2B Spotlight Report (<https://www.brighttalk.com/webcast/1166/137365>), the three greatest problems you have as a content marketer are:

- ✔ **You don't have enough time:** As a business person, your schedule is already full. Adding content marketing to the mix makes it almost impossible to get that marketing done right.
- ✔ **You can't create enough content:** No matter how much content you create, it's never going to be enough.
- ✔ **You don't know what to write about that will engage your audience:** You run out of ideas and don't have the time to spend researching new ones that will resonate with your specific audience.

Here's the good news: You can tackle — and solve — all these problems with the strategic content marketing plan that this book helps you develop and execute. The book is full of resources and solid, research-backed advice.

Sprinkled throughout are the book are pointers to downloadable worksheets that help you customize and implement your own content marketing strategy. Each chapter also ends with a mind map (a great learning tool), of the chapter's contents. You can refer to these mind maps to help you assimilate all the key points of your ongoing content marketing efforts. As you read this book, use them to develop a solid framework and assimilate the key points for your ongoing content marketing efforts.



You can find all the downloadable worksheets and mind maps at [www.dummies.com/extras/contentmarketingstrategies](http://www.dummies.com/extras/contentmarketingstrategies).

## *Foolish Assumptions*

I wrote this book to serve as an invaluable guide, and I wondered what you would need to know to find this book interesting. Here are some of the assumptions I've made about you:

- ✓ You work for or run a business with an online component
- ✓ You've considered using content marketing as a strategy but aren't sure where to start
- ✓ Your competition is using content marketing, and you need a solid strategy to beat it
- ✓ You have accounts on social media platforms but aren't sure what content to send to your followers
- ✓ You sell online products or services and you need to figure out what content will attract new buyers at every stage of the buyer's journey
- ✓ You're curious about how developing content marketing strategies can add revenue to your bottom line

## *Icons Used in This Book*



In the margins of the book, you'll find these icons helping you out:

Whenever I provide a particular idea that will make content marketing easier for you, I mark it with a Tip icon.



The Remember icon marks paragraphs that contain a friendly reminder.



This icon points you to downloadable materials associated with this book.



Note the paragraphs marked with the Warning icon to avoid potential disaster.

## Beyond the Book

In addition to the information you find in the book, I have included these online bonuses:

- ✔ **Cheat Sheet:** The cheat sheet for this book contains a checklist for content for a typical blog post; details about the roles that content marketing team members should play; the metrics to consider tracking; and the different types of influencers you should approach. Find it here:

[www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/contentmarketingstrategies](http://www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/contentmarketingstrategies)

- ✔ **Dummies.com web extras:**

Find out how to avoid content marketing strategy mistakes, reevaluate your business model, and create consistent content. You'll also learn how to document your buyer's journey, encourage your followers to share your content, and see reminders about what things you need to do when creating your content. Find the web extras here:

[www.dummies.com/extras/contentmarketingstrategies](http://www.dummies.com/extras/contentmarketingstrategies)

- ✔ **Worksheets and mind maps:** I include a mind map at the end of each chapter that outlines what's in the chapter. Use these to help you assimilate what the chapter covers, and annotate them with your own ideas. You can also find downloadable worksheets to serve as hands-on aids in developing your own content marketing strategies. Find these items here:

[www.dummies.com/extras/contentmarketingstrategies](http://www.dummies.com/extras/contentmarketingstrategies).

- ✔ **Updates:** If I have any updates for this book, they will be posted at [www.dummies.com/extras/contentmarketingstrategies](http://www.dummies.com/extras/contentmarketingstrategies).

## Where to Go from Here

This book is designed so that you can quickly jump to a specific chapter or section that most interests you. You don't have to start with the first chapter — although if you're new to content marketing strategy, I recommend that you do so. Understanding the Five Cs framework of Content Marketing, explained in Chapter 1, helps you better apply the techniques that you learn in subsequent chapters of the book.



## Part I

# Getting Started with Content Marketing Strategies

getting started  
with

**Content  
Marketing  
Strategies**



Visit [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com) for more great Dummies content online.

## *In this part . . .*

- ✔ Find out about the Five Cs process that will help you develop a successful content marketing strategy.
- ✔ Learn how your business model and brand is perceived by your ideal customers.
- ✔ See why getting attention is critical to building a large fan base on social platforms.
- ✔ You need buy-in from all parts of the organization for your content marketing project. I show you how to get it.
- ✔ Putting your content marketing plan together requires that you collect the information that will persuade your stakeholders. See how to present the data that will get buy-in from your audience.

## Chapter 1

# Establishing Your Content Marketing Strategy

---

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Formulating your business goals
  - ▶ Picking your key performance indicators (KPIs)
  - ▶ Catching customers with the Five Cs
  - ▶ Serving your customers using content
  - ▶ Building product habits
- 

**C**ompanies have finally recognized what their customers have always known. If they can't find the content that makes your product easy to use and enjoy, they are off to seek out your competitor. You've missed the opportunity to impress them or, in some cases, even get on their radar screen. As marketing expert Seth Godin has said, "Content marketing is the only marketing left."

This chapter covers what goes into creating a content marketing strategy. Without it, you can't get the traction you need to beat the competition. You also discover each of the "Five Cs" that must be included to make your strategy complete.

## *Understanding the Components of a Content Marketing Strategy*

To understand how the pieces of a content marketing strategy fit together, I have organized the components into a framework called the Five Cs. They are (1) company focus; (2) customer experience; (3) channel promotion (4) content creation, and (5) check-back analysis.

Working with the Five Cs framework helps you cover all the bases as you create your content marketing strategy and implement your content plan. You can choose to go sequentially through the chapters, or pick the ones that relate to your company's present status.

I also present a mind map created with iMindMap software (<http://imindmap.com>) at the end of every chapter to help you take notes and organize your thoughts. You can download these maps (and see them in color) at [www.dummies.com/extras/contentmarketingstrategies](http://www.dummies.com/extras/contentmarketingstrategies).

The following sections walk you through each of the Five Cs in more detail.

## *Determining the company focus*

The first C is company focus. To create a content marketing strategy, you need to begin by looking at your company's business goals. The question to ask yourself and your team is, "What do we want the company to achieve and how do we make it happen?"

You should direct your attention to your goals and business case for undertaking this effort. To that end, Part I of the book covers the following topics:

- ✔ **Components that go into creating a content marketing strategy:** You're in that topic's chapter now, and aspects of that strategy are covered in more detail in subsequent chapters.
- ✔ **Getting your customers' attention:** Content marketers are fiercely competing for your customers' attention. Find out why attention is important and how to capture it.
- ✔ **Understanding your business model and your brand:** Learn about a variety of business models and how to determine what "job" your product does. You look at brand components and access a downloadable brand worksheet to use.
- ✔ **Getting buy-in from your teams:** Getting buy-in from everyone on your team, not just the executives, is important. I tell you how to present your proposal to encourage participation and provide a downloadable worksheet that uses what I call the Five-Prong Approach (FPA).
- ✔ **Putting your content marketing plan together:** Find out how the organization of your company can affect the success of your content marketing efforts. You also see how the work you do on the Five-Prong Approach in Chapter 4 helps you put your plan together.



## *Uncovering the customer experience*

The second of the Five Cs is customer experience. You need to learn what your prospects will think, feel, and do when interacting with your brand. The question for your marketing team to ask is, “Who are our prospects and how will we serve them as customers?”

You must define your audience and analyze the customer experience. You do this by

- ✔ **Collecting and analyzing customer data:** Before you define your audience, you need to evaluate the kind of data you will use. In Chapter 6, you look at the benefits and challenges you may face when dealing with big data to analyze your audience.
- ✔ **Creating personas:** Chapter 7 helps you define the characteristics of your perfect audience by investigating several different types of information. You find out what actions you need to take, and I point you to a worksheet for creating a persona template to use as a model to document your findings.
- ✔ **Developing the customer journey:** You want to understand the journey your prospect takes from being interested in your product to sold on it. Chapter 8 looks at the buyer’s mindset and gives you a model to help you document your customer’s touchpoints.
- ✔ **Assisting with sales enablement:** Your sales team is facing an empowered customer. Find out in Chapter 9 how your content can assist in making the job easier and more powerful. I also show you how to determine where your company falls on the content maturity scale.

## *Creating quality content*

The third *C* is content creation. You need to focus on creating quality content (based on your story) that you know your customers want and need. The question to ask is, “How will we create quality content, who will do it, and what will that content be?”

You need to develop a strategy for content, define your messaging, and establish your systems and governance rules. The chapters in this part take you through:

- ✔ **Creating a content strategy:** You should have both a content plan and a content marketing strategy. In Chapter 10, you see how to take an audit of your content to determine what you have and how you can leverage it

to develop a true corporate asset. This chapter is chock-full of maps and worksheets: a downloadable content audit worksheet; a downloadable content plan worksheet; and examples of maps that you can use to visualize your own content ecosystem and websites.

- ✔ **Content types:** You want to ensure that you take full advantage of all the types of content available to you. Chapter 11 covers various types including long- and short-form original content, curated content, and visual content.
- ✔ **Writing and storytelling:** You have a story to tell that will connect with your audience. How do you incorporate it into your content? See Chapter 12 to get a feel for the science behind why stories work and how to develop your own powerful corporate stories.
- ✔ **Processes and systems:** You know that without a documented workflow and procedures, your content marketing efforts fail. Chapter 13 spells out the roles and responsibilities of your content team and shows you the benefits of using an editorial calendar.

## *Developing channel promotions*

The fourth *C* is channel promotion. To have your content make the greatest impact, you want to decide where and by whom your content will be distributed. The question to ask is, “How will our prospects and customers find our content so that they can choose us?”

You want to make your content easy to find and share. You need to know how to promote your content so that prospects can find it.

- ✔ **Channel plans:** Developing a content plan is not enough. After you have created your content, you need to get wide distribution. Chapter 14 explores how to understand your channel needs and shows you a model you can use to put together individual channel plans.
- ✔ **Sharing content:** Sharing is key to any content plan. Chapter 15 looks at why you should embrace share-ability as a strategy and borrow from journalism’s Five *Ws* and one *H* (who, what, why, where, when, how) as applied to sharing.
- ✔ **Paid, earned, shared, and owned media:** Making the most of all types of media is the only way to ensure that your brand voice will be heard. Look to Chapter 16 to learn about the value of these types of media and why earned media is gaining in importance.
- ✔ **Syndication and guest posting:** Do you think syndication is “old school”? Maybe it’s not. Chapter 17 shows you how to get the most from syndication and why you need to be guest posting.

- ✔ **Influencers:** Influencers wield a great deal of power with online audiences. Find out in Chapter 18 how to pick the right influencers for you. I also supply a downloadable worksheet to help you put together your plan for working with individual influencers.

## *Deploying check-back analysis*

The fifth C is check-back analysis. The focus here is on the metrics you choose to determine successes or failure. The question to ask is, “Have we met our goals?”

You want to reevaluate your plans and make revisions as necessary. Chapters 19 and 20 work with you to

- ✔ **Reassess your business model and brand value** You know that it’s important to frequently assess how things are working. Find out how you can determine whether business model changes are warranted and whether you need to revise brand plans.
- ✔ **Reexamine your content marketing strategy:** Obviously, a determination of how well your content marketing strategy is working is essential. See why even failing is a springboard to success and why you need to get buy-in for making changes.

So that’s an overview of the Five Cs. Each chapter also includes far more information and working plans than listed here. If you do the hard work required to create and implement your plans, you can expect to be on the road to content marketing success.

### **Don’t be left out**

When creating your strategy, knowing what other companies with high growth do is helpful. According to a 2014 study done by Accenture called “CMOs: Time for digital transformation or risk being left on the sidelines” (<https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insight-cmos-time-digital-transformation-risk-left-sidelines.aspx>), a large percentage of high-growth companies:

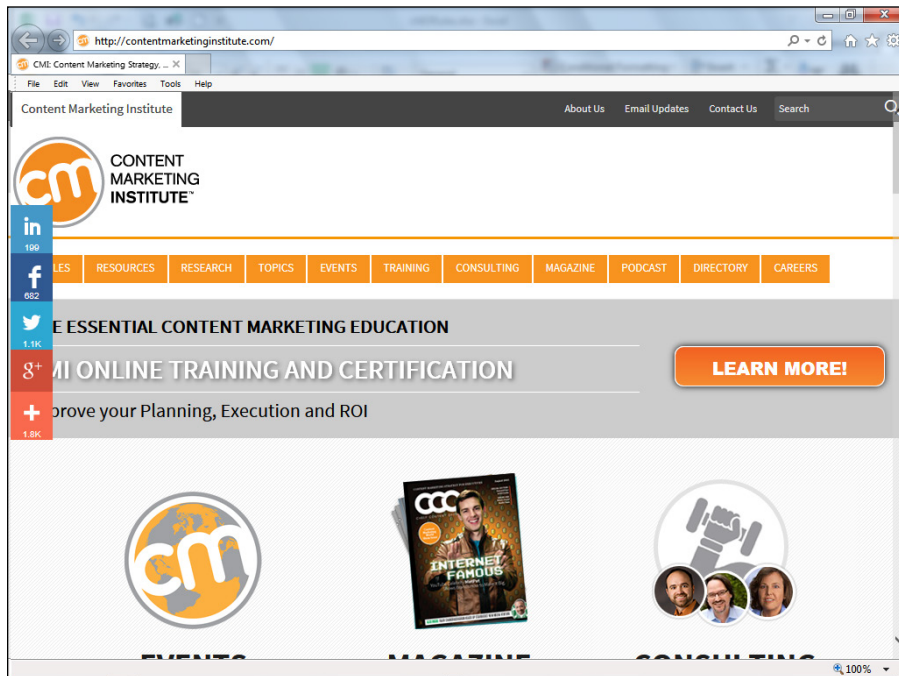
- ✔ Use data and analytics to improve the impact of their marketing (86 percent)
- ✔ Know that digital channels are of strategic importance (84 percent)
- ✔ Make sure that customers get a similar experience across all channels (80 percent)

## Communicating Your Mission

When you hear the term *mission statement*, you probably want to skip to the next section in this chapter. I understand. At some point while you were in school, you were taught about mission statements and you found it boring. But the good news is that now, when you look at communicating the reason your company exists, a mission statement becomes important and personal.

### Crafting your statement

In his book *Epic Content: How to How to Tell a Different Story, Break through the Clutter, and Win More Customers by Marketing Less* (McGraw-Hill Education, 2013), Joe Pulizzi, “the godfather of content marketing” and head of the Content Marketing Institute (see Figure 1-1), offers an easy way to craft a content marketing mission statement.



**Figure 1-1:**  
Content  
Marketing  
Institute.

Pulizzi says to break down the statement into three parts:

- ✔ **Whom you will serve:** The core audience you are targeting
- ✔ **What solution you will offer:** What you will deliver to that audience
- ✔ **The outcome:** How it will make them better

Here's a breakdown of what goes into each of these sections:

- ✔ **The target audience:** Before you determine the characteristics of your personas (Chapter 7 covers personas in detail), you have to identify the niche(s) that work best for you. Aside from doing market research, you need to pick a very narrow group to target. When defining their niche, some companies are afraid to rule anyone out. They think that they may eliminate an important customer segment. But narrowing down the target is exactly what makes this tactic so powerful. By defining your niche carefully, you know that you're speaking to the people who are interested in hearing your message.

You can always add segments later, but remember this: When you target everyone, you don't connect with anyone.

- ✔ **Your solution:** This may seem like the simple part of the formula, but it's only deceptively simple. You know what your product does. But in your mission statement, you want to communicate the solution as a promise to meet your customer's needs.
- ✔ **Your desired effect:** In this section, you want to spell out what need your product satisfies. Clearly identifying this need is key to determining whether customers believe you fulfilled your promise to them.

As you look at your company's goals, you want them to align with your content marketing strategy. If those goals don't align with your strategy, you need to determine what revisions to make.

## *Reviewing real mission statements*

Now that you've looked at what goes into creating a mission statement, let's see how it plays out in real life. In her article "12 Truly Inspiring Company Vision and Mission Statement Examples," as shown in Figure 1-2, Lindsay Kolowich gives some examples to work with (<http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/inspiring-company-mission-statements>).





**Figure 1-2:**  
HubSpot  
blog.

You can deconstruct a few that hit the mark by looking at their mission statements and seeing how the formula fits.

✔ **Patagonia mission statement:** “Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis” (<http://Patagonia.com>; see Figure 1-3).

- *Who the company serves:* People who love outdoor activities
- *What the solution is:* High quality clothing to fight the elements
- *What the outcome is:* Deliver excellent clothing under superior working conditions that do not damage the environment

This is an effective one-sentence mission statement that is clear and defines Patagonia’s commitment to its customers and the environment.

✔ **Warby Parker mission statement:** “Warby Parker was founded with a rebellious spirit and a lofty objective: to offer designer eyewear at a revolutionary price, while leading the way for socially-conscious businesses” (<http://warbyparker.com>; see Figure 1-4).

*Who the company serves:* Fashion-forward eyeglass wearers

*What the solution is:* Designer eyewear at a revolutionary price