

Building Your Brand with Content Marketing

Break Through the Noise and Take Your Content to the Next Level



Action Guide

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How to Use Your Action Guide

You'll get the best results from any course you participate in by completing the Action Steps at the end of each module. They will help you apply what you learn directly to your business and your life, maximizing the investment you're making.

Use the following Action Guide to record your answers, insights, and other notes for the Action Steps, which are outlined in your Course Book. You'll want to refer to each module's content as you complete the related steps.

While we have left space in the guide for each action step, you may feel more comfortable using a separate notebook or digital application for your work. Use whatever method you feel most comfortable with and don't feel constrained to using the space in the Action Guide alone.

In addition, your course may have other Action Sheets, such as spreadsheets or planning templates, which are separate from the guide. Look out for those with your other course materials.

Finally, you don't have to complete all the steps at once. Instead, try setting a specific time on your calendar to work on them. And don't feel that you have to get it right the first time. Learning is a process that happens as you apply your new skills and knowledge. You'll want to return periodically to your Action Guide and both remind yourself of the work you've achieved and edit your answers as you see their impact.

Have fun with it and enjoy the progress and successes that will happen as a result of your work!

Introduction

Expectations

Before we start the course, take a minute to think about what you want to get out of it.

Write down three skills you expect to gain.

1	
2	
3	

Module 1 - Reasons You May Not Be Using Content Marketing Yet

1. What is holding you back from doing more content marketing right now? How might you overcome these barriers?

Barriers	How to overcome

Module 2 – Create Your Content Brand Strategy

- **Lesson 1: 5 Keys to Building a Timeless Content Brand**
- **Lesson 2: Putting the 'Marketing' into Your Content Brand**
- **Lesson 3: Gather Your Content Research**
- **Lesson 4: Create Your Content Brand Strategy**

Lesson 1: 5 Keys to Building a Timeless Content Brand

1. Look at the content brands where you get your online or offline content. Make a list of your favorite content providers in the table below.

2. Ask yourself for each item, why do you go to them? How do you feel about these content brands?

Content Provider	Why I Go There	How I Feel About Them
<i>Example: The New York Times blog</i>	<i>Example: High quality, original content every day</i>	<i>Example: Trustworthy and reliable</i>

3. If there are some content providers you've quit going to, why was that?

Content Provider	Why I Don't Go There	How I Feel About Them

<i>Example: Wikipedia</i>	<i>Example: Information can be edited by any user</i>	<i>Example: Not trustworthy on several subjects</i>

4. How do you currently measure up against the above five keys? Which keys are strong and which could use improvement? Take notes on what you can do to improve:

1. Understand Your Customers		
Strengths	Weaknesses	Actions to Take

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2. Serve Your Customers' Needs		
Strengths	Weaknesses	Actions to Take

3. Consistency		
Strengths	Weaknesses	Actions to Take

4. Building Authority		
Strengths	Weaknesses	Actions to Take

5. Always Quality		
Strengths	Weaknesses	Actions to Take

5. Draft your content brand vision in the table below:

<p>How I want to be seen</p>	
<p>How I want to be remembered</p>	
<p>Why people should consume my content over others'</p>	

Lesson 2: Putting the 'Marketing' into Your Content Brand

1. Identify your top 5 content marketing goals. Aside from the possible goals listed, add any other content goals you have.
2. Put your goals into priority order. E.g. driving traffic to your website might higher priority than getting more Likes on your Facebook Page.

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Lesson 3: Gather Your Content Research

1. Conduct research to see where your market consumes content and use the table below to start a list of sources to regularly visit for ideas.

Current Content Sources	Place to Connect
<i>Example: Social Media Examiner</i>	<i>Example: Facebook Pages</i>

2. Find places to connect with your customers online such as social media or forums and add those places to your list of sources, so you can regularly visit and use to check for ideas.
3. Start your idea file by visiting at least 3 of the places you identified in your initial research. Start with the ones where you saw the most discussion happening. Note the topics that were most discussed and some of the biggest issues talked about. Those are the types of ideas you should put in your idea file.

Source	Most discussed topics

Lesson 4: Create Your Content Brand Strategy

1. Use the table to draft your content brand strategy. Make it as short and to-the-point as possible while still including everything essential. Create a separate document if you need more space.

<p>Your brand vision (summarized from earlier)</p>	
<p>Your top content marketing goals (from earlier)</p>	

<p>Your target market</p>	
<p>Your high-level content creation process</p>	
<p>Your monitoring schedule</p>	

Content styles and language guidelines:

Your guidelines are the rules for creating content for your brand.

Include rules on grammar, tone, composition and article length etc.

2. Based on the research you've done so far, identify 7 to 10 content topics to get started with. Use the table below to record your ideas:

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Module 3 – The 6 Types of Content You Need to Create

- **Lesson 1: Text Content**
- **Lesson 2: Visual Content**
- **Lesson 3: Audio**
- **Lesson 4: Video**
- **Lesson 5: Interactive Content**
- **Lesson 6: Stories**

Lesson 1: Text Content

1. Select one of the topics from the list you identified earlier to use for a piece of text content.
2. Select one format of text content and create something based on the topic you identified.

Type of Text Content	Topic Idea	SEO
Step-by-Step	<i>Ex. How to make a PB&J sandwich</i>	<i>Ex. Use keyword "pbj sandwich"</i>
Tips		
Basic Information		
Lists		
News		
Case Studies and Testimonials		
Interviews		
eBooks & Reports		

3. Check your content to make sure it follows the guidelines discussed earlier, including a catchy title, readability, subtitles, one clear topic, and keywords for SEO.



Catchy Title	
Subtitles	
One Clear Topic	
Keywords for SEO	
Article Length Appropriate for Topic	

Lesson 2: Visual Content

1. Brainstorm a list of visual content ideas and start an idea file.

Photographs	
Illustrations	
Infographics	
Memes	
Comics	
Slideshows	
Other:	
Other:	

2. Look at other brands to see what they share and what's the most popular with their audience. Make a list of those in your idea file, along with links to the most popular content.

Brand	Content Shared	Popularity	Link
<i>Ex. Nestle</i>	<i>Ex. Chocolate chip cookie recipe</i>	<i>Ex. Many Facebook shares</i>	

3. Make a list of software and online tools to help you create and edit your visuals. Take note of anything you already own, such as image-editing software.

Software/tools I already have	
Software/tools I need	

4. Now select one format of visual content and create something related to one of the topics you identified earlier. It could also be based on the topic you used in the text-based content you created or something you've created in the past.

Chosen Visual Topic:	
Chosen Visual Form:	

Lesson 3: Audio

1. Brainstorm and list different kinds of audio content you would like to offer.

Podcasts	
Instructional Audio	
Audio Webinars	
Other:	
Other:	

2. Identify the tools and skills you need to produce your own audios.

Tools:	<i>E.g., need better desktop microphone and pop filter</i>
Skills:	<i>E.g., need to learn how to reduce 'ums'</i>

3. Select one format of audio that you can create quickly, such as an inspirational message, an audio version of an article, or a brief interview with a colleague.

Chosen Audio Format:	
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4. Using one of the topics from the list you created earlier, create your audio content. If you don't have top-notch equipment right now, just use the free Audacity software and the microphone on your computer to get started.

Chosen Audio Topic:	
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Lesson 4: Video

1. Select a type of video you would like to create, along with a topic from the list you identified earlier. You can also use the other content you've created so far (text, visual, audio) as the basis for our video.

Demos and Tutorials	
Brand Documentaries	
Promotional Videos	
Product Demos	
Case Studies and Testimonials	
Behind the Scenes	
Webinar or Presentation	
Interview	
Event Videos	
Vlog	

2. If you don't already have some video creation software, check out the free ones available, such as Jing for screen capture videos. Experiment a bit and take note of the features you like or need. Use your notes to help you choose a better video production program for the future.

Software	What I Liked	What I Need
Ex. iMovie	Ex. Very user-friendly	Ex. Customizable features

3. Pick the software or platform you will use for the video you are going to create on your selected topic.

Chosen Video Software/ Platform:	
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4. Write your video outline and/or script and produce your first video. Don't worry if it's not perfect the first time. You don't have to publish it. However, it will show you where you need to improve.

Intro	
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<p>Main Content</p>	
<p>Conclusion & Call to Action</p>	

Lesson 5: Interactive Content

1. Brainstorm what kind of interactive content you could use to engage your audience. Make notes next to each idea on what you would need to implement that content.

Surveys	
Social Media Groups	
Contests	
Interactive Visual Content	
Apps	
User Experience	

2. Select one topic from your list and one form of interactive content that you can create right now, such as a question to your email list or posted on your most popular social media site.

Chosen Interactive Topic:	
Chosen Interactive Form:	

3. Create and publish that content. Then be sure to monitor and respond to the answers and reactions you get.

Date published:	
Monitoring schedule:	
Comments & Responses:	

Lesson 6: Stories

1. Think of a difficulty you overcame that could help your customers and outline the story behind it.

Setting:	
Characters:	
Conflict:	
Resolution	

2. Write your brand story using the elements above of setting, characters, conflict, and resolution.

	Your Brand Story
Setting:	
Characters:	
Conflict:	
Resolution	

3. Select the media you would like to use to communicate your story, such as text, images, video, audio, or even an interactive webinar. It can also be any combination of different media.

Chosen Media for Story:	
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4. Now, produce your story in the media you selected.

4 – Repurpose Your Content

1. Look at what pieces of your content have been popular with your market and make a list using the table below.

Content for Repurposing	Ways to Repurpose
<i>E.g., my guest blog post on relaxation techniques</i>	<i>E.g., audio of techniques, video demo, infographic of all techniques</i>

2. Complete the table above by listing ideas for ways to repurpose some of that content.

3. Select one piece of content from your list and one method of repurposing it. Go ahead and create that new, repurposed content.

Chosen Content for Repurposing:	
Chosen Repurposing Method:	

Module 5 - Spread the Word about Your Content Brand

- **Lesson 1: Where Will You Share Your Content?**
- **Lesson 2: Email - Still the Most Personal Content Marketing Channel**
- **Lesson 3: Social Media - Creating Viral Content**
- **Lesson 4: Mobile Content - Making Your Content Mobile-Friendly**

Lesson 1: Where Will You Share Your Content?

1. Go back and identify the key channels for reaching your audience from the research you did earlier in this course in Module 2, Lesson 3. Remember to look at where your most successful competitors are publishing their content and where your audience is interacting with content.
2. Note the channels that have the most interaction and note them in the table below:

Key Channels for Reaching Your Audience:	

Lesson 2: Email – Still the Most Personal Content Marketing Channel

1. This activity assumes that you already have an email list set up.
 - a. Make a list of the content you’ve already created or plan to create that you can share with your email list via broadcast emails.
 - b. Create a schedule for sharing your content via email.

Content for Broadcast Emails	Schedule
<i>E.g., weekly blog update</i>	<i>Every Friday</i>

- c. For evergreen content, outline and write an autoresponder series in which you share specific pieces of existing content on a pre-scheduled basis. These can be emails that you add to an existing autoresponder series or a brand new one for people who are just signing up for your list or buying a product.

Content for Autoresponder Series	When to Send
<i>E.g., Video: How to set up your tent</i>	<i>Immediately after tent purchase</i>

Lesson 3: Social Media - Creating Viral Content

1. Find out what social media sites your customers or potential customers use. You should already have a list from your earlier research. Join these sites to get a feel for them and make a list of the pros and cons of using them to share your content.

Social Media	Pros	Cons

2. Find ten examples of viral content in your market. One easy way to do this is to search your main keywords on a site like YouTube and look at which videos have an extremely high view count.
3. Try to determine what made them go viral. What emotions do they evoke in people? Why did people feel compelled to share them? Write your notes next to each of the 10 examples so that you can refer to them when creating your own content.

Viral Content	Emotions Evoked	Why It's Shared
<i>Ex. YouTube video</i>	<i>Ex. Happiness, joy</i>	<i>Ex. Desire to spread joy</i>

4. Now go back to the content you created before. Make notes on where you can improve that content to give it a higher chance of being shared and going viral.

Content	Improvements

Lesson 4: Mobile Content - Making Your Content Mobile-Friendly

1. Test some of your current content on a smartphone and tablet. Test a variety of content to see how it looks, noting what needs to be changed and how you'll change it.

Content	What Doesn't Work	How To Change It
<i>Ex. Your blog</i>	<i>Ex. Graphics are too small</i>	<i>Ex. Make them larger</i>

Lesson 5: Going Global - Expanding Your Content into New Markets

1. Do you have an international audience? Identify the countries where your current customers and/or content consumers are from. You can do this via your Google analytics or any other analytics program you are using.

	Countries
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

2. Now go back and look at the content you created previously in this course. Where do you need to make edits to make it more easily consumed by your biggest international audience?

Content	Optimize for Globalization

Module 6 – Review & Refine

1. Review all the worksheets you completed in the course and the content you created.
2. If necessary, make revisions to your Content Brand Strategy, now that you've learned more about your audience throughout the course.
3. Enter the content you created during the course into your Editorial Calendar. Use the one provided or create your own version.
4. Review the Content Brand Visibility Checklist on the next page. It lists the main action steps from the course that help you maximize the effectiveness of your content when it comes to building your brand.

Content Brand Visibility Checklist



Identify your content marketing goals	
Identify where your market consumes content	
Conduct research to find out what your customers want and need in content	
Start an idea file	
Create your content strategy document (brand vision, target market, content goals, content creation process, and monitoring schedule)	
Do keyword research for content SEO	
Create 6 types of content (text, visual, audio, video, interactive, stories)	
Measure your content against the 5 Keys to Building a Timeless Content Brand	
Repurpose your content in multiple ways	

Identify the channels where you'll share each piece of content	
Create a plan for sharing content via email	
Identify which social media platforms you will use for sharing content	
Check your content to see if it's mobile-friendly	
Identify opportunities to go global	
Create an ongoing Editorial Calendar for creating all 6 types of content.	
Monitor your results	

5. After reviewing the checklist, use the Action Plan table below to plan your next steps.

	Action to Take	Action Deadline
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		