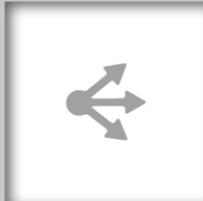


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DEFINITION WHITEPAPER
An informational document issued by a company to promote or highlight the features of a solution, product or service. White papers are sales and marketing documents used to entice or persuade potential customers.

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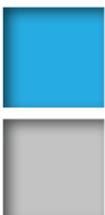
DEVELOPING A CONTENT STRATEGY

DEVELOPING A CONTENT STRATEGY

Next to programmatic buying, Content Marketing is probably the biggest industry topic right now. It seems like every week there is a big content summit somewhere, industry journals are full of case studies and more and more clients are demanding content strategies from us.

Content is a powerful way for brands to win against the competition because content can help brands increase the space they occupy in the minds and hearts of consumers.

In this White Paper, I explain how to actually create a full-blown Content Strategy. You will find 10 Golden Rules for content. And an easy-to-use template for a Content Calendar.



MENTAL AVAILABILITY

"Mental Availability" is probably one of the most interesting new concepts in marketing today. It was first developed by Byron Sharp, author of the much acclaimed book "How Brands Grow", and it describes the influence a brand's presence in people's minds has on their market success. In a nutshell, Byron claims that there is a direct correlation between the number of associations I have with a given brand and my propensity to choose this brand over another.

Without wanting to go too much into the details of Byron's theory: there seems to be a lot of merit to this idea and it explains rather plausibly why some brands are more successful than others despite a similar media budget. The theory behind "Mental Availability" explains why and how regular advertising is most effective to drive brand growth: by continuously reminding consumers of the key brand message; by "refreshing memory structures" as Byron Sharp calls it.

In other words, advertising works because when you are an established, well-known brand it takes only a few contacts a week for people to be reminded of what they already know about you. Without these messages the mental image consumers have of a brand would eventually fade away, the brand would lose its Share of Mind and other brands will take up that space.

Advertising works, there is absolutely no doubt about that, and it works well, too – but there can be "too much of a good thing". Up to a certain level you can increase market share by increasing your budget – but there will come a point of saturation. Once you pass a certain threshold (which may be different from brand to brand) your budget first becomes ineffective – additional messages no longer add anything to the brand's Share of Mind. Eventually your messages become counter-productive: people get tired of hearing your message and they actively tune out.

But if you want to *grow* your brand you need to *increase* your brand's Mental Availability or Share of Mind. To that end, you have to build *new memory structures*; but unfortunately, simply producing a new TV spot or another ad won't help: consumers are very adept in recognizing advertising when they see it. It is not that they dislike advertising per se – but once they got the message they tend to get annoyed if they have to hear it over and over again, even when it comes in a slightly different form.

THE OPPORTUNITY

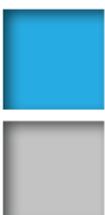
Content allows a brand to increase Mental Availability because it builds new associations.

An example: like many other FMCG brands, Philadelphia cream cheese was under pressure from private labels. First they tried to increase Mental Availability by building new associations around food: from being associated mainly with breakfast occasions to becoming a versatile addition to many other types of food. They delivered thousands of recipes demonstrating that the brand literally "Goes with everything". In Italy, however, the brand went even further: because Mondelez realized the audience's obsession with fashion they extend their content strategy and created lots of associations around models, fashion photography, designers etc. This was a different interpretation of "Goes with everything" and thus the content around this idea built entirely new memory structures. This strategy allowed the brand to win back significant market shares.



When it is relevant to them, people are genuinely interested in content even when it comes from or is sponsored by a brand. In fact, they don't mind at all that brands attach themselves to content – this is the price they are willing to pay for free content. But today's consumers are quite savvy, especially around content and, therefore, brands do have to be careful about the content they choose and how they deliver it.

First, the content has to be truly relevant. There is so much free unbranded content out there that people can choose from – so if a *brand* wants to compete for consumers' attention the content must have value. It has to be (more) entertaining, (more) informative or educational, or (more) inspiring.



Moreover, people don't like it if you simply try to stick advertising messages onto or into the content they love. Therefore, you have to make sure that you integrate the brand in a meaningful way: for example it was smart for Philips to place over 400 different kitchen appliances within the TV cooking show "The Taste" because it makes total sense for the contestants to use them. It would make a lot less sense to place them in "The Bachelor".

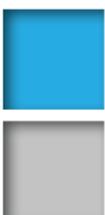
Secondly, you need to make sure that brand has "a right to play" in a given content area. To that end you have to answer two questions: does the brand actually have the credibility in that area? And: are there any other brands already in that space? For example, it would be very difficult for Coca Cola to sponsor car racing because it lacks the "energy credentials". Red Bull, on the other hand, could very plausibly get into motor sports a few years back because at that time it was a "white space" for soft drinks.

The Purpose of a Content Strategy:

To increase "Mental Availability" by building additional memory structures for the brand based on a profound understanding of consumer culture or lifestyle.

When you develop a Content Strategy you have to apply the same strategic rigor as in Convergence Planning – if not more. Your Content Strategies have to answer 5 fundamental questions:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1. WHO | Who is your audience and what are their areas of interest? |
| 2. WHAT | What type of content can you create or curate for them? |
| 3. HOW | What is the architecture of your content strategy, how do you leverage the content? |
| 4. WHEN | What is your content calendar, when will you distribute the content? |
| 4. WHERE | In which channels & touchpoints will you distribute the content? |



FINDING YOUR AUDIENCE AND ANALYZING THEM

Understanding the real interests of your audience is probably the most important part of your strategy: relevance is critical. If your content is not relevant, if there is no demand for it, there is no chance it will have an impact on the brand's memory structures.

You can use industry audience studies such as TGI or TdW as a starting point for your strategy but usually they are not granular enough to find out what content people really like. Fortunately, by accessing Facebook data we can get a much better understanding of your audience's interests.

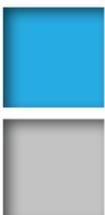
Using the Facebook Audience Lab we can literally create specific audience segments in Facebook and identify their favorite pages, topics, entertainment interests and categories. We can find out whether they are more interested in famous people than, say, movies. Or if sports is more relevant to them than music.

The Facebook Audience Lab will give us a ranking of the top Facebook pages they visit regularly, it can tell you which TV shows they love and which bands they like. We can get insights on their Facebook behavior – how likely are they to like or share something? will they act on promotions or comment on content? And we can find out what kind of devices they use when they are on Facebook.

The screenshot displays the Facebook Audience Lab interface. On the left, the 'CREATE AUDIENCE' panel is visible, showing settings for 'Location' (United States), 'Age and Gender' (Age 18+, Gender All), and 'Interests' (Business and Industry, Advertising, Entrepreneurship, Design). The main panel shows a '(New Audience)' of 3.5m - 4m monthly active people in the United States. The 'Page Likes' tab is selected, showing a list of top categories and their corresponding page likes.

Rank	Category	Page Likes
1	Internet/Software	DraftKings
2	Community	Crazy Street Fights • Muscle Cars Revolution
3	Recreation/Sports	FOX Sports • Uproxx Sports
4	Just For Fun	Deal Man
5	Automobiles and Parts	CARiD.com • Advance Auto Parts
6	Cars	Mercedes-Benz USA • Garage Valvoline • Alfa Romeo USA • Nissan
7	Website	AutoTrader.com • LED Concepts • Celebrity Net Worth • FanDuel • JackThreads
8	Public Figure	Bruce Lee • Vida Guerra • Coco • Tommy Chong • Eva Andressa • Dan Bilzerian
9	Automotive	Toyo Tires • Classic Car Liquidators
10	Media/News/Publishing	Playboy • Alt_driver • Motor Authority • Maxim • Comicbook.com • TheRichest

Facebook Audience Lab Sample Audience

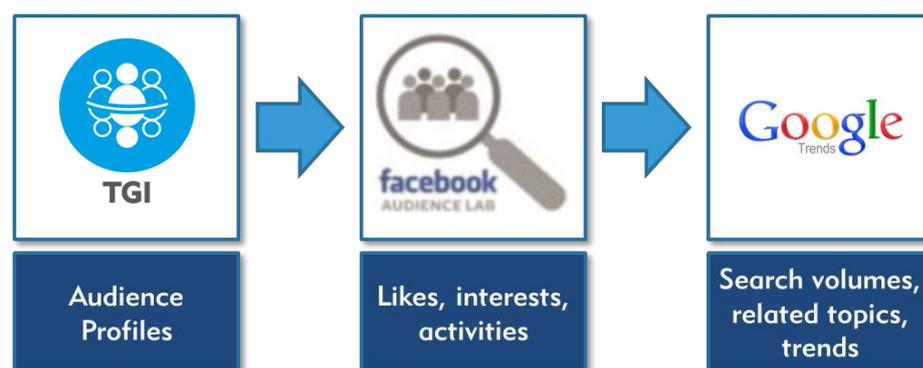


Eventually, we will be able to even dig down into the actual Facebook posts of our audience to understand – in real time – what they are actually talking about. This analysis is called "Themes & Topics" and will be available to us as soon as Facebook rolls this out globally.

Moreover, by using the Facebook Relevance Score we can analyze the impact a given piece of content had on your audience. The Relevance Score is an algorithm based on Facebook insights regarding likes, shares, mentions and an evaluation of the emojis your audience uses to comment on content. This can help us to optimize your content strategy in near-real-time.

However, in order to make your content strategy even more relevant we can go one step further. The objective is to add depth to our understanding of the audience's interests and to that end you will refine and enrich the insights from the Facebook Audience Lab by using Google. Google Trends can paint a much richer picture of the topics and search words related to the key areas your audience finds interesting.

By analyzing all keywords related to the Facebook insight we will end up with a tag cloud of possible content that we can use to build your strategy. This tag cloud will serve as a guideline and inspiration for the kind of content we want to create or curate. And by monitoring how this cloud changes over time we can generate even more insights of how you want to evolve your Content Strategy.



Matching TGI with Facebook & Google



DEFINING THE RIGHT CONTENT

Now that we know what kind of topics your audience is interested in we need to define what kind of content to develop against these interests. The first question we need to ask is who will produce the content. Basically, there are 4 different ways to approach content development:

- Original content:** For some brands it makes sense to create proprietary content. Red Bull is probably the best known brand in this space – every day they create a plethora of original content around the world and publish it in their own channels. But even if a brand cannot invest as much into content creation as Red Bull original content can be a way to create relevance. Oreo is good example of how a brand can become part of consumers' conversations through social content; and adidas has demonstrated how reactive content around the World Cup can be leveraged in real-time.
- Co-created Content:** This is content generated in collaboration with a media owner; content from across the ecosystem of any given publisher re-packaged and/or slightly modified to fit the brand's need; the Tic Tac Fresh Now app is an example of this where MSN brands about 10 selected pieces of information each day with the Tic and Tac characters.
- User Generated Content:** This can come either from special campaign activations such as a sweepstake ("upload your picture and win") or by mining the social space of consumer driven conversations, for instance by creating special hashtags for consumers to use (e.g., "#allin" for adidas).
- Curated Content:** And finally, you can use **curation engines** and/or platforms that curate **3rd party content** from across the web. MSN is probably the most comprehensive platform for curated content: in each country they have a staff of journalists who decide which local media content gets placed on their portal; but there are other platforms such as Flipboard and Livefyre which do this programmatically.

In the first step we identified the general area of interest and the kind of content we want to leverage. Now we have to create a concept for your content strategy: what is the story we want to convey? How do we want the brand to be perceived? What are the new associations we want to build?

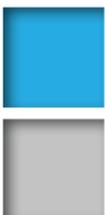
The content can be entertaining e.g. by commenting on current events (Oreo's "you can still dunk in the dark ")? It can provide utility (Home Depot's project guides). Or it can be inspirational (Dove's Real Beauty sketches). As always, we need an overarching platform and/or idea that guides your content teams and informs production.



On the following pages are 10 Golden Rules that can help you to increase the relevance of your content and the impact it has on brand growth.

If you follow these rules chances are that you will end up with powerful content for your brand. But when all is said and done, the best thing you can do is to "test & learn". Most successes in Content Marketing do not come from a "designer approach" to content, i.e. to create and refine your content endlessly before putting it out there. The best way to make your content successful is an iterative process where you create something, find out what works and what doesn't and then going back to create better content, testing that again and so forth.

After all, the best professional content – TV shows, magazines, radio shows – weren't perfect the first time they were on air or on the newsstand. Like with so many things: the more you do it the better it gets.



10 GOLDEN RULES FOR CONTENT MARKETING

1

Does it add value? Is it in some form useful to consumers, is it entertaining or inspirational? Be sure to compare your content not only to other content available in the category in which your brand operates – your need to benchmark your content against everything that is available to your audience.

2

Have you considered different content formats? Video and short editorial content may be the most obvious types, but have you considered 6s Vines or animated GIFs as an alternative to longer videos? What about pictures on Instagram? Or even live streams? For some consumers non-standard formats are more relevant.

3

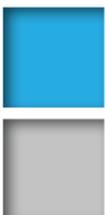
Have you exploited all your content? Viewers are often not only interested in the videos you produce but also in a behind-the-scenes or a making-of; you can have other people talking about the content to extend its appeal. Also, new video technology, such as Videopath, will allow you to enrich your videos with additional material – so that you can add depth (and therefore relevance) to your content.

4

Does it tell a story? Does the content you provide add up to a Big Picture? When you provide more connected and inter-related content your audience will build new memory structures faster and more sustainably than through disparate pieces of content. Storytelling is the best way to learn anything.

5

How capturing is it? Especially with video content it is immensely important that you "hook & hold" your audience. To that end, the first few seconds are critical: if they are not engaging or interesting your audience will switch off. And remember: in most media (Facebook, in-banner, digital OOH etc.) your video content will have to work without sound – at least initially.



- 6** **Does it stand out or is it unexpected?** This is an extremely important principle. Most content doesn't stand out. It all looks the same in a given category. If doing nothing else, cast unique people. Also, always do this test before watching new content from your brand: Imagine what the content will look like before you see it and if you're right that's bad. High arousal videos (feeling of exhilaration or surprise) are shared twice as often as low arousal (feeling of contentment).
- 7** **Is the benefit to your audience clear and simple?** Especially when providing utility, you have to make sure everyone gets it. What is the value of your content to your audience with respect to your brand? Ask 10 people who saw your content what the benefit was, and if they all say the same thing you nailed it.
- 8** **Is it authentic, credible and, most importantly, is it "on brand"?** Your brand needs to have the "right to play" in whatever the content is about; if your brand is not credible in this content area people will shake their head and move on – or worse: switch to another brand.
- 9** **Does it have a clickable call-to-action or some other form to "learn more"?** In an integrated ecosystem you do not want to create any dead ends. So at the very least, your content should lead to the brand website or a central content hub where your audience can find out more about the brand or consume further content. Additionally, you can think about more ROI-relevant mechanisms such as a link to the online shop.
- 10** **Is it clear that your brand is providing the content?** The key reason you employ content is to create additional memory structures for the brand – but of course that will only happen when the brand is clearly present. Using the brand's logo (ideally from the beginning), using other brand assets or the brand's color palette will create a mental connection between brand and content. You may also want to think about an even more blunt approach and use "sponsored by" or "presented by" cut-ins.

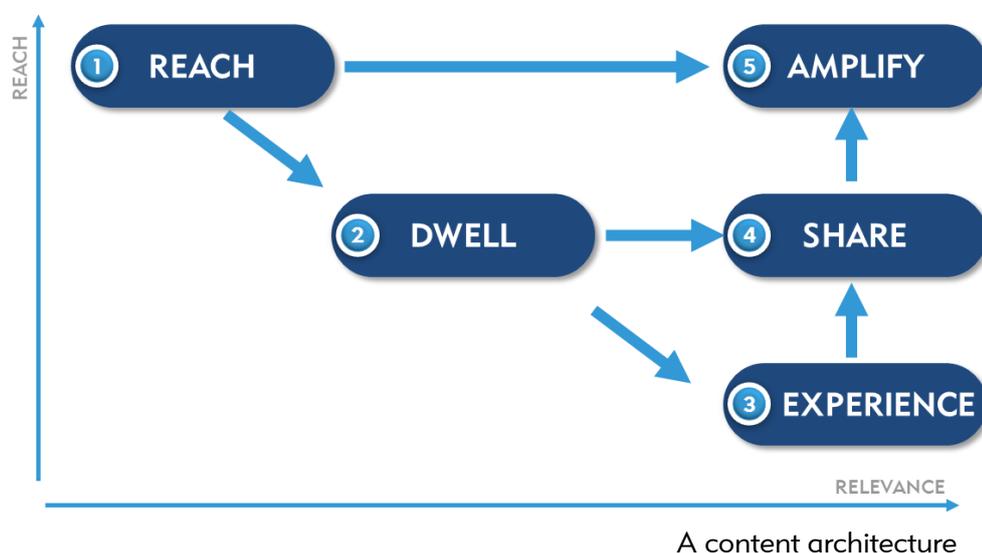
THE CONTENT ARCHITECTURE

In this part of your strategy, we will define the depth of engagement we want to generate with your content. Deep engagement is typically not the most important objective for your content. In order to generate brand growth we usually want to **reach** as many people as possible with your content and build new memory structures with them.

However, in many cases you will find that there are some consumers who are so interested in your content that they want to engage further with it. It would be a wasted opportunity to not allow these people to "dig deeper" – not only because we might miss a chance to engage with them. What's even more important is that if their curiosity is satisfied these people will very likely become brand advocates and will share your content.

And there is yet another level of engagement we might want to explore in your strategy: in some categories, we will have people who really "get into" the content you provide. Fashion bloggers, tech experts, lifestyle gurus or music mavens ... people who are really passionate about your content because it coincides with their field of expertise may actually want to enter into a meaningful dialogue with your brand. It may be worthwhile to provide exclusive content experiences for these people because chances are that you can turn them into Brand Evangelists. This can be extremely beneficial to your brand: brand ambassadors like this will lend massive credibility to your content strategy, they might help you improve the content you provide – and they might even become active in product development or other brand activities.

The following diagram shows how to build a content architecture across Reach and Relevance and provides guidance for media & investment planning:

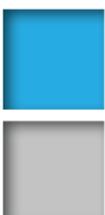


5 LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT WITH CONTENT

1. REACH In most cases you will spend most of your budget behind REACH content; this is the first layer of your content strategy it is what you distribute according to your content calendar
2. DWELL This layer of content is for those who want know more: this can either consist of additional, richer content; e.g., longer videos or interviews; or it can be behind-the-scenes or making-of material. In any case, it has to be interesting enough to really capture people's attention. The key metric behind this content is dwell time. When you produce REACH content you should always make sure you also produce additional DWELL content (sometimes you can go the other way: produce one really long video and then use cutdowns and short edits as REACH content)
3. EXPERIENCE This kind of content is really dependent of the category and your brand; sometimes, an exclusive invitation to your factory or a talk with your developers will be sufficient; or you might think of creating a networking event for opinion leaders. In any case, you will probably not have to put any media investments behind this layer. Engagement here will happen organically if you provide the right content.
4. SHARE People who are more engaged with you content will be inclined to share it with others. We know that shared content – especially when it comes from opinion leaders – is much more effective because it has the additional authority from the sharer. And you can use the knowledge about what content gets shared for the purpose of amplification.
4. AMPLIFY Naturally, you can amplify the most shared content in Bought media; and you can select similar content and boost that as well. Amplifying content should also take up a good part of the budget.

When we build your Content Architecture we need to keep in mind that while it can be very beneficial to engage with people who might eventually become Brand Ambassadors this can also be somewhat challenging: the more interested people are in your content the more demanding they will become. On the deepest level of engagement the content you provide has to add even more value than on the other levels.

Once we have defined the Content Architecture we need to develop the Content Calendar.



CREATING A CONTENT CALENDAR

A Content Calendar is a detailed overview of what content you want to publish when. Creating a content calendar from scratch may seem really complicated and terribly challenging at first – but if you go about it systematically it can actually be quite straightforward.

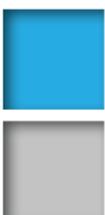
First, we recommend using an actual calendar (or an excel spreadsheet) rather than merely a long list. The benefit is that you can actually visualize how your content will be distributed across the year. This allows you to plan around key events in your industry or important dates; it will help you get a better feeling for production times and project management; and it will quickly show you if your content is distributed evenly or if you have gaps.

Second, it is makes your life a lot easier if you create your content plan well ahead rather than short term. That way you can ensure a consistent flow of content – and it still leaves you resources to react on short notice should something unexpected come up. Looking at the year ahead, you might see several industry or world events that you want to plan content around – the content calendar is a place to store and manage this information.

You must then decide whether to publish content on a daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis. This will depend on how quickly the category moves and many resources you can put behind your content strategy. In some categories, you might have to be more reactive or adaptive; in others it may be sufficient to stick to your initial plan.



Reactive content: #TheDress



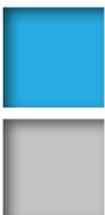
Here is an example of what a template for a Content Calendar might look like:

1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	W/C	World Events	Topic 1 Events	Topic 2 Events	Topic 3 Events	Company Events	Content Item 1	Content Item 2	Content Item 3	Social Activity 1	Social Activity 2	Social Activity 3			Key
2	30. Dez						Topic 1 Blog Post Title			Promote blog post on Facebook, Twitter, Google+					Topic 1
3	06. Jan							Topic 2 Whitepaper		Promote whitepaper on Topic 2 LinkedIn groups					Topic 2
4	13. Jan								Topic 3 Video	Promote video on YouTube, Google+					Topic 3
5	20. Jan														
6	27. Jan														
7	03. Feb														
8	10. Feb														
9	17. Feb														
10	24. Feb														
11	03. Mrz														
12	10. Mrz														
13	17. Mrz														
14	24. Mrz														
15	31. Mrz														
16	07. Apr														
17	14. Apr														
18	21. Apr														
19	28. Apr														
20	05. Mai														
21	12. Mai														
22	19. Mai														
23	26. Mai														
24	02. Jun														
25	09. Jun														
26	16. Jun														

These guidelines will help you putting your calendar into action:

- The first column of the calendar sheets marks date periods in weeks (though you can make this more granular for organizations with daily content publishing activity).
- The second provides space to fill in important calendar events which may affect your publishing schedule (e.g. X-mas, the World Cup, the Oscars).
- The third, fourth, and fifth are for marking important dates for each of your content topics. Such events might include trade shows, conferences, product launches, or other updates. You might need more or less of these columns depending on how many audience types you need to cover.
- The sixth column lets you mark important company events which you might want to publish content on e.g. price changes, product launches, potential award wins, and campaign launches.
- The seventh, eighth, and ninth columns are for scheduling pieces of content – color coded by topic/audience – and the tenth, eleventh and twelfth for scheduling supporting social media activity. Again, you might need more or fewer of these columns depending on how many pieces of content you have the resources to publish in each period.

Designing a long-term content calendar is probably one of the most challenging aspects of your content strategy. The best advice we can give you is to imagine you were running a magazine. Publish your content in a way as to attract readers, schedule regular editorial meetings to make sure your content strategy is still on track and in line with current developments. And be sure to find the right venues to publish your content so that you reach as many people as possible.



STOP BEHAVING LIKE A BRAND, START BEHAVING LIKE A PUBLISHER.

This way of thinking is the key to successful Content Marketing: make people really want your content. Think of yourself as the editor of a magazine and keep the following things in mind:

- Who are your readers and what topics do they want to discuss with each other? What are they really interested in?
- What kind of content would they willing to pay money for? What do they not get any-where else for free? How will your content add value to their lives?
- How deep are they willing to engage with you? Are they just interested in browsing your content? How many are willing to write "letters to the editor" and enter into a discussion with you?
- What will you write about next week and the week after? No reader wants to read the same stories over and over – how will you make sure you capture their attention each week at the newsstand so that they don't grab the other magazine?
- How can you diversify your content? Fewer and fewer people actually buy printed magazines – so how can you re-package your stories in other channels? Perhaps you can even make your content richer if you go from print to digital? How can you reach those who no longer use paper?

And like a publisher make sure you don't give up too soon. More often than not, the investment behind a content strategy (or a new magazine) does not pay off straight away. Because memory structures are not built over night you may not see sales effects immediately. When you create a content strategy you should give yourself enough time for the content to "sink in". Don't expect it to be perfect from the start: keep reviewing your editorial product until you have got it right. Many magazines took years before they had found their place.



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