



HOW TO CREATE A CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY THAT PAYS

HUDSON
FUSION

When it comes down to it, most businesses have a common goal: *growth*. (Less subtly: *profit*.)

If you're reading this guide, you know that marketing is one of the most effective ways to bring in leads, convert customers, and maximize sales—specifically, content marketing. The only struggle is figuring out **how to create a content marketing strategy that will ultimately pay off**.

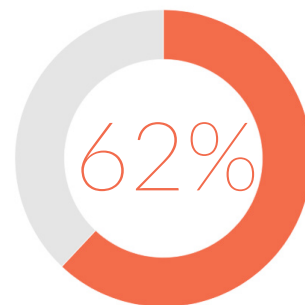
First, a little background: You may be familiar with [the magic of inbound marketing](#), which focuses on creating quality content specifically designed to attract your ideal customer. Quality content, however, is not something that just *happens*.

In order to avoid wasting time and effort on content that doesn't quite hit the mark, you need an effective content marketing strategy in place that pushes you towards your ultimate goal: attracting qualified leads.

In the old days, you'd be walking door-to-door armed with a briefcase and a smile, praying you'd end up on the front stoop of someone with a genuine need for your product.

But this isn't the old days—it's 2018—and that's why we're showing you how to create a solid content marketing strategy.

Content marketing [generates](#) **3x as many leads** as outbound marketing—and **costs 62% less**.



More leads for less money? I know what you're thinking: What do I have to do to nail down those numbers?

Good content marketing involves planning, development, and management. If you take the time to sit down and identify **what you want to accomplish**, it's much easier to figure out **how to accomplish it**.

This guide will cover everything you need to know to get started, including:

- **How to Define Your Goals**
Create specific, actionable content goals that translate into sales
- **How to Define Your Audience**
Develop specific, effective Buyer Personas that will get your content in front of the customers you want
- **How to Conduct a Content Audit**
Analyze the content you have thus far and find out what works and what doesn't
- **How to Brainstorm New Content Ideas**
Come up with fresh, engaging content concepts your customers want, need, and love
- **How to Determine Your Capacity**
Set yourself up for success and avoid failure by determining what level of production you're capable of
- **How to Share Your Content**
Share your work with the world via the proper social media and republishing channels to make sure you get in front of right-fit readers

Define Your Goals

Sure, you want more customers—that much is clear—but you'll need to get a little more granular when it comes to setting goals for your content.

Come up with a set of [S.M.A.R.T. goals](#) to define what success looks like to you:

Specific: Think about what you actually want to achieve from content marketing. Rather than surface-level reasons, dig deeper into the details and motivations. Write out what your ultimate objective is, and then carve out the specifics.

For example: I want to increase traffic to my website by publishing 5 blogs per week this month.

Measurable: As a great man [once said](#), “What’s measured improves.” Without having a set of metrics to check your progress, you won’t have the means to measure the success of your content marketing strategy.

For Example: I want to increase my average monthly traffic by 7%.

Attainable: C’mon now, let’s be realistic: if you’re currently blogging once a month and getting 100 views on average, blogging three times a day and getting 9,000 views is not only unlikely, but probably unattainable given your schedule. Be sure that your goals are doable before you start building out your strategy.

For example: We know that the last time we increased our blogging frequency from 4 monthly posts to 4 weekly posts, we saw a drastic increase in web traffic.

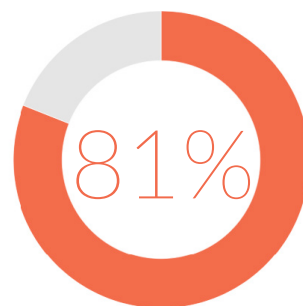
Relevant: Keep your goals aligned with your overall objectives. Luckily for you, if you’re trying to bring in sales, almost all of your content should bring in potential customers. Whether you’re increasing/enhancing your blog, social platforms, content offers, email campaigns, or website, you’re bringing in more visitors—and more visitors means more opportunities for your sales team to access them.

For example: Our blog posts are specifically designed to appeal to leads around a specific service. It will allow more people to see our brand, and our blog will drive users to the service page we’re focusing on.

Time-Bound: This one’s pretty self-explanatory. There’s a massive difference between bringing in 10 new customers a week and 10 new customers a year. Without a timeline, you won’t have any context for your success.

For example: We plan on executing this over the course of the next month.

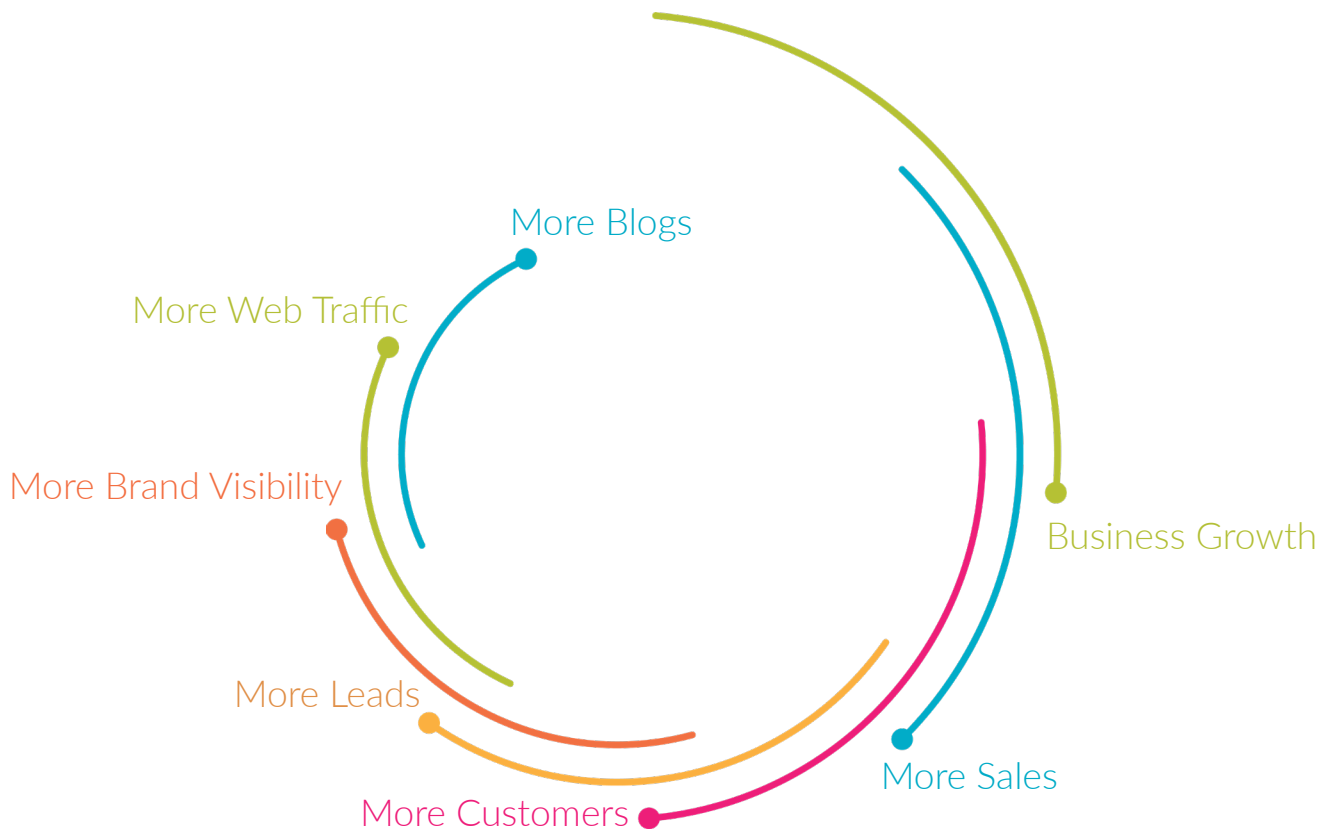
[Marketers who set goals](#) are **429% more likely to report success** than those who don’t. And **81% of those successfully, goal-setting marketers achieve them.**



Here are some [metrics to base your S.M.A.R.T. goals on](#) that will help you measure the success of your content marketing strategy:

- Website Visits & Engagement
- Ad Campaign Analytics
- Email Performance
- Contacts in Your Database
- Social Media Engagement
- Sales Lead Quality
- Sales Rates
- SEO Ranking
- Customer Renewal Rates

Make sure you connect all of your metrics back to your ultimate goal, tracing exactly how it'll affect them.



HOW TO DO IT

If you have a HubSpot account, you can set goals directly in your account that you can then track and manage. Here's [how to get started](#).

If you don't have a HubSpot account, create a document that outlines all of the goals you'd like to achieve through your content marketing strategy ([here's a free template](#) from HubSpot to start). Get feedback from your team, and when you've settled on your goals, prioritize which ones you'd like to start with.

Define Your Audience

You can't have an effective content marketing strategy without understanding and targeting your audience. It's important to define who you're creating content for in order to determine what content you're going to create.

First, you'll need to define your Buyer Personas and map out their journeys, aka the decision-making process they go through before making a purchase.

Buyer Personas

I'm happy to introduce you to the customers you've been waiting for: your Buyer Personas.

Buyer Personas are fictitious versions of ideal clients, allowing marketers to identify, understand, and target potential buyers. Developing Buyer Personas allows you to put yourself in your customers' shoes to figure out exactly how your products and services could benefit them.

Depending on your industry, you'll want to determine which factors are important to your customer's decision-making process. Based on your experience with current customers and your dream leads (the sales you're dying to close), use this checklist to figure out who they are and what they need:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Title/Company | <input type="checkbox"/> Preferred Social Media Platforms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age | <input type="checkbox"/> Challenges They Face/Pain Points |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Estimated Salary | <input type="checkbox"/> Goals They Aim For |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Location | <input type="checkbox"/> Their Story |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Roles | |

When you're developing your Buyer Personas, focus on your customer's needs, not your products or services. Once you nail down exactly what they want and need, you'll be able to provide answers and solutions through your content.

After you've built your personas, organize your thoughts and visualize your buyer by creating a graphic. Say you're the IT/Systems Manager of a compliance and process optimization agency:

IT/Systems Manager Matthew

Age: 31

Location: Greater New York City Area

Salary: \$125,000

Background: Matthew has been with the company for 5 years, working with a team of six other IT professionals to keep the company's software and integrated systems functioning to provide optimal service. He's currently in a serious relationship, and is looking to purchase a condo within the next year. He works from 9am–5pm, but needs to be available afterhours to troubleshoot.

Personality: Matthew has a quiet demeanor, and is entirely focused on technology. IT isn't just his career—tech is also his hobby.

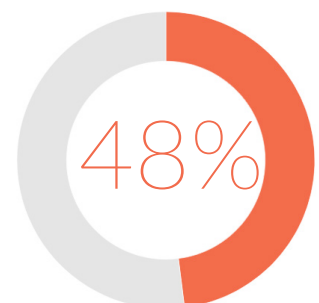
Goals: Matthew wants to ensure a stable IT system, increase the knowledge and skillset of his department, and come up with a cohesive strategy for his team to implement. He wants to have all of the company's systems integrated to increase efficiency and productivity without onboarding new team members. His overall goal is to integrate company systems to make operations more efficient.

Challenges: Matthew is responsible for reporting back to the leadership team. He constantly encounters employees who lack the ability to be tech independent. He needs to find support for all of the systems while keeping costs low, ensuring their software is tailored to their specific needs. He needs to keep the system operating at peak efficiency.

Having a designed Buyer Persona allows you to better visualize potential buyers. Generating content for a target audience is much easier when you understand their roles, goals, challenges, and stories. Instead of content-stuffing your website for SEO, you want to create meaningful content that will maximize conversions and produce sales.

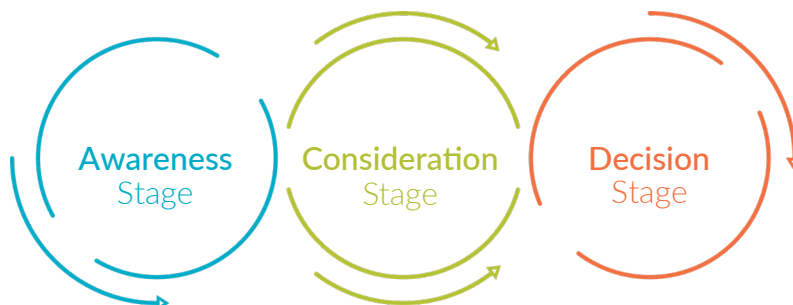
How are you going to accomplish that? Simple—by creating content that targets specific steps in the Buyer's Journey.

Buyers are **48% more likely to consider purchasing** from service providers that personalize their marketing to address their specific business issues.



Buyer's Journey

Once you've created your Buyer Personas, you'll have a better understanding of where they fall in each stage of the Buyer's Journey. Let's use IT/Systems Manager Matthew as an example.



Awareness: Buyers are researching solutions for a particular problem they have. They're looking for answers—expert insights, opinions, and research.

Despite the amount of time and money I've invested in content marketing, I'm not seeing results. I don't have an effective content marketing strategy and it's negatively affecting my bottom line.

Consideration: Buyers are researching the solutions your business has to offer. They're interested in seeing exactly how you can help.

Okay, so it looks like they have pretty comprehensive content marketing services, but I need to make sure they know what they're doing. How do I know their strategy pays off?

Decision: Buyers want to see exactly what you can do. They want to find out how to enlist your services, and what that relationship would look like.

They've had a lot of success with their retainer clients, but they also have a more affordable, limited content marketing package. I need to see which would be best for my business.

HOW TO DO IT

HubSpot has a bunch of free online tools that will help you build the foundation for an effective content marketing strategy.

If you're struggling to transform the list of Buyer Persona information you gathered into actionable Buyer Personas, try HubSpot's [free online Buyer Persona generator](#). To better organize your content for each stage of the Buyer's Journey, check out this [Content Mapping Template](#).

Conduct a Content Audit

You can't have a content marketing strategy without content, right? Before you get excited about creating engaging new content for your established Buyer Personas, you'll need to conduct a content audit to analyze what you currently have to work with.

Take a look at all of the content you've created to date—blogs, resources, automated emails, social media campaigns, videos, infographics, etc.—and figure out **how much** content you created, **what topics** you covered, and **when** each piece of content was published.

Companies that publish at least 16 blogs per month get roughly **4.5x more leads** than companies that publish between 0-4 monthly posts.

Your content marketing strategy is going to rely on the effective development and even distribution of content. Knowing what you have currently will help you figure out what content you need.

HOW TO DO IT

The best way to analyze your content is by putting together a content audit spreadsheet. It should look something like this:

Content Title	Date	URL	Buyer's Journey Stage	Content Type/Format	Buyer Persona	Topic

Once you have all of your content in front of you, it'll be easier to identify the gaps. Have you been focusing too much on a specific Buyer Persona? Have you neglected certain stages of the Buyer's Journey? Are there any topics that you know would be relevant to your audience that you haven't covered yet?

Brainstorm New Content Ideas

You've defined your goals, identified your audience, and conducted your content audit. Now that you have a feel for what your content should focus on, it'll be much easier to come up with new ideas to either **create new content** or **repurpose existing content**.

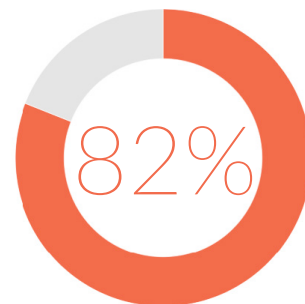
Create New Content

There are countless types of content you can use to build out your strategy. Depending on your audience, however, you may want to focus on certain formats more than others. To start, these seven [types of content](#) are proven to have the highest engagement and, subsequently, the highest ROI:

1. Authoritative Blogs
2. Infographics
3. Standout Opinion Pieces
4. "How-To" Content
5. Original Research Pieces
6. Trending Content
7. Videos

Keep in mind that while all of these appeal to most audiences, they may not necessarily appeal to yours.

82% of customers have a more positive outlook on a company after reading [custom content](#)—and **70% of customers feel closer to a business** after engaging with their content.



Repurpose Existing Content

Before you get started on creating new content, let's hop back over to your content audit for a second. Do you already have content that could be repurposed?

There are two ways you can repurpose existing content: by **changing the target audience** or by **changing the format**.

For example, say you have three different Buyer Personas. You can easily rewrite a high-performing, high-quality blog post to speak to each of the three buyers, giving you three times as many blog posts that have already proven to be effective.

Now, take that same blog post—your highest viewed post to-date with high social share rates and a consistent conversion path—and reimagine it. Transform a how-to blog into a step-by-step infographic, or a series of blog posts into a series of podcasts.

When it comes to repurposing your content, here's the bottom line (for your bottom line): **Work smarter, not harder.**

Know Your Capacity

Here's an important lesson: You can't create effective content without the capacity to do so.

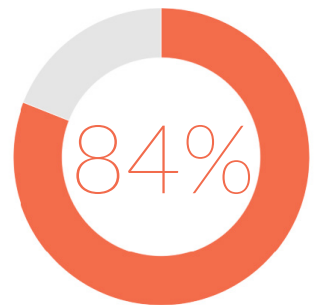
If you're interested in creating a biweekly blog series, do you have a team member in-house that you can rely on to write engaging, targeted copy? Do they have time to do it?

If you want to create a webinar, do you have the software to produce it? Can you rely on your team to put together a webinar that will be both visually appealing and contain valuable, relevant information?

At the end of the day, you can always outsource your marketing efforts [to an agency that specializes in content marketing](#), but if you're planning on doing it yourself, you'll need to be sure you have the capacity to do it—namely, the tools, technology, and expertise to execute valuable content.

Luckily, we live in a digital world and most of us have smartphones capable of producing quality video and audio.

84% of people expect brands to provide content that **entertains, tells stories, provides solutions, and creates experiences.**



The most important thing to do is design your content to appeal specifically to your audience in order to achieve your goals.

Here are some technologies and tools you may need to produce the highest quality content:

- A Website
- Social Media Platforms
- Analytics Tools
- Keyword Research Tools
- Competitor Research Tools
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Tools
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Software
- Content Management System (CMS)
- Marketing Automation Platform
- Copywriting Support
- Program Support
- And most importantly....**Time**

HOW TO DO IT

Gather your team and explore what experience everyone has in content production. You may have a team member who's really interested in writing, digital media production, or content strategy as a whole.

If you don't have the time or capacity, start researching a marketing agency that has all of the talent and [technology you need](#) to create the most effective content marketing strategy for your organization.

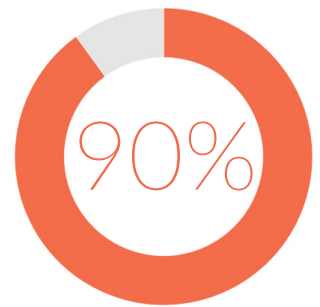
Share Your Content

Your content marketing strategy won't end with hitting "Publish." When your content goes live on your website, you'll need to share it on other platforms to maximize visibility. The ultimate goal is to get your content in front of buyers—but how do you reach them?

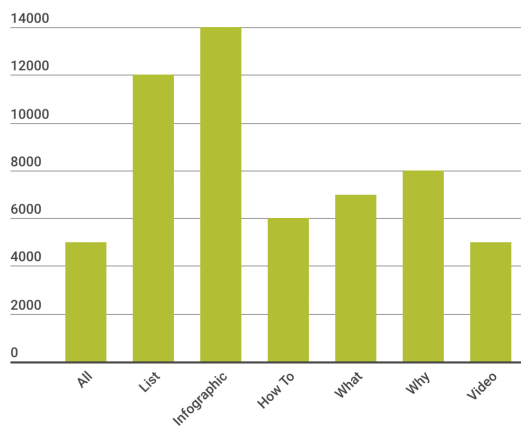
Using your Buyer Personas, identify what platforms, devices, and websites your customers use. That's where you want to share your content.

Any successful content marketing strategy is created in alignment with solid social media marketing and email marketing strategies. We'll save the intricacies of designing, developing, and deploying social media and email marketing strategies for another eBook, but in the meantime, it's important to know that your social media platforms are a highly effective way to share your content with potential buyers.

Nearly 90% of marketers say their social marketing efforts have **increased exposure for their business**, and **75% say they've increased traffic**.



Average Shares By Content



Source Okdork + Buzzsumo

Consider what types of content your audience is most interested in and the types of content that are most likely to generate organic interest on your social media.

Don't be shy about sharing more than once. Just as you're repurposing your content, you should be re-sharing. Consider the numbers:

$$\frac{\text{Average Content Views} \times \text{Social Media Shares}}{\text{Maximum Conversion Opportunities}}$$

$$\frac{\text{Cost to Produce Content} \div \text{Number of Social Media Shares}}{\text{Cost of Web Traffic \& Conversion Opportunities}}$$

At the end of the day, you have a business to run. Maximizing the time and effort it takes to produce content by re-sharing is a no-brainer.

HOW TO DO IT

We put together [a handy tool](#) to help our readers find out what social media platform is best for their business. We recommend that you start there before you start planning how you're going to share your content and where.

Just as you have an editorial calendar, you'll want to create and maintain a social media calendar. Hootsuite designed [a free social media calendar template](#) you can use to start creating your own.

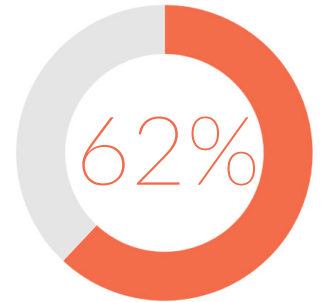
If you're looking at your editorial calendar, your social media calendar, and your personal work calendar and wondering how you're going to find the time to design, develop, and implement your content marketing strategy, it may be time to consider [outsourcing your marketing efforts](#).

Talk to the Experts

Here's the thing: **You can't do it all, and you can't do it alone.** When it comes to the day-to-day operations of running a business, you have enough on your plate. You don't need to add marketing to the pile.

Don't waste time and resources on a content marketing strategy that continues to slow down sales. You can't skip steps or sacrifice content quality—that strategy will never pay.

62% of companies **outsource** their content marketing efforts.



Outsource your content marketing efforts to an agency that understands every element of the process and specializes in getting it done. When you work with Hudson Fusion, you're not just getting a team of marketers—you're getting a **team of marketing specialists**:

- Marketing Strategists
- Copywriters
- SEO Specialists
- Social Media Managers
- Marketing Analysts
- Graphic Designers
- Creative Directors
- Web Developers
- Technical Gurus
- Industry Experts

Hudson Fusion now offers a **Content Marketing Package** that provides the high-quality strategy development that your business deserves.

Content Marketing Package \$2,300/month

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|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Dedicated Account Manager. Work with a single point-of-contact on your content marketing efforts. Regular check-ins ensure you're kept up-to-date every step of the way to measure the impact of your strategy. | <input type="checkbox"/> Optimization of Social Media Platforms. Social media managers will analyze your current social media platforms and identify opportunities for greater engagement and better branding. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Editorial Calendar Development. SEO specialists and content strategists will analyze your audience, develop right-fit content concepts, and create a content schedule specific to your potential buyers. | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media Content Creation & Publication. Our content team will provide consistent activity on up to two of your social media platforms, sharing original content and third-party content to drive post engagement. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Monthly Blog Posts. Expert copywriters will create search optimized (and engaging) copy twice monthly that will appeal to current—and future—readers. | <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Reporting. Your Account Manager will provide regular analytics reports that measure the success of your content marketing campaigns. |

Interested in hearing more about our Content Marketing Package?
We're happy to walk you through how it works—particularly for your **business**.

Let's Talk