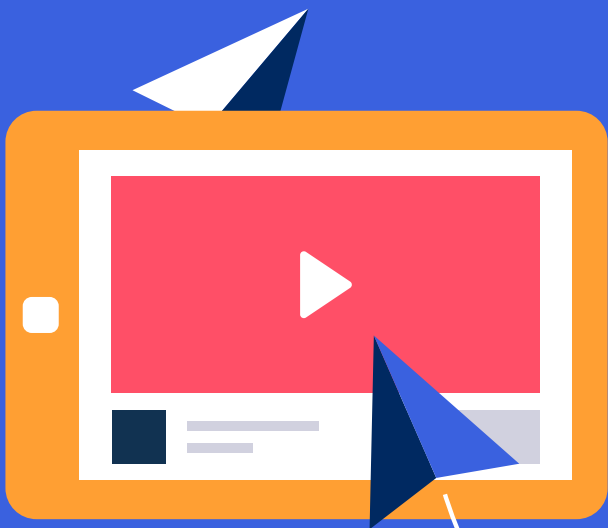




CONTENT MARKETING, SEO & YOUR BRAND MANAGEMENT



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INTRODUCTION

Brands are constantly looking to build awareness, connect with their audience and become an authority within their industry. Although there is an array of digital marketing services that can help your brand stand out online, content marketing is one of the dominant forces which can help lead the way.

In this eBook we will explain what content marketing is and how you can incorporate the service into your strategy to help your brand dominate online.

WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?

With its main purpose of distributing content to a targeted online audience, content marketing is an organic way to intrigue, educate and inspire people through the use of relevant and high-quality content, which meets the needs of your brand's intended audience.

The creation of a content marketing campaign is a structured process, consisting of thorough research, ideation, and a well thought out content strategy which aligns with your brand's SEO objectives. However, it's important to understand that content marketing isn't purely associated with SEO. In fact, there are many ways a detailed content marketing strategy can benefit your brand, but by combining both content marketing and SEO, this will maximise your chances of turning a target audience into loyal customers.



CONTENT MARKETING & SEO

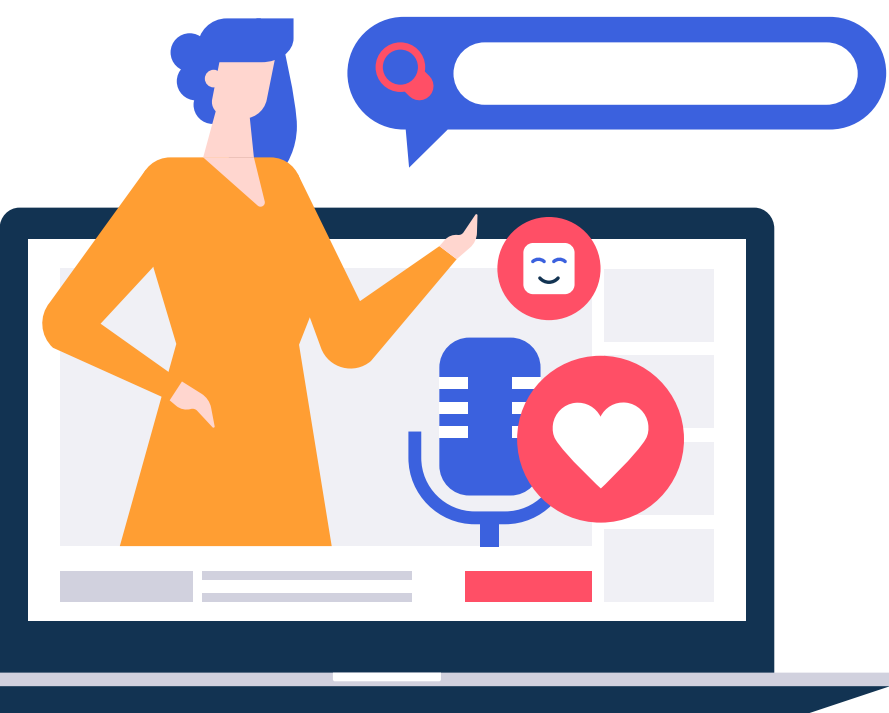
There is a false choice often made by marketers between content marketing and SEO – it doesn't have to happen, and with recent research into the latest broad core algorithm update seeming to negatively impact insufficiently authoritative, or overly sales focused content, SEO and content need to be more closely connected than ever.

While they do require different skills for the best implementation, the purpose of both search engine optimisation (SEO) and content marketing is to improve the ranking of a site in search engine results pages (SERPs) for key terms which are important for the brand. With this fact in mind, it is surprising how often they are treated as completely separate – when, in order for the best results, a brand needs both to be working in unison.

One of the most important considerations is that not only do you need to think about the type of content that you are creating but that you are also aligning it with your SEO strategy. To do this, all content has to be 'quality' and not just in terms of the written content but that it is 'SEO quality' and helps with rankings.

'Quality', by its nature, is generally qualitative – there's something ephemeral and subjective about the definition. However, in a field which – rightly or wrongly – prides itself in being predominately data-driven, such a non-specific term is virtually useless to us.

For that reason, what we need to do is to break down this 'quality' that is much discussed in to quantitative terms. Measuring the immeasurable is not as much of a losing battle as it may first seem, however, as the 'quality' we are looking to define here is a series of machine translatable aspects of a larger whole.



Because we are looking at quality as it could be understood by an algorithm, we can bypass the quality of the writing – beyond structural, grammatical and accuracy measurements (spelling, punctuation etc.) and we can look at elements of a piece of content or a web page which an algorithm could easily understand.

Can the content be reached?

Firstly and importantly, the ability for the data to be discovered by search engines has to be the first point in any checklist. This means that you should ensure your content is not blocked by robots.txt or any in any other way out of the reach of search engines.

Is the content quick for users to access?

With the shift to mobile devices, search also developed the need for low demand, high speed pages. In order for your content to be considered 'quality', it will need to load quickly – so you will need to avoid render blocking scripts, loading too many animations, images or excessive numbers of fonts to ensure that the content is fast loading.

Is the content well written?

This is not a measure of literary value, it simply refers to the use of correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. As far back as 2011, Matt Cutts was advising that such things were already a ranking factor (though presumably of low weighting), so ensure you're running your copy through a spell checker.

Is your data using the right structured data types?

Schema helps to add machine readable context to your content, so ensure that you're employing the various schema types that are available to your content and your industry.

Are you attracting the right links?

There has been an over reliance on DA as an indicator of quality as far as links are concerned – but in reality, we should be looking at industry relevant domains to build our authority in order to serve as a frame of reference for our content.

Among other things, these are five quantitative measurements we can make that can allow us to better build our chances of producing 'quality' content. While this is part of a broader movement toward the automated assessment of online content, there is a gap between human and machine interpretation of quality that has yet to be bridged, therefore there is a requirement to break a subjective concept into qualitative measurements, and therefore we need to ensure that in addition to attempting to produce the 'best' content we can, we are also ticking the boxes that algorithms require us to in order to succeed.

INFLUENCER MARKETING FOR LINK ACQUISITION AND CONTENT

Influencer targeting shares a lot in common with keyword research, and should really stem directly from it. Across your site, you will be targeting specific industry keywords with product and service descriptions, blogs or other forms of content, headers, meta-descriptions and so on. If all is well, you should therefore have some kind of keyword strategy document – a list of what keywords you’re targeting and for what part of the site, product or service for which they are being targeted.

This list – while unwieldy – with editing and prioritisation can serve as a fantastic resource for influencer targeting. The reason for this is that the appropriate influencer is likely to be targeting the same set of important keywords as your brand, and happily, there are plenty of tools that allow you to search specifically for those keywords prior to approaching your ideal candidates.

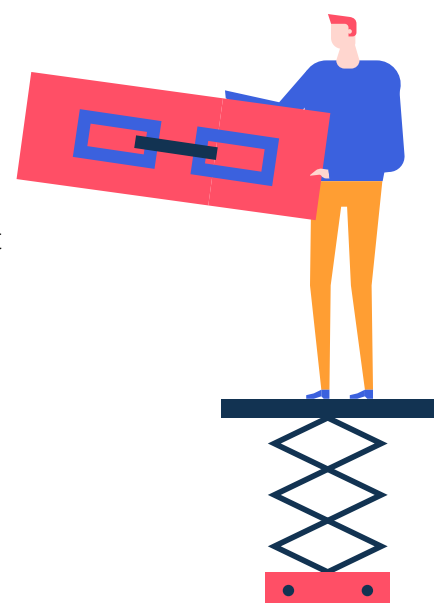
Though, obviously, as an expert in your industry, there may be key industry influencers that you would add to your dream team for brand promotion – and we would certainly encourage you to approach them. However, the better known the influencer, the more likely they will be to have been inundated with requests similar to your own.

While in some cases it is best to have an influencer’s input from the planning stage of the content you hope they’ll help you promote, it is often beneficial to have something waiting – meaning that your design team can be working while you’re engaging with the influencers.

This does mean, however, that the content should be easy to adapt to various audiences – if you’re working on a project with ten bloggers, you don’t want to have to create assets from the ground up for each of them, instead you need a more generic basic concept which can be personalised or segmented by the interests of your influencer’s audience.

Again, by having a versatile and adaptable approach with your content, you open up a level of trust with your target influencers – allowing them to feel that you are both well prepared and open to their input and feedback while being able to harness their understanding of their audience to make the content more relevant to it and therefore more likely to achieve the targets you have set.

Equally, don’t over-brand your content – influencers work hard to build their audience and will fear losing it if they appear to be actively promoting specific brands and, therefore, to be losing their objectivity. So, while you don’t want to make your brand invisible, it’s worth not pushing it too hard either – the relationship should come first, the link second, brand promotion third.



CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY VS BRAND STRATEGY

A common mistake which many brands make and as a result often see a campaign fail, is not being able to differentiate between a content marketing strategy and a brand strategy. In fact, content marketing is a technique which should be built into your overall brand strategy.

When talking about the brand strategy, you're effectively talking about the main aim of where you want your brand to be once all of your desired goals have been reached. To be able to create a successful brand strategy, you need to explore the brand itself in depth, for example, missions, values etc.

Once your brand strategy has been put in place, it's then time to develop your content marketing strategy. It's at this point that you will evaluate the direction you want to take your brand in and how content can support this, as well as focusing on the more technical details such as a keyword strategy and budget allocation.



CONTENT MARKETING AND BRAND AWARENESS

Brand awareness is one of the main objectives of content marketing. The technique enables you to present yourself in front of a wide audience, with the potential of increasing online visibility and driving your brand to the forefront of its industry.

During the planning stage of a content marketing campaign, it's crucial to consider how you want your brand to be presented to the intended target audience. A successful campaign will reach a wide spectrum of users that will perhaps be larger than you originally intended.

It's more than likely you'll want to present yourself in a professional manner and as a reliable content source, but remember to add a humorous element to your campaign as this will help strengthen your brand awareness.

Remember: visuals are digested better and shared more frequently than content. With this in mind, include videos and images where possible to add a more visual and fun element to your campaign, as this will intrigue your audience more.



CONTENT MARKETING AND BRAND IDENTITY

Developing a credible brand identity is key to turning your target audience into customers. Brand identity is all about making a statement with an audience who share the same values as your brand, which will help towards building a relationship between both brand and customer.

As an increasing number of brands battle it out to become the stand out name among their competitors, it can make each industry extremely competitive. It's at this point where content marketing comes into play.

By sharing consistent and credible content with your audience, you can start to develop a bridge of trust. Not only will it increase your chance of conversions, it will turn members of your audience into loyal customers who see your brand as an authority; which is only going to strengthen the overall identity of your brand.

Remember: when sharing any form of content, a brand should always bear in mind that the message should speak in unison with their audience and not at them. Think of ways to generate conversation and not tell the audience what to think and how to behave.



CONTENT MARKETING AND BRAND AFFINITY

Brand affinity is the most essential component needed between a brand and its customers. The core belief behind brand affinity is that a customer can feel their relationship with any brand is second to none and both parties have strong shared values.

Customer loyalty is key to any business and this is essentially what brand affinity is. There is an abundance of ways in which you can create a strong relationship with your customers and content marketing is one of the most effective.

Relevant and intriguing content is at the heart of any content marketing campaign and by targeting the correct audience, a brand can start to build trust with their customers. It's essential that when sharing content, you understand what your customers values are and make sure they're aligned with yours. This process will allow your audience to gain trust in your brand, which in turn, will develop into a lasting relationship.

Remember: One of the most effective ways to connect with an existing audience is to share any of your brand's upcoming content marketing campaigns with them, prior to releasing it to a wider demographic.

CONTENT MARKETING AND BRAND LOYALTY

At the core of any successful brand are loyal customers. Creating a campaign and targeting it at a specific audience isn't a difficult task, but creating a campaign which will bring loyal customers to your brand is a more complex process.

When talking about a content marketing strategy, brand loyalty presents itself throughout the whole campaign duration in a number of minor ways, but it's once you have acquired customers that brand loyalty is essential.

There are many ways you can outline how you're going to attract customers back to your brand on a regular basis. It's likely that your approach will depend on what industry your brand falls into, but let's take retail for example. One of the most effective ways to maintain loyal customers is to take a more traditional marketing approach, by sending out discount codes, exclusive competitions etc. Taking steps like these will prove to customers that they are valued by the brand, which can help make them favour your products/services.

Remember: When your brand has acquired a loyal customer base, future content marketing campaigns will take a different approach. The reasoning behind this is because you are now able to target this specific audience as well as a wider group of potential customers.



CONTENT MARKETING DURING AND POST COVID-19

As we've mentioned in the brand affinity section of this eBook, consumers want a strong relationship with brands they are familiar with, one that is built on shared interests and values. Therefore, how brands respond to the current pandemic will have long lasting effects, which could impact the future of your business.

Brands that treat their employees and suppliers with respect and care during these times are more likely to succeed and develop, as consumers look for brands who portray honest and caring characteristics.

During the pandemic, many brands will believe they should put any upcoming content marketing campaigns on hold for the foreseeable future, but this isn't the case. In many ways, this is the perfect time to communicate with your audience and reassure them, by sharing topics you know they're interested in.

According to Marketing Week, only 7% of brands are taking a 'seize the opportunity' approach during COVID-19. The main cause of this seems to be financial, as the majority of those surveyed by Marketing Week believe they simply don't have the budget to spend. However, we know that many digital businesses are thriving during this time, and the truth is if you have an online presence you can seek opportunities, the secret is knowing where to look.



KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER

- Understand what your audience is currently interested in by using social media platforms to research influencers that meet the criteria of your audience. This will allow you to discover what type of content may be of interest at the moment. Alternatively, look at what your competitors are doing and build on this.
- Create content that your audience are intrigued by and want to read about. One way to do this is by creating a weekly plan that looks at what topics you will focus on each week. Then write the content and post on your website, in the blog or news section.
- Share your work on the relevant platforms and outlets. As well as social media and the use of hashtags and groups, there are an abundance of online platforms which allow you to share your content. One of the best approaches is to look at similar topics to yours and see where they are being posted, for example, news aggregation sites and social news.
- It's important to learn and develop. Just like in any form of marketing we are interested in the results, so take this opportunity to analyse what you have worked on and learn from your successes and mistakes. If something didn't work how you intended, take time to understand why it was unsuccessful and use your research to try a new approach.



FINAL THOUGHTS

The aim of this eBook is to help you understand the importance of content marketing and how you can incorporate the technique into your brand strategy. By creating a strategic plan of how content can connect with a target audience, raise brand awareness and help you become an authority within your industry; it's only going to strengthen your brand's online profile.

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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 Organic Search (SEO) Team of the Year 2020, 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.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

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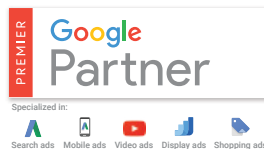
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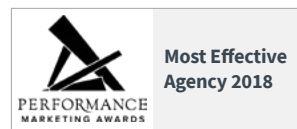
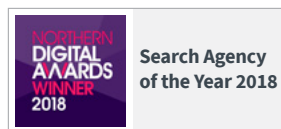
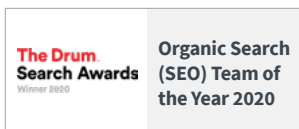
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