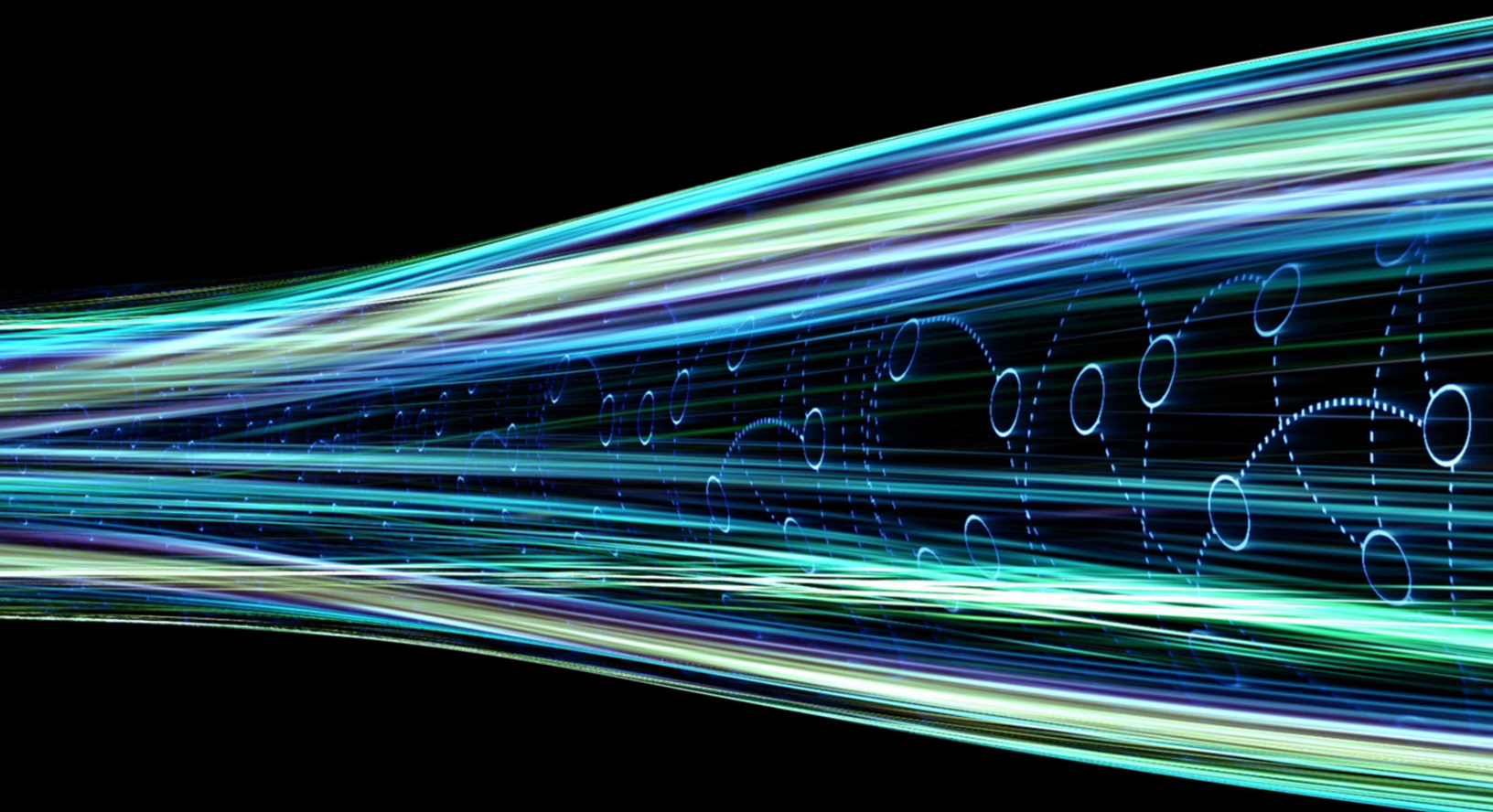




# B2B Content Marketing Strategy Checklist



Dymic Digital presents:

**A Comprehensive Guide for B2B  
Marketing Departments**

# Content Strategy: Part 1

## *Goals, Personas & Sphere of Expertise*



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## *Creation, Distribution & Measurement*



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# Why Content Marketing?

*Because traditional B2B Sales and Marketing models are being fundamentally re-written.*

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## WHEN BUYERS WERE ISOLATED AND FACT STARVED, INTERRUPTIVE SALES AND “BROADCAST STYLE” MARKETING TACTICS WERE EFFECTIVE.

But today's buyers have Google search—the new source from which seller information flows—and they decide if and when sales has a part to play. In fact, according to a recent Accenture survey, only 12% of B2B buyers even want to meet with a sales representative.

Now, B2B buyers do most of their research online, and they value suppliers who make it easier for them to navigate the purchase process. When there is an interaction with sales, it is much more consultative—with sellers providing helpful information about products and services via case studies, white-papers, and other buyer-driven content.

Today's companies need to *earn the right to sell* by making themselves useful throughout the buyer's journey. In the new B2B world order, marketing is the engine, content is the fuel, and thought leadership wins the buyer's attention. This makes content offerings—for each stage of the journey—essential to helping the buyer through their decision-making process, and ultimately conversion.

**Moreover, it means content marketing is critical to B2B sales and marketing success and business growth.**

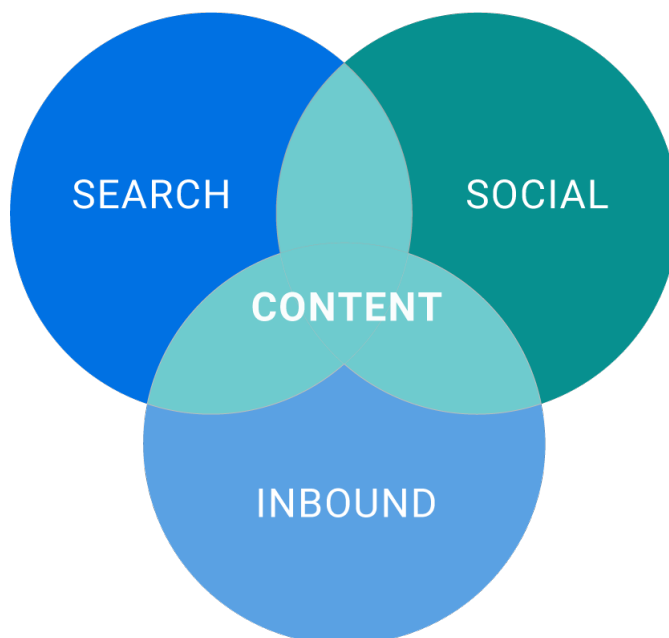
- 62% of B2B buyers say they can make a purchase selection based solely on digital content
- Almost 90% of the buyer's journey is complete before engaging a vendor

# Content is *Critical* to B2B Marketing Success

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**CONTENT MARKETING WORKS BECAUSE IT STARTS WITH WHAT YOUR PROSPECTS NEED TO KNOW—INSTEAD OF WHAT YOU NEED TO TELL THEM.**

In a world where buyers are inundated with advertisements, nothing matters more than content that addresses the buyer's challenges, needs, and concerns because people care about their problems more than they care about products or services. That's why you need to capture your expertise, package it, and distribute it through the three most important B2B marketing pillars: search, social, and inbound.



## Search

High-quality content is what earns backlinks, and it's what search engines crawl on a website. Great content moves you up the search rankings.

## Social

Social Media offers a way to differentiate, demonstrate authenticity, and build trust. It's an opportunity for you to connect with your buyers.

## Inbound

The Inbound Strategy produces more qualified, sales-ready leads for a fraction of the traditional outbound sales and marketing costs.

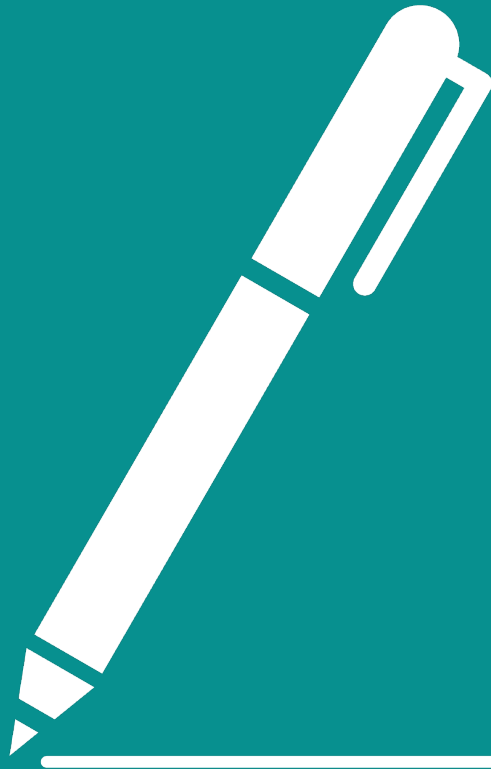






# Part 1

*Goals, Personas & Sphere of Expertise*



Let's Get Started



# Business Goals

*Setting goals will help you create content with a purpose. Tracking goals will drive performance.*

- ☐ Describe what your business wants to accomplish in the next 12 months

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- ☐ Capture marketing's role and what it needs to achieve in the next 12 months

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Set clear goals, identify the metrics you'll be tracking for each, and build them into your analytics.



Business goals are essential to keeping your entire organization focused on desirable outcomes and to ensure everyone is supporting your company's priorities.

With this in mind, prioritize the things content marketing can do to help you achieve these goals, including:

- ☐ Build Awareness
- ☐ Establish Company Expertise
- ☐ Educate Buyers
- ☐ Generate New Leads
- ☐ Nurture Leads to Purchase
- ☐ Up-Sell or Cross-Sell Customers
- ☐ Serve Existing Customers

# Target Audience

*Briefly describe each buyer persona.*

## Persona #1

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## Persona #2

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## Persona #3

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## Persona #4

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**Example: Here's target persona #1 for our B2B Content Marketing Strategy Checklist:**

Tom Jones, Age 45

CEO of a 100-400m dollar legacy company

Type A, looking for answers, results-oriented

Believes in the power of thought-leadership

His sales are flattening out, has growth problems

We recommend using brief, visual personas with psychographics and demographics. The goal is to get in the buyer's shoes: list their gender, role, age, interests, questions, challenges, ambitions, prejudices, etc.

# Buying Stages

*Each piece of content should help a prospect move to the next stage of the purchase journey*

Awareness	Consideration	Decision
.....		
Persona:		
.....	.....	.....
#1		
.....	.....	.....
#2		
.....	.....	.....
#3		
.....	.....	.....
#4		
.....	.....	.....

It will be helpful to list the questions buyers have in each stage of the buying process. Then you can develop content that answers their questions for the stage you are targeting.

For the content you're reading now, the questions we're trying to answer are: "How do I develop a content strategy?" or "What kind of content should we produce?".

Some content pieces can serve in multiple stages. But you do need to think of the progression – to encourage people to move through your funnel. *That's the lead-nurturing mindset.*



# Trigger Events

*What events within a company might trigger interest in your solutions?*

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Personas .....

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Trigger Event:

.....  
#1 .....

.....  
#2 .....

.....  
#3 .....

.....  
#4 .....

**Example: For our B2B Content Marketing Strategy Checklist, a trigger event might be:**

A B2B Company just hired a new CMO  
.....

The CEO announces new digital strategy  
.....

Prospect launches a new website  
.....

*Search and social (tweets and/or questions on social platforms) are two ways to learn about these three triggers.*

You can research new trigger events, for little to no cost, by leveraging press releases, websites, and newswires.

Understanding trigger events can help you develop timely and relevant messages.

# Sphere of Expertise

*The most effective content comes from a very specific, clearly delineated sphere of expertise.*

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This is the area where you have the most authority - where no one has a better claim on expertise. Some call it your company “sweet spot.” In what area do you have the most authority? *What does your company do better than anyone else?* How does this authority help your target audience? *Why should your audience care?* What will your audience get from listening to your perspective? *What problems will be solved?* It doesn’t have to be complex; just specific:

Write out your company’s sweet spot:

.....

.....

.....

## Sweet Spot Examples:

.....

We’re radically transforming IT with technologies that make your business more agile, efficient, and profitable. (VMWare)

.....

We’re experts at creating digital strategies that use content marketing to generate new revenue for traditional B2B companies. (Dymic)

.....

Your sphere of expertise is the intersection between your customer’s pain points and requirements, what you’re really good at (your strengths), and your competitor’s weaknesses—to provide the best possible competitive outcome.

# Content Themes

*Themes or “topic clusters” are broader in scope, and represent areas you want to start owning.*

Content themes act as high-level buckets that align your company’s goals with your audience’s needs and guide your brainstorming and content planning efforts. Choosing a limited selection of themes when you’re planning content ensures you focus on topics that meet your audience’s needs while representing your company’s sphere of expertise.

Criterion:	1	2	3	4
Theme:				
#1				
#2				
#3				
#4				

Here are some of the benefits to this approach:

- **Brand Authority:** You can strengthen your brand and gain authority as an expert in your chosen areas.
- **Better SEO:** Limiting your content’s breadth helps search engines more easily categorize your site, and it also helps buyers find the information they need.
- **Easier Topic Ideas:** Limiting content to themes can make it easier to come up with topic ideas, as you won’t be paralyzed by too many choices.

Your themes should focus on that cross-section where your company’s subject matter expertise meets your customer’s informational expectations.



# Content Audit

*A well-executed content audit can deliver big insights into your content marketing strategy.*

A content audit involves looking at the content on your website to assess its relative strengths, weaknesses, and to identify gaps so you can prioritize your future marketing activities. It's a qualitative assessment and evaluation based on the KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). An audit will tell you where you need to focus future SEO and content marketing efforts, and it can even help you improve your lead generation, sales, and marketing processes.

Existing Content	Persona(s)	Buying Stage	Notes
.....	.....	.....	.....
#1	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....
#2	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....
#3	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....
#4	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....

When performed correctly, a good audit will help you answer these questions:

- Which pieces are performing best?
- What topics connect with your audience?
- Which pieces are outdated or have overstayed their welcome?

Too often, we post something and then never go back to it again. Years later, it's outdated, stale, and irrelevant. Good practice demands that we return to our content periodically. Include everything that can be used or repurposed: blog posts, sales decks, videos, and webinars.

# SEO Keywords & Phrases

*Content with targeted keywords and phrases will improve your visibility on search engines.*

SEO Strategy and Content Strategy have converged, and Dymic is using content marketing to boost SEO metrics and vice versa. While content marketing and SEO are two different tactics, they should not be thought of antagonistically. It's not one or the other, but rather both working together to help each other.

Keypphrase:

1

2

3

4

Topic:

#1

#2

#3

#4

**Don't forget:** Today's B2B buyer thinks and searches in long-tail keyword phrases. (Short-tail keywords are only 1-2 words long, and long-tail keyword phrases are 4-5 words. Those extra words can have a massive impact on your SEO results.) Thinking and writing in long-tail keyword phrases should sound natural. If it feels forced or awkward, you may be trying to use too many words.

It's a good idea to choose SEO keywords and phrases before picking a topic. **But it's critical when it comes to writing copy for your content.**

# Content Calendar

*The content calendar is your production and delivery schedule organized in one place.*

Daily View

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	<div><div><div></div></div><div>DYMIC</div></div> <div>Content Marketing Calendar</div>									
2	Publish Date	Due Date	Author	Content Title	Buyers Journey Stage	Funnel Stage	Format/ Type	Buyer Persona(s)	Keyword(s) Phrases	Offer/CTA
3	1/1/19	12/29/18	Copywriter Cathy	Why Content Marketing Is So Critical	Awareness	Lead	blog post	Marketing Mary	Content marketing, content calendar, B2B content marketing strategy, etc.	Download B2B Content Marketing Strategy Checklist
4	1/2/19									
5	1/3/19									
6	1/4/19	12/30/18	Designer Debbie	B2B Content Marketing Strategy Checklist	Consideration	MQL	ebook	Marketing Mary		Schedule B2B marketing consultation call
7	1/5/19	12/31/18	Strategist Steve	B2B Marketing Presentation Deck	Decision	SQL	Webinar	CEO Charlie & Marketing Team		Send B2B Marketing Proposal
8	1/6/19									
9	1/7/19									
10	1/8/19									
11	1/9/19									
12	1/10/19									
13	1/11/19									
14	1/12/19									
15	1/13/19									
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35	2/2/19									
36	2/3/19									
37	2/4/19									
38	2/5/19									
39	2/6/19									
40	2/7/19									
41	2/8/19									
42	2/9/19									
43	2/10/19									

Planning is an essential step to finding success within your content – in both efficiency and relevancy. Creating consistently great content goes hand in hand with the strategic use of an editorial calendar. If you don't have one, your content marketing will become *ad hoc* rather than strategic.

If your organization needs a content calendar template, see our [Content Marketing Resource Center](#) for a downloadable content calendar template.





# Content Strategy Statement

When building a content strategy, it's essential to start with a singular, defined focus or what is known as your "content strategy statement." The goal is to unify your business's online experience under a clear, inspiring, and memorable statement of purpose that will connect your business goals with your audience's needs and align your content team.



**NOTE:** Think of it as a guide for your content, against which all your online channels can be driven, guided, and measured.

## Part 2

*Creation, Distribution & Measurement*



Let's Create Your Next Piece

# Content Topics

*Topics are the individual ideas that support each of your themes. It's where you get specific.*

A content topic refers to the main subject of discussion and usually involves a compelling title. It should address pain points, provide solutions, and answer questions for your audience. If the theme is SEO, a topic might be "5 Big Mistakes in B2B SEO" or "How B2C SEO differs from B2B." So for each cell in your persona/buying stage matrix, you need to generate topic ideas.

Criterion:	1	2	3	4
Theme:				
#1				
#2				
#3				
#4				

**For our B2B Content Marketing Strategy Checklist, the theme was content marketing strategy. The criteria for a topic within this theme were:**

- Practical, usable, and "How-To" oriented
- Educational and informative
- Sharable
- Clear, concise, and more comprehensive than other content marketing strategy checklists

Topics should be unique, simple, and interesting to draw the attention of the reader. Also, just like you did in the 'themes' section, decide on your content success criteria and score each topic against them.

# Medium (Media)

*The medium can make or break your message.*

The medium or media used to share a message is sometimes more important than the message. It filters a message in a way that can significantly influence how it is interpreted. After choosing your topic, you want to decide what media would be best for your content. Then prioritize according to the scope, if it should be gated behind a download form, sharability, etc.

☐ Blog Post

☐ Guest Post

☐ eBook

☐ White Paper

☐ eNewsletter

☐ eChecklist

☐ Webinar

☐ Video

☐ Interview / Chalk Talk

☐ Demo / Documentary

☐ Animation

☐ Curated Piece

☐ Customer Interview

☐ Survey / Contest

☐ Slideshare or Prezi

☐ Infographic

☐ Article

☐ Live Event

☐ eChecklist

☐ Other

.....

☐ Other

.....

We recommend developing a mix of media and creating new things to keep it interesting. Sometimes, the media itself can be the message.



# Information Sources

*Questions are more powerful than answers.*

Once you've decided on a topic, you'll need to research and validate your ideas. The goal is to create content that solves problems and answers your buyer's questions about your company, product, service, and industry. Asking the right questions leads to creating content with high-value answers. Here's a list of resources you might use:

☐ Existing Internal Content

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☐ In-house Experts

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☐ Existing External Content

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☐ Customers

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☐ Known Sites & Resources

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☐ Google, Social Forums, Etc.

☐ Original Research

☐ Crowdsourcing

☐ Commission An Expert

The media format you choose will influence where you should go to source information (e.g., eBooks will probably need different content than infographics).

## Style & Tone of Voice

*The way a brand sounds is just as important as the way it looks. Let's define how your brand speaks.*

Knowing who you're trying to reach and how you want to communicate will set the standard for your style, voice, and tone. Who's your audience? What personas are you targeting? Do you want to be conversational and speak in the second-person ("you" and "we")? Good. Write it down. Recording your organization's brand voice is part of putting together a comprehensive style guide that should be shared across your business.

- ☐ Try to define your brand voice in three words (for example: conversational, educational, professional).

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- ☐ Make a list of design guide pieces for reference and inspiration:

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- ☐ Make a list of copy style guide pieces for reference and inspiration:

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NOTE: Like any relationship, people want to be heard. They want to know someone is listening and communicating in a relevant, empathetic, and human way.

In branding work, people often think about how a brand looks visually, from fonts to colors to design styles. Brand voice is often overlooked. So ask yourself: If your brand was a person, what personality traits would it have? What traits should you actively avoid? Who is your brand online? How can your voice be more consistent and recognizable?



# Distribution Channels

*How you distribute your content is as important as the content itself, if not more important.*

First, it's important to understand the three types of distribution channels—owned, paid, and earned. To succeed in today's context-inundated world, you need to share your content in a way that strategically maximizes traffic, builds backlinks effectively, and encourages social shares outside of your company—beyond the usual social media platforms. How you share your content with your audience depends on what digital distribution channels you use, how you market to your audience, and what you're willing to spend.

## Your Channels:

- ☐ Your Website
- ☐ Your Blog
- ☐ Your e-Newsletter
- ☐ Your Resource Library (PDF's, ebooks)
- ☐ Cross Promotion
- ☐ Email

## Social Media Channels:

- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Google+
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ YouTube

## Influencers, Bloggers & Partners:

- ☐ Tweets
- ☐ Mentions
- ☐ Reposts
- ☐ Recommendations
- ☐ Product or Service Reviews
- ☐ Search Engines

## Paid Media Channels:

- ☐ PPC - Google Ads
- ☐ LinkedIn & Facebook
- ☐ Banner Ads
- ☐ Direct Mail & Print Media
- ☐ Media Partner Webinar
- ☐ Cost-Per-Lead Services

Thinking about this before you create your content can maximize your reach and impact, and it's also good to consider as a post-creation checklist.



# Lead Nurturing

*Maintain relationships with potential customers throughout each phase in the buyer's journey.*

In a landscape where cutting through the noise and establishing trust is everything, it's essential to deliver timely, relevant content with a consistent voice and value, while also considering the prospect's pace throughout the buyer's journey (instead of just sending it to everyone in your database).

By developing a lead nurture campaign with the right marketing automation process, you'll create intuitive, adaptive communications at scale. Then you can measure the interest and behavior of your buyers as they interact with your brand so you can ensure future campaigns become increasingly more relevant, and ultimately, more profitable.

## Lead Nurturing Checklist:

- ☐ Meet with your Sales Department to define a sales-ready lead.
- ☐ Decide how to score your leads based on buying stage, interest, and behavior.

- ☐ Implement your marketing automation platform. If you don't have one, now is the time to get one.
- ☐ Map your content to your buyer personas and stages in the buyer's journey.
- ☐ Design the flow of content for each new prospect pipeline/segment.
- ☐ Start sending inbound prospects into your new lead-nurturing process.
- ☐ Measure the interest and behavior of potential buyers to refine your content and your lead-nurturing campaigns.

Here's an example of a 5-step nurture:

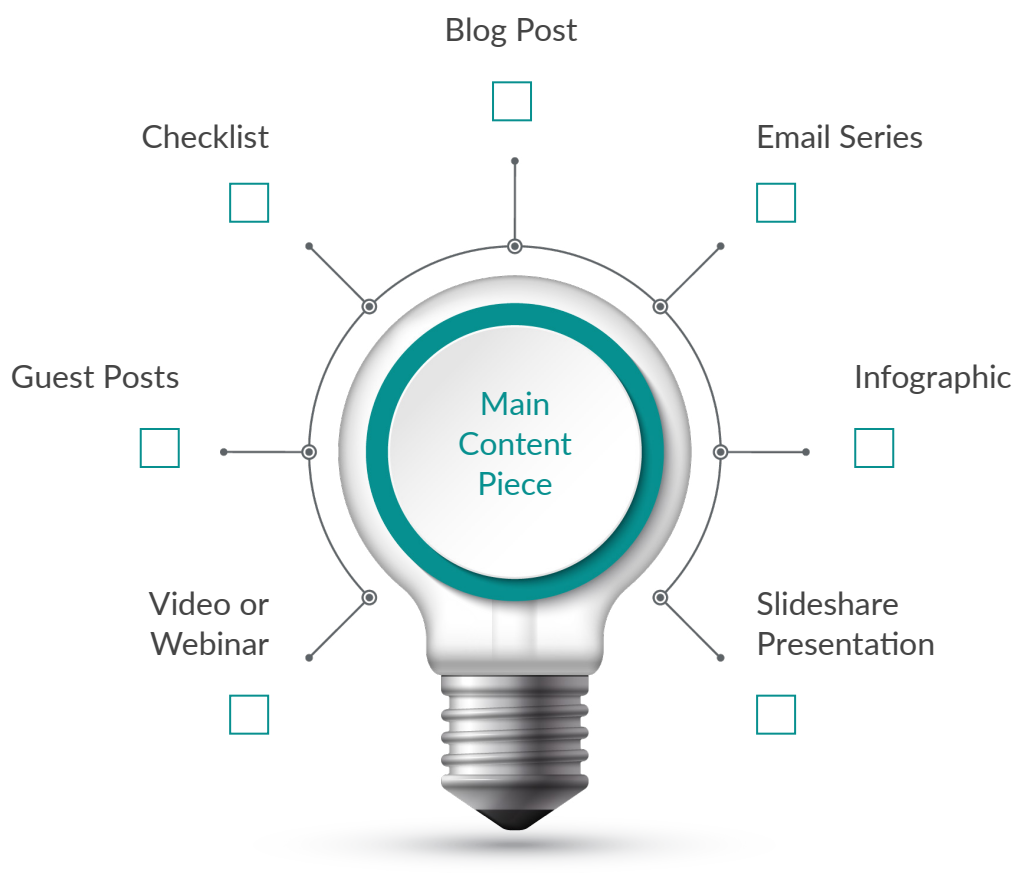
1. Thank you for visiting our website.
2. Here's our B2B Marketing eBook.
3. Like it? Check out our B2B Content Marketing Strategy Checklist.
4. Need content like the stuff you just experienced? Let's talk.
5. Need help? Schedule a B2B marketing strategy call with us.



# Content Atomization

*If your audience is everywhere, shouldn't you be?*

Content atomization is taking one large piece of content and breaking it down (versioning it) into smaller pieces for different mediums and channels. Doing this enables you to cover more ground with less effort, and by spreading it in various ways, you can increase your odds of reaching your target audience on the platform of their choice. Moreover, each element in your marketing mix complements the other, elevates the campaign as a whole, and creates a cross-media-multiplier (CMM) effect.



Plan your atomization as you create each major content piece. Then, put all the other versions into your content calendar. Don't forget to link the smaller versions back to the main content piece – using the right key phrases as anchor text.

# Measure & Optimize.

## *Identify success factors and calculate ROI.*

If you want to be a successful content marketer, it's not enough to do what you think is effective—you must objectively measure what you're doing and take corrective actions. If you keep things too consistent or predictable, your campaign will stagnate. Experimentation in marketing is vital to long-term success; that's why the best content marketers live in analytics. It's your tool to determine what's working and what isn't.

### **Define what success means and establish KPIs:**

- ☐ Make sure all URLs are tagged
- ☐ Build test landing pages, campaigns, etc.
- ☐ Set goals and create custom reports in your analytics
- ☐ Set up advanced segments to track each channel and campaign
- ☐ Optimize and ramp up what's working (and remove what isn't)
- ☐ Measure and report campaign ROI

### **Content Marketing Metrics that generate ROI:**

- ☐ Qualified Leads
- ☐ Sales (of course)
- ☐ Website Traffic
- ☐ Onsite Engagement
- ☐ Improved SEO Rankings
- ☐ Social Media Engagement
- ☐ Exposure & Authority

Remember, the process of setting and achieving goals is ongoing. It's something you should revisit, modify, and adjust as you gather more information about how your buyers interact with your campaigns.

# Overview & Advice

*Content marketing isn't a one-and-done tactic.*

Many B2B marketers are using content marketing to lessen their reliance on traditional tactics and generate more leads for less money. But that means you will be competing against a steady stream of new content from your competitors. To succeed, you'll need to create content that's *compelling, on-strategy, and capable of inciting action*. Moreover, you have to deliver it in a consistent, ongoing program because content marketing is a strategic, long-term approach—not a one-and-done marketing tactic.

## TRIGGER EVENTS

Think about the events within your target company that might trigger interest in your solutions.

## SPHERE OF EXPERTISE

The most effective content comes from your sphere of expertise (your company's sweet spot).

## CONTENT AUDIT

Take inventory of what you have and look for gaps.

## Discover

### GOALS

Start with your big goals and work your way down.

### TARGET AUDIENCES

Summarize and prioritize each buyer persona.

### BUYING STAGES

List buyer questions for each stage. Then create content that answers those questions.

## Delineate

### CONTENT THEMES

Choose an area you want to start owning.

### SEO KEYPHRASES

Pick your keyphrases before you pick a topic and especially before you start writing.

### CONTENT CALENDAR

Place your production and delivery schedule in one sheet.

## STRATEGY STATEMENT

Start with a singular, defined focus to unify your business's online experience.

## CONTENT TOPICS

Pick topics that address pain points, provide solutions, and answer the buyer's questions.

## MEDIUM (MEDIA)

Decide what media would be best for your content.

# Develop

## INFORMATION SOURCES

List the resources you'll use to research and validate your ideas.

## STYLE & TONE OF VOICE

Define the communication standard for your brand.

## DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

Maximize your reach and impact with a post-creation checklist.

## — Parting Advice —

- *Start with what your prospects need to know (rather than what you want to say).*
- *Stick to your sphere of expertise (where your company is the expert).*
- *Make sure your content ideas consider the buyer's search intent (every search query has intent behind it).*
- *Less is more in content marketing (it's better to produce a few major, high-value pieces than a ton of low-value items).*
- *Always live by the numbers (become an analytics expert—or hire one. It's too competitive to be flying blind).*

# Deliver

## LEAD NURTURING

Use marketing automation to create intuitive, adaptive communications at scale.

## ATOMIZATION

Cover more ground with less effort and create a CMM effect.

## MEASURE & OPTIMIZE

Identify success, refine your content, and calculate ROI.

# It was a pleasure to meet you :-)

*We hope you'll take this priceless  
experience and apply it to your  
next content marketing strategy,  
campaign, or piece of content.*

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DYMIC IS A NEW BREED OF AGENCY—ONE THAT IS PART BRAND CONSULTANCY,  
PART CREATIVE AGENCY, AND PART DIGITAL MARKETING POWERHOUSE.

Working with speed, precision, and ingenuity, we empower our clients with the digital strategy, creative expertise, and buyer insights to compete and win in a fast-changing, increasingly digital world. Driven by a people-first philosophy, we help brands connect with their audience, differentiate through experience, and thrive in the future.

## LET'S CONNECT

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