



SOCIAL MEDIA & CONTENT MARKETING

- A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?.....	4
WHY IS CONTENT MARKETING IMPORTANT?.....	4
CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY.....	5
WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING?.....	6
WHY IS SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IMPORTANT?.....	6
SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGY.....	7
FINAL THOUGHTS.....	11



INTRODUCTION

There are many facets to producing the perfect search marketing strategy and it is vital that you work at all of them. In order to get the very best for your brand online it is crucial that you have a balanced strategy which is flexible enough to adapt as your industry and customer needs change.

One thing to remember when you are putting together your strategy is that you must be able to take different parts of your work and merge them. An excellent example of this is in the relationship between content marketing and social media. These two elements have long been touted as a match made in heaven and, if used together properly, the impact they can have on the digital performance of a business is huge. This eBook will look at these two parts of a search marketing strategy and provide actionable advice on how to use them in harmony to get the most from your online results.

Let's begin...

WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?

Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach which involves the creation and sharing of materials – both on and offline – including blogs, videos, reports, whitepapers and **social media** posts among others with the intention of acquiring links, business and exposure as well as building consumer relationships.

Businesses which excel here are often ahead of the curve, so it is very important to make sure that you think about the audience you currently attract and the audience that your competitors attract. Having a gauge on who might want to visit your site, read your content, hire your services or buy your products is the difference between whether you are successful or not.

Content should be several things:

- It should inform the reader
- It should, where appropriate entertain the audience
- It should always be relevant to the users search query - something that Google has taken very seriously in recent months, especially with their 'EAT' update.

WHY IS CONTENT MARKETING IMPORTANT?

Content marketing is a vital form of communication between your business and your potential audience. With competition at an all-time high and the way individuals take in their information so varied, content marketing allows you to connect with as large an audience as possible and across an ever expanding number of formats.

There is a well-known saying that 'content is king' and whilst that is true, in that you need to produce and promote your content, a better phrase would be 'good content is king'.

If, as a business, you are able to create, publish, distribute and promote materials for your target audience which will, in turn, lead to new business, then this is a strategy you have to explore. The content and assets you can create can be very lucrative. If you can then make the content engaging and shareable, you are on a path to even greater exposure at a relatively low cost.

CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

When it comes to deciding on a content marketing strategy it is important to consider two things:

- Who forms your current market?
- Who are you trying to target?

If you are able to answer both of these then you are partway there. Knowing your current market allows you to understand how they receive their marketing information and on which platforms they are most receptive. Applying tactics based on these findings therefore gives you a better chance of adding to your readership by highlighting the key formats to use.

Once you have the formats decided, you can answer the second question. Understanding who you are targeting allows you to focus on the subject of the material produced, eg, are they more likely to want the answer to industry specific questions or are they looking for promotions? Another consideration here could be the tone of voice, do they expect an authoritative voice that informs and that represents a thought leader or is the brand friendly and humorous looking for social shares?



Content marketing is vital if you are looking to grow your business. The temptation is often to generate as much content as possible, across many platforms in the hope that the branding will grow and something will stick.

This is a tried and tested method that is especially true when it comes to social media, where brands engage at every possible moment, but is not without fault. This saturated approach can annoy existing or potential customers and deter them from your brand. For this reason it is highly important that you take them on a journey.

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING?

Social media refers to both websites and apps that are designed to allow people to share content quickly, efficiently, and in real-time. Social media marketing is the utilisation of these websites and apps to engage with your audience and monitor measurable results based on things like impressions, likes, retweets, and shares. You can also get into the real performance data such as the number of website visits and conversions, both of which will prove if the model is working or not.

WHY IS SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IMPORTANT?

Social media marketing is important for a number of reasons and whilst the benefits change from brand to brand and business to business, the general benefits are the same. These are just some of the reasons that you need to consider social media marketing important.

- **Improved brand awareness** - social media is one of the fastest ways to grow brand awareness. It becomes another touchpoint with your audience, or potential audience, and by using different social media platforms you can engage with different audiences with the same message.
- **Improved brand loyalty** – If you run your accounts well, then you won't improve your brand loyalty. Connecting with your audience directly means you are far more likely to retain them. Social media is not just limited to introducing your product; it is also a leading platform for promotions. Consumers see these platforms as service channels where they can interact with a business.
- **It's cost effective** – Signing up to the various social channels is free, and social media marketing is one of the most cost effective methods to advertise your business. It's also worth noting here that you can branch into paid social, and start running ads on social media, and despite the cost, the return on investment is a huge selling point, leveraging social for conversions.
- **Increased traffic** - One of the other benefits of social media is that it also helps increase your website traffic. By sharing your content on social media, you are giving users a reason to click-through to your website.
- **Better personalisation** – Social media allows you to build one-on-one relationships with your customers and talk directly to them, even amongst the noise of other competitors and regardless of who else they follow.
- **More authority and customer satisfaction** - When customers see your company posting on social media, especially replying to their queries and posting original content, it helps them

- **Improved SEO/search performance** - Social media presence is becoming a vital factor in calculating rankings. These days, to secure a successful ranking, SEO requirements are continuously varying and by sharing your content on social media you sending out a message to search engines that speaks to your brand validity and integrity.
- **Competitor/market analysis** - By observing the activities on your profile, you can see customers' interest and opinions that you might not know otherwise if you didn't have a social media presence. You can also see what your competitors are doing and who they are interacting with. Getting to grips with the industry as a whole is sure to benefit in the long term and social helps this.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGY

When it comes to a social media marketing strategy, brands need to produce a logical process to get the best from their social efforts. Whilst some people take a metaphorical magnifying glass and inspect the finer details - such as impressions and the words that are being used in a post others take a bird's eye view. Both are valid but as a starting point it's better to look over your work and survey the bigger picture.

This involves asking a few questions of your brand and your wider business goals. First of all you need to be able to identify what exactly it is you want to achieve – are you using it to increase brand awareness? Is the purpose of your social media to increase traffic or are you looking at the commercials and trying to generate sales? Implementing your strategy based on your goals is a must. More commonly brands are also using their social media not only to harness relationships and forge community but as a way of dealing with FAQs and customer concerns.

According to Buffer, the two big questions when it comes to the overall strategy are:

1. What type of content do you want share?

What type of content will attract your target audience best? Is it images, videos, or links? Is it educational or entertaining content? A good place to start is to create a marketing persona, which will help you answer these questions. And this doesn't have to be fixed forever; you can always change your strategy according to how your social media posts perform.

2. Which platforms are best suited for getting this content to the right audience?

The major social media platforms, mentioned above, are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, and Snapchat. There are also smaller and up-and-coming platforms, such as Tik Tok, and social messaging platforms, such as Messenger and WhatsApp. When starting out, it's better to pick a few platforms that you think your target audience is on than to be on all platforms.

So how can we merge these two different elements of search?

The first stage is to think about the content production. You need to decide on the type of content that will best suit your audience and then consider the social media pairing. Video is on the rise and if you can produce a blog that contains interactive content that will auto play on Twitter or Facebook you are likely to get a higher engagement rate.

Evergreen content (the stuff that is factual and never 'really' dates) should form the base of your social plan and using tools such as Hootsuite you can schedule this content regularly, filling in the gaps with more time sensitive pieces. This is especially useful for brands which have a service offering that doesn't change they can promote these 'sales-focused' posts sporadically throughout the day or week and then add in news-worthy posts, promotional posts or new blog/video content in-between.

Not only do you want your brand to grow, but you want your content to resonate with the largest possible (relevant) audience. As your business and social media following grow, conversations about your brand will also increase. The ultimate goal of content marketing is to grow your brand awareness while encouraging conversions by showing that you're an experienced, authoritative leader in your field. By establishing your reputation, you encourage customers to return to your website for further content, and you can keep informing them while selling to them.

Content marketing should always have structure to it and if you can plan the buyers' cycle then success rate will be higher. An example of this would be to start with a simple blog post, this might generate social shares and expose someone who has little or no knowledge of your brand, they may then follow you on social media where another post gets their information, this would lead them to your website where similar engaging content waits. At the bottom of these blog posts or as a link in a social post you could put a call to action (CTA) in.

Content and social have similar functions in your overall marketing strategy. Your content and social should serve one or some of these objectives:

- Help your audience understand the subject matter you specialise in
- Challenge the status quo on your subject
- Entertain your audience with content specific to them
- Educate your audience on new best practices and trends
- Convince your audience to buy your product

You should also develop a value proposition which aligns your content and social. To get the most from your output, make sure your posts are relevant to one of the following areas:

- Product specific
- Event specific
- Discount specific
- Editorial topic specific
- Solution specific

Thanks to the trust which is built by the first few posts the user sees on social media (if done correctly) they are more likely to agree to sign up to a newsletter or to read more of your long-form or gated content.

This is an important part of the way customers interact. Non-gated content is an item that is free at the point of access and that can be freely shared (internally or on social etc). Gated content is that which requires the recipient to fill in a form or register to receive it.

It is common knowledge that gated content only receives a fraction of the interaction that non-gated content does (somewhere around the 15-20% mark). For whatever reason there is something entrenched in the human psyche that means we are less likely to download or read something where we have to fill in an online form, especially if it is our first interaction with a brand.

It is for this reason that you must build trust and nurture your audience through both social media and 'free' content. The added value of them submitting information is twofold, and trust is built by exchanging their interest as a customer, with your output of additional, useful information.

This chain of thought is a stark reminder that businesses have to take their customers on a buying journey and they have to lead them through the cycle if they are to turn readers into leads and leads into conversions.

Marketing influencer and writer, David Meerman Scott, said that: "Ungated content gets 20 to 50 times more downloads than gated content and for most marketers — especially those who have to prove results — the idea of not requiring some kind of sign up information for viewing content sounds outright crazy."

Trust and authenticity, as we have mentioned are vital and when it comes to aligning your content and social strategies these are our top six tips:

- Define what makes your brand special, and let your content flow from that.
- Let your product dictate your voice – if you sell aspirational products, talk aspirations.
- Know your audience – even if you are talking in the right way to your audience, it still important to be talking about the right things.
- Be consistent – though style or type of content changes dependent on platform, your tone should not.
- Identify gaps – if your brand competes in a crowded marketplace, ask yourself ‘what is the competition not offering’.
- Coordinate your content with social media – if your market operates seasonally, or your marketing calendar prioritises different services at different points in the year, tailor content to match.

FINAL THOUGHTS

One of the most important things to remember is that a Facebook post, Instagram image or a Tweet doesn't tell the whole story. These social posts become the 'hooks' for the content that lies behind them. It is a proven way to get people to your site and to read the more in depth pieces. This is better for user experience (UX) as they get the detail they need and the opportunity to buy or convert.

If you can perfect both offerings as part of your overall strategy, then you will be well on the way to success, but combining them will send you racing up the search engine results pages (SERPs) and ahead of the competition. Your content is the most important resource you have when it comes to your message, and the way the digital landscape is changing, social media is the quickest and arguably widest reaching way to do so.



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ABOUT US

Click Consult is a multi award-winning digital and search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC). Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

Our complementary services include content marketing, outreach, social media, conversion rate optimisation (CRO) and international/multilingual search marketing. We can also offer training and consultation to support your teams or existing strategy.

Click was named SEO Agency of the Year 2019, adding to our long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, a Bing Select Partner and feature in The Drum Recommends.

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