

MASTERING B2B CONTENT MARKETING

YOUR TIME-SAVING GUIDE TO BUILDING A
DYNAMIC CONTENT STRATEGY



INTRODUCTION

For years, B2B organizations have focused on developing content to support demand generation efforts. As we all know, buyers have changed the way they consume information and interact with you. Today, buyers no longer wait for you to reach out to them to make decisions. They are now proactive and independent in researching technology and services when a need arises.

Because of this, it's essential to develop content that meets buyers where they're at. This means making sure they have content to support all stages of the funnel and various topics of interest and reach them via the methods and channels where they're most active.

This B2B Content Guide is crafted to provide you with both the WHAT and the HOW of creating an effective content strategy, serving as a reliable guidepost in the process.

In it, you'll discover how to:

- Conduct a **content audit** (with full audit and mini audit options)
- Complete a step-by-step **competitive analysis** to stay ahead of the competition
- **Repurpose** content to optimize resources, SEO, and reach
- And more!

It all starts with the strategy (always).

Before we dive in...

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WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?

Content marketing is the lifeblood of your entire organization. And despite its name, it's not *only* a tool for marketing or a second-thought hand-me-down for sales. In fact, content marketing isn't really any *one* thing at all.

It's best to think about content marketing as an *entire process* of identifying, creating, and delivering relevant content to the people in your customer journey. It's the core of your demand generation engine and it's an approach that can (and should) be used throughout your entire customer lifecycle—at every stage—from open to close to renewal.

Content marketing, at its best, facilitates consideration, drives decision-making, and creates positive, thoughtful experiences for your prospects and customers alike.

Having personalized, relevant content that's readily available for marketing, sales, and customer success to utilize throughout your customer journey gives your company a significant advantage over your competition. It enables your teams to work smarter, act faster, and provide more useful resources to your audiences. And in doing so, helps grow your market share as well as your thought leadership in your industry.

Without content marketing, the job of building predictability into your pipeline becomes much harder. Because while demos, sales presentations, and new product pitches may yield *some* results in the latter stages of your funnel, those materials won't do much in moving the needle on the rest of your pipeline. That's why it's imperative your content marketing campaigns support the true needs of your prospects and customers—rather than hoping one size fits all.

Content must also be personalized, timely, and relevant. After all, today's customers are savvier than ever. And in a world where Netflix, Amazon, and Google offer nothing but personalized results and time-sensitive content, your own content marketing efforts must do (or at the very least, attempt to do) the same.

Ultimately, your content marketing efforts must be focused on providing value, education, and unique perspectives to your prospects and customers. And in turn, those attributes will drive profitable, predictable action.

Undoubtedly, content marketing has a lot of moving parts. So how do you create content that truly resonates with your audience? How do you build a content marketing engine that drives your desired outcomes? It all starts with a content strategy.



CREATING A CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

To create a predictable, competitive content marketing strategy, there are 6 stages you should first take into consideration. These steps ask you to:

1. Define your goals
2. Audit your content
3. Assess the competition and the market
4. Identify core themes
5. Define relevant topics and formats for each buying committee member, at each customer stage
6. Develop a content-driven campaign

1. Define your goals

Before barreling down the content marketing road, kick-off on the right foot by defining the goals of your content marketing strategy.

Are you driving awareness through inbound channels? Facilitating consideration with prospects already in your pipeline through emails and nurtures? Helping sales and customer success have more content in their stables? Or maybe you're pursuing a hybrid approach.

Regardless of what your goals are, the important part is to clearly define them so you can gain necessary buy-in from your company's leadership team and other stakeholders. It's at this point that you can also align these goals with those of the organization as a whole.

Tip: When defining your goals, also think about what sales, marketing, and CX channels you'll need to utilize to achieve them once the content has been created and is ready for deployment. Better yet, invite them to the table to define the goals for greater sales and marketing alignment.

Once you've defined, agreed and shared your goals with everyone across teams...



CREATING A CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY (CONT.)

2. Assess your content

As tech royalty himself, Bill Gates said, “*Content is king.*”

To us as modern marketers, no statement is truer. As brands shift to the more customer-centric inbound marketing approach, our efforts lean towards how we can connect with our customers and provide value meaningfully.

Consider your content as your customer magnet. Relevant and compelling, it will attract and resonate with those most interested in what your brand has to offer and keep them engaged all the way through the buying journey.

So how do you own your owned media? Outside of content created for social channels, your website is your company’s treasure trove of content. Manage and maximize what you have by taking detailed inventory.

SO WHAT IS A CONTENT AUDIT?

A content audit is the methodical review and analysis of all the assets hosted on your website. Over time the collection of blog posts, guides, eBooks, and on-demand webinars can grow into what feels like that one drawer of unorganized odds and ends in your house.

While conducting a content audit might seem painful, it doesn’t have to be. We’ll give you step-by-step instructions and even a time-saving option.

Here are 6 steps to help you complete your audit:

Step 1: Start by determining *where* the majority of your content lives.

- Is it in a Google Drive or SharePoint folder?
- Is it mostly on your website?
- Is it scattered across multiple tools/platforms?

Step 2: Once you know where your content is, assess *how much of it* there is.

- If you have a ton of content, consider looking at the past 2 years’ assets
- This will likely be your most relevant and up-to-date content (although some of it might need to be refreshed)



CREATING A CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY (CONT.)

Step 3: Begin recording each asset and include the following pieces of information (a simple spreadsheet will do):

- Asset Name
- URL
- Format
- Funnel Stage
- Intended Persona
- Topic
- Industry (Optional)

Step 4: After you've collected the past 2 years' worth of content, analyze it by using filters to record the following in the same spreadsheet with these columns:

- **Format** – How many pieces are blog posts, webinars, whitepapers, case studies, etc.?
- **Funnel Stages** – How many pieces are top, middle, and bottom funnel?
- **Persona** – How many pieces are there for each intended persona? If you don't want to record individual personas, you can always create groups (think business versus technical)
- **Industry** – How many pieces are there for each of your target industries?
- **Topic** – How many pieces are there for each topic area?

Step 5: Next, take a look at your metrics. Pull the top performing assets and compare that list against what you have in your audit.

- Consider highlighting the top 10-50 pieces (this might depend on how much content you have in total)
- These will be your lowest hanging fruit

Step 6: Lastly, identify which pieces can be easily refreshed and which ones need a complete overhaul (or to be retired). *We'll talk about repurposing later in this guide.*

Once you have the information above, you'll be able to see where your strong and weak points lie. These will be good indicators for where to focus your future efforts.

Maybe you need to beef up your top-of-funnel content. Or want to explore creating content for X industry. Or realized you have no content targeted towards executives. Whatever it may be, you have the opportunity to build a campaign or editorial calendar around it.



CREATING A CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY (CONT.)

By taking the time to sort through the mess, not only will you have a system to track content, but you can also:

- Gain insights on your distribution of topics and persona messaging
- Identify gaps and areas for repurposed content
- Pinpoint content that is most popular or performs best for future campaigns
- Fix broken links on your website and remove outdated materials

HOW TO CUT DOWN ON CONTENT AUDIT TIME

Put best by the Content Marketing Institute, “content audits are about as popular as colonoscopies but they’re just as necessary to health – in this case, the health of your content marketing strategy.”

Conducting content audits is crucial for optimizing the extensive work your teams have dedicated hours to create. However, it often tends to be overlooked and deprioritized as you gear up for the launch of your next major campaign. Let’s be honest, they are tedious to do, ultimately time-consuming and consequently often left undone.

Here are a few ways to get around doing a traditional content audit when you are crunched for time or resources.

Opt for a condensed content audit:

- Pick 3 metrics to measure and 30 URLs to analyze.
- Conduct a mini audit regularly in times when you need to evaluate your content quickly.
- Narrow your focus and select the most important metrics that align with your current goals best. These metrics can be conversion, traffic or even engagement related.
- Create a spreadsheet much like you would with a traditional audit to inventory data like content type, title, topic, funnel stage, and intended persona.
- Lastly, analyze what you’ve collected and note actionable next steps.

The idea of a condensed content audit is to strip down the long and arduous process of a traditional audit and create a habit of regularly accessing your content. Although it doesn’t replace a full-fledged review of your content inventory, it helps make your annual audit more like second nature.



CREATING A CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY (CONT.)

Make the process repeatable – Streamlining the audit process is the next best thing you can do to save your team time, outside of paying for automated tools. Create an accessible spreadsheet that acts as a template that can easily be replicated for new audits.

Content audits will always be a detailed task, but it doesn't have to be a complicated one. Whether you bite the bullet and take the time to conduct a thorough audit or opt for a condensed process, investing in this step will be the ultimate shortcut to pulling content for future campaigns and content strategies.

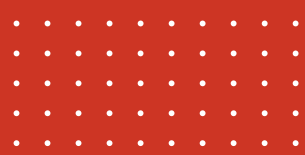
3. Assess the competition and your market

When crafting your B2B content strategy, it's crucial to ensure that your approach is not just unique but also well-informed. To create content that truly stands out in the B2B landscape, you must understand what your competitors are doing. Utilize modern tools and generative AI to gauge what resonates and what falls flat in your industry.

WHY CONDUCT A COMPETITIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS?

There are several compelling reasons to conduct a competitive analysis:

- **Identifying Gaps and Opportunities:** Analyzing your competitors can reveal gaps in your content strategy and untapped opportunities. Consider what additional topics you should explore and what types of content you need to balance your content funnel.
- **Understanding Messaging:** Examine how your competitors position themselves in the market. Does their messaging address the pain points of prospects effectively? If not, this knowledge can help you refine your own messaging strategy.
- **Website Enhancements:** Determine if your website needs a revamp to keep up with the competition. A competitive analysis can highlight areas where your site may be falling behind.



CREATING A CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY (CONT.)

HOW TO CONDUCT A COMPETITIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

To conduct a comprehensive competitive analysis, follow these steps:

- **Identify Your Top Competitors:** Start by identifying your top 3-5 competitors in your industry.
- **Website Exploration:** Examine their websites and document the following information for each competitor:
 - Links to Resource Centers
 - Company Blog and Other Content Pages
 - Content Examples
 - Different Asset Types or Funnel Stages
 - General Impressions
 - Content Themes and Topics
 - Content Tagging Strategies
 - Funnel Stage Focus
 - Messaging and Positioning
 - Specific Content Takeaways
 - Key Differentiators
- *Tip: You can use AI for this! Some of the pro versions will crawl websites for you!*
- **Summary of Findings:** Creating a summary of findings from the analysis can also be useful in communicating changes that need to be made and getting others in the organization on board.
- **Recommendations:** Based on your analysis, provide recommendations for improvement, exploration, or different approaches.

MARKET RESEARCH: UNDERSTANDING THE BIGGER PICTURE

While understanding your competition is essential, it's equally important to grasp the broader market dynamics shaping your industry. This knowledge ensures your content is not created in isolation.



CREATING A CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY (CONT.)

MARKET RESEARCH FOCUS AREAS

Consider the following focus areas when researching your market:

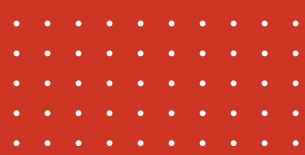
- **Emerging Trends:** Identify emerging trends in your market that you can leverage or address.
- **Market Needs:** Determine the most critical resources and information your market requires.
- **Common Challenges:** Understand the frequent challenges your market faces and how your content can provide solutions.
- **Business Goals:** Discover the primary goals that businesses in your market are striving to achieve.
- **Desired Benefits:** Determine the benefits that interest your market the most.

By conducting both competitive content analysis and market research, you can craft a B2B content strategy that not only distinguishes you from competitors but also resonates deeply with your target audience. This holistic approach ensures your content is informed, relevant, and effective in achieving your business objectives.

4. Identify core themes

This next step should be easy, especially after doing your competitor and market research. Based on what you find, condense your research into 3-4 primary themes. These themes will be the foundations for the next few months of content development, so it's important they're not only relevant to your target audience but that they also fit within your overall company vision of the future.

It's also important these themes are not so broad that anything you create can coincidentally fit within them, but also not too narrow that only very specific subject matter can be explored. Striking the right balance between breadth and depth will enable your content marketing program to provide real value, unique perspectives, and thoughtful insights for your audiences.



CREATING A CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY (CONT.)

5. Define relevant topics and formats for each buying committee member, at each customer stage

You've come to the penultimate stage of creating your content marketing strategy.

After you've identified your themes, it's time to start defining what related topics *and* formats you want your content marketing efforts to consist of. But not every topic is relevant for every persona. And not every persona consumes content the same way. If these factors aren't taken into consideration, it's very easy for your content to fall on deaf ears.

To address these very important differences amongst your targets' buying committees, not only should you be identifying topics and formats for your content marketing program at-large, but you should also be mapping those ideas to *each* buying committee member at *each* stage of your customer lifecycle.

6. Develop a content-driven campaign

Now, you're ready to start building your campaign plan that will showcase your content to the world! (After you've created the content, of course.)

Every great campaign begins with a theme, and fortunately, you've just pinpointed some! To start developing your content-driven campaign, take one of your content themes—whichever you think will be most pertinent for your audience or whichever you have the most content for—and use that theme to build out the rest of your campaign.

Define your campaign goals, identify your target audience, and determine how long your campaign will last. Based on that information, determine what channels you'll need, what audiences apply to each channel, *and* what content you want to fill those channels.

Are you using email to drive mid-stage performance for business decision makers? LinkedIn ads to drive lead generation amongst technical influencers? Remarketing to improve conversion rates for executive sponsors? Whatever your channels and audiences are, you should have the content you need to get the job done.

If you discover a need for more content to bridge gaps or adapt to market changes, jot it down in your content marketing strategy. Next, follow the outlined steps above. When the time comes to release the content to the market, your task becomes smoother, enabling a quicker and more efficient campaign launch.



EXECUTING THE STRATEGY

Creating a content marketing strategy is no small task, nor is it one that's meant to be easy, quick, or immediate. But it is an approach that enables your pipeline—and organization at-large—to grow with predictability, reliability, and confidence. And it ensures your audience stays front-of-mind through that growth.

You've:

- Defined your goals
- Audited your content
- Assessed the competition and the market
- Identified core themes
- Defined relevant topics and formats for each buying committee member, at each customer stage an
- Developed a content-driven campaign

While these 6 steps to create a content marketing strategy certainly don't account for an exhaustive, foolproof list, they should give you the foundations and principles you need to build your own content marketing engine. And hopefully one that has the power to propel your organization forward well into the future.

Once your content is executed, measuring key performance indicators will be important to see what's working and what's not. Refer back to step 5 of your content audit. While this guide does not cover analytics and reporting, there is one more thing worth covering here: Repurposing.



WHY YOU SHOULD REPURPOSE CONTENT

Content is such a good investment and getting the most from it is important no matter the size of your budget.

It's no surprise that we all have more work to do than there are hours in the day. As marketers, we must continually bring exciting and creative content to audiences on a regular cadence, but with our busy schedules, it's hard to dedicate time to brainstorming and content creation. Luckily, content repurposing can help us reduce that stress while promoting valuable content in new formats.

WHAT IS REPURPOSED CONTENT?

Repurposing content is the act of recycling existing content in new formats. For example, converting an old blog on your website into an infographic. If the content is slightly old, this is your chance to reformat the information you covered in a new medium and provide updated info on the topic to match current events.

Repurposed content should not be viewed as 'cheating the system' in any way, as you still need to update the info to be relevant and gain new traction. Simply posting an old blog on social media without updating the content is **not** repurposing content.

WHAT CONTENT SHOULD BE REPURPOSED?

Start with the highest-performing content pieces you discovered in your content audit. With the help of a well-defined Martech stack, we can use different tools like a CMS (Content Management System) to gather insights on the highest-performing content pieces and list those out.

Something else to consider is which formats work the best with your audience – do you get the most traction on blog posts? Videos? Whitepapers? Capitalize on the highest-performing formats and repurpose your content to be in line with those mediums. Refer back to your audit results. Consider adding a column to your audit spreadsheet to flag content that is prime for repurposing.

When looking at new content, we want to think about how this can be repurposed in the future. Long-form content like reports, whitepapers, and some blog posts often cover multiple topics. In some cases, these topics are mentioned at a high level but never go into further detail. This presents a great opportunity to provide separate deep dives on specific portions of those long-form pieces.



WHY YOU SHOULD REPURPOSE CONTENT (CONT.)

Have an old research report? Take the top 4 findings and create blogs or short videos on those findings individually. Make sure to link the original report in each of those new content pieces to help with content distribution. If your line of work doesn't involve research reports, try converting a guide into an infographic. Visualize the steps in your guide to make the content easier to consume. You can also promote that visual across your social media and start new conversations in the comment sections. There are endless possibilities for repurposing your content.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF REPURPOSING CONTENT?

Expand your reach

Everyone intakes knowledge differently. A blog may be easy for one person to read and understand but seeing that content in video format may resonate better with others.

Only presenting your topic in one medium automatically lowers your potential reach for that content piece. You might be writing about a very important topic in your field, but many people may glance over it or completely ignore it since they prefer to see things in an infographic or video instead of a blog post. Meet your audiences' preferences by repurposing your content in different formats to reach new people you would have otherwise missed.

Better SEO

The best way to promote keyword searches is to have multiple links connected to them. By having multiple content pieces connected to one keyword, you are able to boost your ranking on SERP which ultimately results in more clicks and higher website traffic.

Remember to Stay Consistent

As previously mentioned, we do not have time to constantly be creating new content week after week. Some days, we may have terrible writer's block and end up delivering half-baked content, or something you are not satisfied with. We never want to publish content for the sake of not missing a day in your editorial calendar. All content should be high-quality and purposeful.



WHY YOU SHOULD REPURPOSE CONTENT (CONT.)

With repurposed content, you can allow yourself some breathing room and save some time on reformatting content you've already written, instead of creating something brand new. This way, you can stay on schedule, and deliver new content to your audience.

At the end of the day, we want to provide our audiences with insightful, and high-value content. We have to face the facts and realize we don't always have the time or energy to think of new topics and ideas. Fortunately, generative AI is helping us with this and cutting down wasted time by, at minimum helping us get that "first shitty draft".

When facing a similar situation, you can save time and reach new audiences by repurposing your content instead. You can even ask ChatGPT (or similar) to rewrite your content to change it up.

Don't look at repurposing as a replacement for developing new content but as a supplement to your existing strategy. Bring life to your high-traffic, old content and repurpose it in a new format for new viewers to enjoy.



WRAPPING IT UP

In today's saturated market, mastering the art of staying top of mind and creating standout content is crucial for connecting with prospects, regardless of where they are in their buying journey.

Consider this guide your actionable roadmap for content that delivers results. With your content strategy as your compass, you've outlined goals, conducted a content audit, and analyzed the competition. You've identified core themes and defined relevant topics and formats for each stage of the buying committee. Now, both your new and repurposed content are poised to resonate with your ideal audience, boost your authority, and drive conversions.

Looking to learn more about enhancing your marketing strategy? Check out this [workbook](#) for creating a predictable pipeline and hitting revenue goals within your organization.

ABOUT HEINZ MARKETING

Focused on helping clients drive predictable growth via a revenue-responsible focus, Heinz Marketing helps B2B marketing teams elevate their impact and contribution to business outcomes that matter. Heinz Marketing's proven Predictable Pipeline methodology has been successfully customized and implemented at countless organizations, changing the trajectory of marketing work, careers, and lives. The Heinz Marketing team is made up of full-funnel experts who speak the language of sales, empowering clients with strategy and tools for success.

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