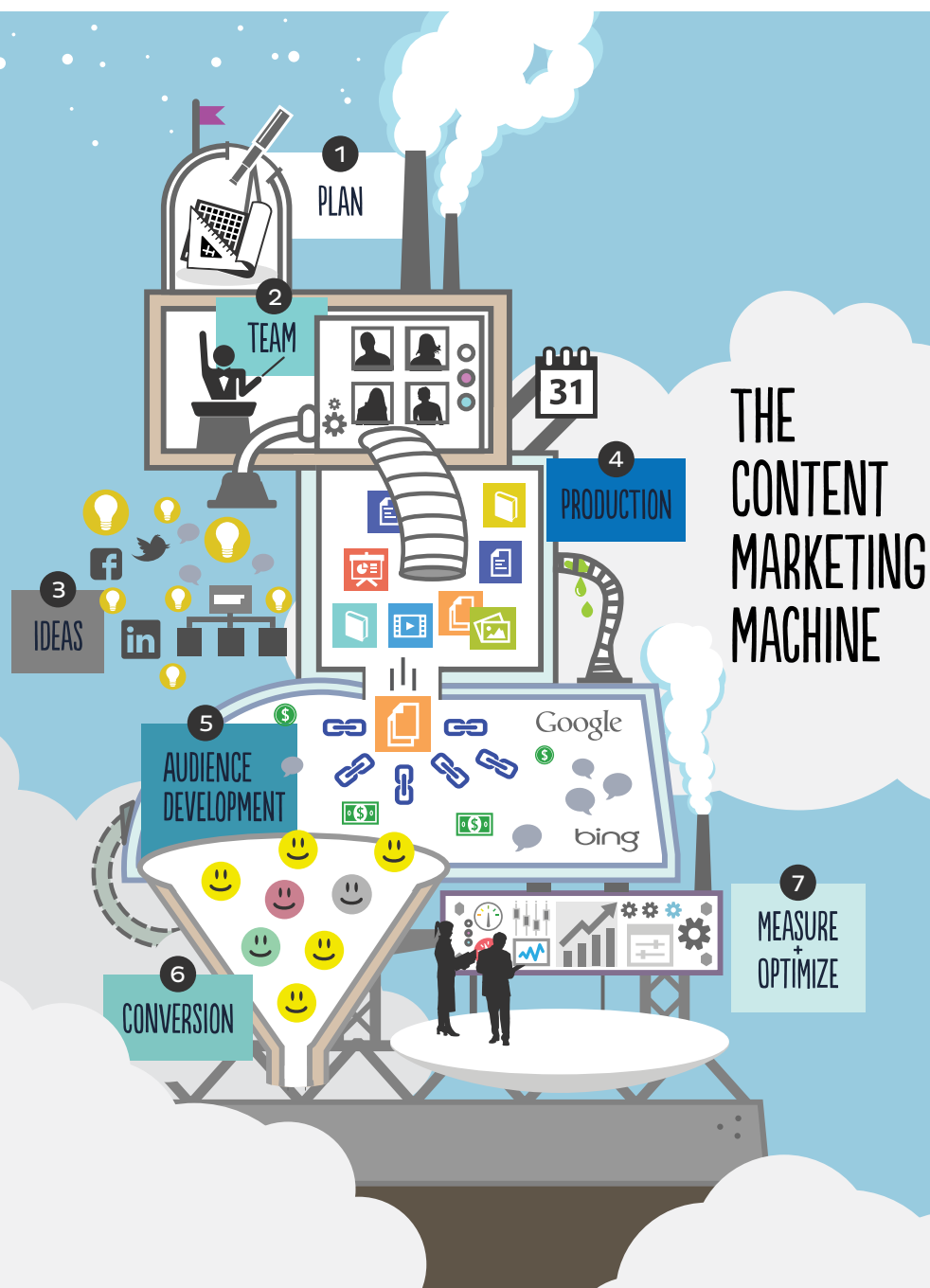


HOW TO BUILD AND OPERATE A CONTENT MARKETING MACHINE



THE CONTENT MARKETING MACHINE

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INTRODUCTION

THE MARKETING WORLD has been turned upside down. It was not many years ago that marketers were still focused on interruption marketing: trying to place their product message in front of prospects' attention to generate leads and customers. But through the Internet, this has quickly changed, and marketers recognize they must practice the opposite. Now, in order to create the relationship and earn the permission to sell to prospects, companies must produce relevant thought leadership content, not only content about their own product.

The critical ingredient to creating engagement, trust, and thought leadership positioning is content. Content is what attracts prospects at the top of the funnel and content is what nurtures leads down the funnel.

Marketers now understand that brands must become publishers. The “why” of content marketing is no longer in question. But marketers are still asking “how?” How can marketing departments generate the high quality and quantity of content necessary to succeed in the new marketing era?

This eBook will explain how marketers can build and operate a Content Marketing Machine that outputs compelling, relevant content that attracts leads at the top of the funnel and leads them down it. The eBook outlines a Content Marketing Machine framework developed by [Kapost](#), the leading provider of [content marketing software](#). It then profiles how [Marketo](#), one of the pioneers of content marketing and one of its leading practitioners, operates its own content marketing both at the top of the funnel and moving down it, using its own marketing automation software to promote content and nurture leads. The eBook also provides perspectives from other content marketing leaders on the different stages. Lastly, the eBook concludes with worksheets that walk step-by-step through the process of building and running your own Content Marketing Machine.

THE MACHINE

FIRST, let's take a look at an overview of the machine, all of its components, smokestacks and parts, so that you can see the big picture of what you're going to build and operate:



MACHINE OVERVIEW

Here's a description of the different components of the machine:

- **Plan:** Create a strategic structure for your content marketing
- **Team:** Assemble the group to manage your content marketing operation
- **Ideas:** Generate a steady flow of ideas for your content
- **Production and Distribution:** Assemble your content and distribute it across the web
- **Audience Development:** Generate traffic to your content
- **Conversion & Nurture:** Convert visitor to leads, nurture them to opportunities
- **Measure & Optimize:** Analyze and improve performance

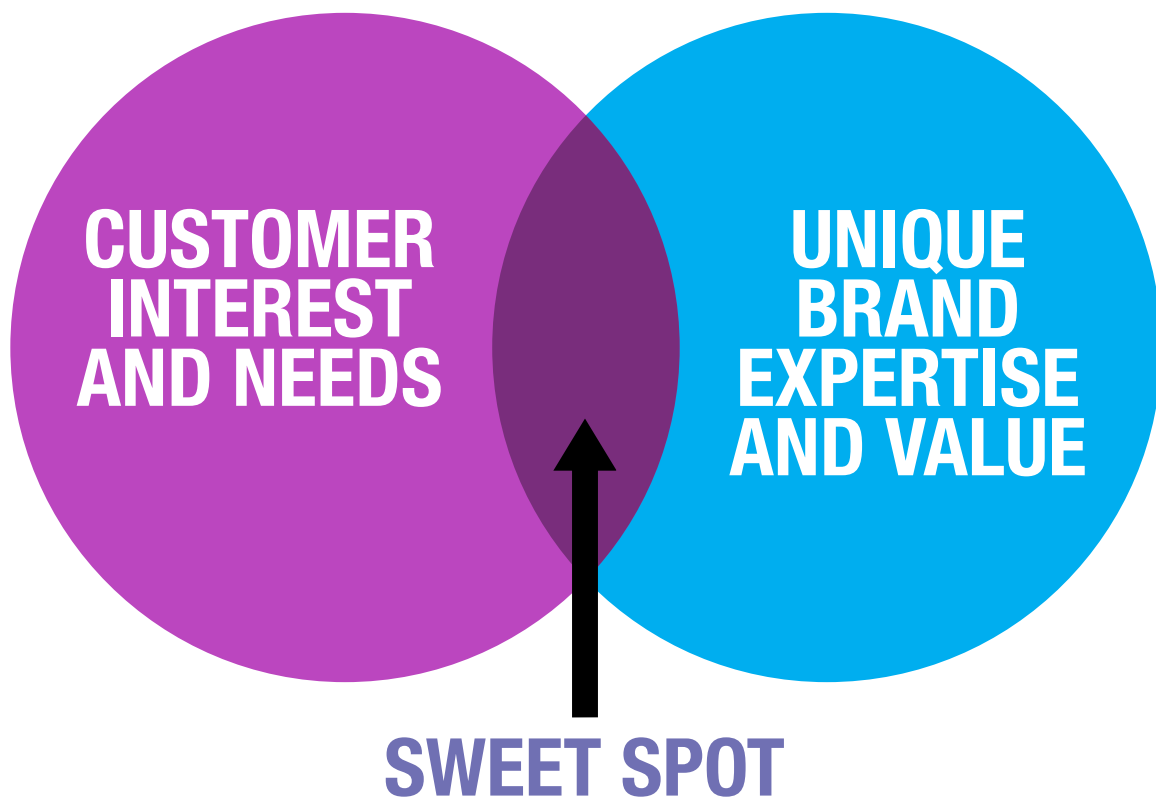
Now we'll review each component in detail, starting with the Plan.

PLAN



THE OBJECTIVE of the Content Marketing Machine is to output content that pulls prospects from where they are today, moves them through the buying process, and converts them to closed customers. The Plan stage breaks that objective down into its component parts defined by persona and buying stage, and lays out a strategy for each part.

First, consider your overall topic positioning. What exactly should you create content about? The answer lies somewhere between the interests of your customers and your unique expertise.



So your content—at least at the top of the funnel—should focus on this intersection, called your “Sweet Spot.”

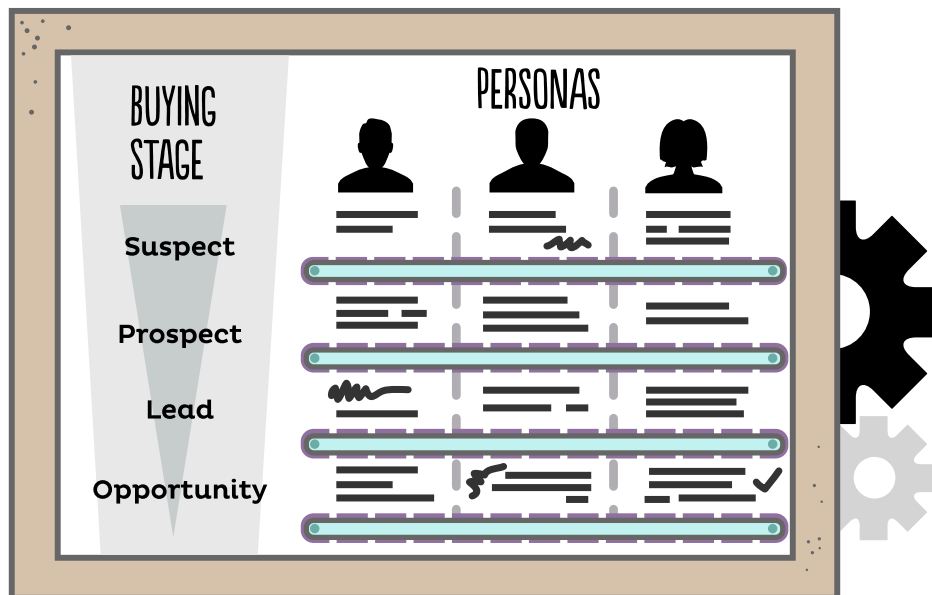
This sweet spot serves the following purposes:

- It pulls in prospects, because the content addresses their interests
- It is a subject matter that your organization knows and has authority and credibility around
- While the top of funnel content here is not about your product, it is pointing toward your product and thus directs prospects to their journey down the funnel

Next create a matrix with your buyer personas across the X-axis and your buying stages across the Y-axis. This structure demystifies content marketing into a very simple approach: **each piece of content should have an objective of attracting a persona to a stage and moving them on to the next.** Complete your grid by answering the following questions for each cell:

- What are the persona's issues and concerns at this stage?
- What questions does the persona need to answer at this stage?
- What topics and categories would answer these questions?
- What are some sample headlines and titles for the content in this topic?

Summarize your answers to these questions in their proper location in the grid. Once completed it will look like this:



So through this process you've built out the framework that will drive your machine. But too many marketers make this a one-time exercise that then gets put on the shelf. Instead, make it a living document and see your first Content Plan as your first hypothesis. Your focus as you move forward should be to gather feedback and data that better informs your understanding of your personas' needs at different stages and evolves your Plan into an ever-more effective structure for your efforts. (We'll discuss this more in the Measure & Optimize section).

PLAN: MARKETO MACHINE

MARKETO targets a set of senior-level personas for its content. Each piece of content it produces speaks to one or more of the following personas:

- Marketing Operations Practitioner
- VP of Marketing / CMO
- VP of Sales
- CEO

Marketo also organizes its content by buying cycle stage, using these categories:

- **Early:**
Prospect has no indicated interest in Marketo; content must be about prospect interests
- **Mid:**
Prospect has indicated some interest in Marketo; is being nurtured through marketing automation
- **Late:**
Prospect has strong interest in Marketo; is being managed by Sales team
- **Post Purchase:**
Prospect is a Marketo customer; goal is customer satisfaction and Marketo brand advocacy

PLAN SIDEBAR: KELLY SERVICES

With 15 years experience in the human resources and workforce consulting space, Todd has overall responsibility for thought leadership and global marketing initiatives at Kelly Services. Kelly provides staffing, outsourcing and consulting services, generating \$5 billion in revenue annually.



Below Todd shares how he and Kelly use personas & buying stages to create their content marketing grid.

In an organization the scale and complexity of Kelly, we have a wide range of products and services targeting very different audiences. For some idea of how broad this range is, think of a graduate scientist looking for work. Now think of a pharmaceutical company CEO looking to gain greater agility through a global talent supply chain of 100,000+ people. Both are key audiences for us, but with very different profiles, objectives, pain points and content consumption habits.

To understand how we use personas and buying-stages to frame our content, let's focus on a specific offering –in this case addressing a B2B audience looking for staffing solutions in the call center industry.

As a starting point, we might develop say four core buyer personas for such an offering. This would likely include HR, Contact Center Operations, Technology and C-suite. Each of these core personas could be broken down based on role seniority (entry-level through to VP) or a more specific area of focus (i.e. within the C-suite, differentiate between CEO, CFO, COO, etc).

So—depending on the program objectives, budget and resources, a core group of four personas may in fact represent say 12 more nuanced role-based personas. A simple rule of thumb for determining if it's worth developing content for a more-targeted niche is whether or not you can identify differences between the pain points, knowledge needs and buying behavior of each role type. If you can't, then your content isn't going to be unique enough to justify creating a different stream.

For simplicity's sake with this example let's stick to the four core personas. Keeping it straightforward with three buying stages, a basic content matrix for a pre-purchase audience may start to look like this:

	HR	Contact Center Ops	Technology	C-Suite
Interest (Early)				
Consideration (Mid)				
Evaluation (Late)				

In each box, the specific Pain Points, Topics, Messages and Content Pieces are identified to ensure a targeted approach is appropriately addressing each audience. For example, HR and Contact Center Ops contacts may have a common problem of sourcing employees for a hard-to-commute-to location; the C-Suite may have a problem with expiring tax credits on overseas operations. An IT manager may be attracted by content discussing smooth integration of new systems; a CFO by reduced cost, risk and increased agility and transparency; an HR manager by the promise of better sourcing, training and retention of employees.

The content matrix is a very simple but effective way of mapping the process. By successfully identifying a range of unique – and common – issues such as these, content can be developed to speak directly to a market need.

Sample Grid Cell:

Persona: Contact Center Ops VP
Buying Stage: Consideration

Pain Points:

- Difficulty in Sourcing Quality Staff
- High Turnover of Existing Employees
- Constant Pressure to Improve Call Quality & Productivity

Messages:

- Alternate Staffing Models
- Developing Agent Productivity
- Improving Workplace Flexibility

Topics / Content Pieces

- Case Studies – Virtual Workforces
- Case Studies – Outsourcing / Partial Outsourcing
- Video Series – Alternate Staffing Models, Features & Benefits
- Whitepaper – Using an At-Home Workforce as a Virtual Swat-Team
- Article Series – Making the Call: Improving Productivity & Customer Satisfaction Through Workforce Strategies
- eBook – The Staff Retention Habits of Great Call Centers

TEAM



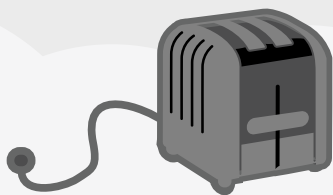
OK, YOU'VE GOT A PLAN. But who is going to execute on it? Begin by looking at your plan's grid. Who are the right people to produce this content?

For most organizations, this is going to be a mix of internal contributors and external freelancers. Few people know the ins and outs of your sector like your own employees. Furthermore, no content builds the relationship and trust between prospects and your brand better than content coming authentically from your team. So you'll want to recruit a good number of internal contributors.

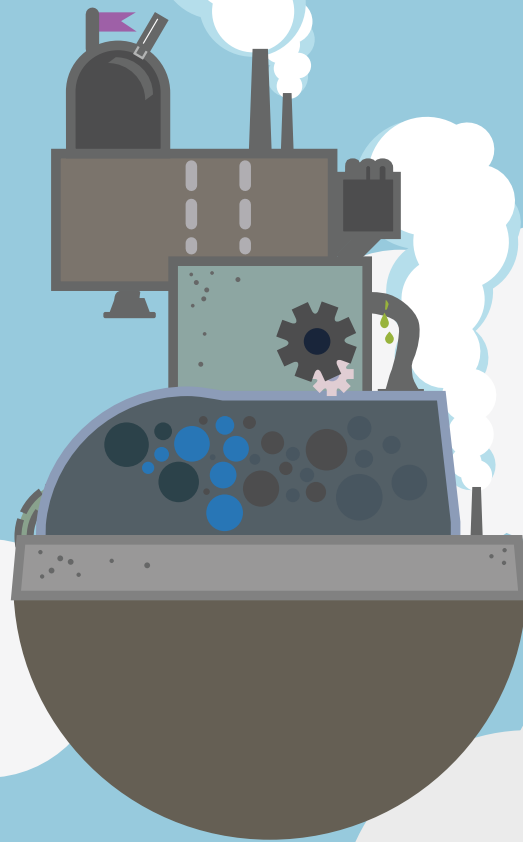
At the same time, content marketing requires a significant quantity of content, and few internal teams abound with content producers. So most content marketing operations blend internal contributors with external freelancers, particularly for graphical and video content.

However, no matter what your team composition is, there is a critical role in the form of the Managing Editor. Many stakeholders provide inputs and extract outputs from the Content Marketing Machine, but marketing departments need at least one person whose primary responsibility is to man its controls and be accountable for its results. The Managing Editor runs the Editorial Calendar, manages content production and distribution, supervises the development of an audience, coordinates with the wider demand marketing / marketing automation team, and monitors the machine's metrics. Often the Managing Editor comes from a journalism, PR / communication or copywriting background. No matter what, if a marketing department does not have an appointed Managing Editor, they do not have the commitment to build a real Content Marketing Machine, and will end up with more of a content marketing small appliance, like a toaster, and be disappointed with the results.

Which
would you
rather have?



VS.



TEAM: MARKETO MACHINE

MARKETO'S machine is run by a core team of 6 employees:

- **2 Senior Leaders:** Two marketing executives lead Marketo's content marketing. They set the strategy, review key metrics and take in feedback from internal and external stakeholders. They also contribute content themselves.
- **Managing Editor:** The quarterback of the operation runs the editorial calendar, coordinates the content submissions of internal and external contributors, reviews metrics and is also a content contributor.
- **2 Content Creators / Social Media Specialists:** These two manage Marketo's social media presences, manage relationships with key Influencers in the sector and also contribute content
- **SEO Expert:** This employee is dedicated to Marketo's search strategy and performance

Marketo encourages participation from all its employees in its content marketing and many employees outside of the core content team contribute to the blog every month. CEO Phil Fernandez himself publishes around 3 posts every month.

Additionally Marketo uses some external contributors, particularly on its long form content. [Tenton Marketing](#) has assisted with content creation; [MindYourMedia](#) helps on video editing; [Column5](#) has assisted with infographics; and [Velocity Partners](#) assists with content editing, layout and graphics. [TopRank](#) assists Marketo with their SEO.

TEAM SIDEBAR: AT&T



Gina Welker is the Online Strategy & Community Manager for AT&T, where she manages the Networking Exchange Blog and supports the Networking Leaders Academy blogger community. Gina brings more than five years of communications experience in both agency and corporate environments, leading a variety of public relations, advertising and social media efforts.

Below Gina shares how she's able to involve 150 AT&T employees as content creators in her content marketing machine.

With nearly 4 million business customers around the world, AT&T knew that taking advantage of online and social media channels to stay engaged with its audience was a no-brainer—so in 2011, it launched the [Networking Exchange Blog](#).

Knowing the voice needed to be authentic and the insights real, we dove head first into recruiting bloggers directly from the ranks of our own IT savants. To date, nearly 150 employees have signed up to be online thought leaders, not only posting to the blog but also contributing their knowledge to other social media sites and online forums.

So how do we manage all that brainpower? Through the Networking Leaders Academy, our official blogger program. New bloggers (most of whom have never blogged before) complete an initial training session focused on blog writing and social networking, and receive an official welcome kit and playbook to make sure they can hit the ground running.

But we didn't stop there; we provide bloggers with continuing social media education opportunities, contests and incentives, and ongoing support. The company also developed editorial processes to manage content, making it as easy and "hands off" for the bloggers as possible so they can focus on the important stuff: creating great posts!

The program's impact was immediate. In the three months following the launch of the Networking Leaders Academy, average monthly visits to AT&T's Networking Exchange Blog increased 55 percent, page views increased 45 percent, and social referrers increased 93 percent. Today, the Networking Leaders Academy continues to grow as word of mouth within the company spreads about the benefits of blogging. Many bloggers have begun to contribute guest posts on other blogs as they nurture their own thought leadership (huzzah!).

While the numbers speak for themselves, our ultimate goal is enabling bloggers to connect and influence. At the end of the day, it's the bloggers who define success—by continuing to raise the bar for themselves and the organization.



THE BIGGEST ROADBLOCK for marketers building their Content Marketing Machine is the ideas stage: what content are we going to produce now? In the [Content Marketing Institute's 2012 Content Marketing Research Report](#), over half cited consistently outputting content as their greatest challenge, which is a particular struggle over figuring out what to produce.

Remember, the bulk of your content is going to be about your customers' interests, not your own products. So the best way to generate ideas is to better understand your customers' interests. There are three best practices for this process:

Engage Your Organization. How to hear the voice of the customer and learn of their interests? Your colleagues in sales, support, services and beyond are having conversations with customers every day, so make sure you leverage their insight. Develop a process whereby employees can submit content ideas into your Content Marketing Machine--but don't make that a black box as you have to motivate your colleagues to participate. Quickly inform them of approval or rejection. For approved ideas, keep them updated on progress and involve them in the content creation. Sophisticated machines even track employee participation for HR reviews and publish leader boards to generate internal competition.

Social Listening. Your customers are talking on the web every day. Dive into your target categories on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and forums focusing on your topic. See what topics and issues are on your customers' minds. Q&A sites like LinkedIn Answers, Focus and Quora are great indicators of just what questions your prospects are looking to get answered.

Buyer Interviews. Some content marketers go direct to the source and ask potential buyers about their issues. This is not done in a sales context: the best, most unbiased interviewees do not know your brand; some marketers do this without revealing the brand that they work for. This can be done with in-person interviews or anonymous surveys. Either way, the objective is not to sell to prospects, but to instead learn about their challenges so you can better structure your content.

These best practices can generate lots of knowledge about customer challenges. But while your top-of-the-funnel content should not discuss your products, it should lay out your unique, inspiring vision for how customer challenges can be solved--such content is truly thought leadership. So while part of the ideas process is understanding customer challenges, it should also include your vision of solutions for those challenges. The resulting concepts are the best materials for creating compelling content.

IDEAS: MARKETO MACHINE

MARKETO SETS the direction for its content through its Integrated Marketing Plan process. This Integrated Marketing Plan lays out its strategy for all marketing activities, including content.

For the content portion of the Integrated Marketing Plan, the following inputs are considered:

- **Hot Trends & Topics**—As the members of the content team interact with customers and participate on the social web, they gather information on what trends are of greatest interest to their customers.
- **Sales Requests**—The Marketo sales team through its interaction with customers collects customer's content interests and identifies spots in the buying cycle where content is needed to move prospects down the funnel.
- **SEO Considerations**—As the Marketo team assess its search traffic and search ranking, it identifies keywords where content is needed to sustain and improve their search performance
- **Personal Interests**—While Marketo listens closely to the voice of the customer, it also communicates its own innovative solutions to industry challenges. This practice keeps its content fresh and compelling and it has a long tradition at the company: before the company even had a software product, it had a dynamic blog where it discussed its vision for solving marketers' major problems and engaged in a dynamic discussion with its audience.

From these different inputs the Marketo content team identifies one or two topics per month that it will focus on in its Integrated Marketing Plan. For example, past topics include Marketing Automation, Lead Nurturing, Lead Scoring, Social, Revenue Performance Management.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION



AS YOU GET YOUR IDEA generation going, you then move on to the heart of the Content Marketing Machine, production and distribution. Marketing organizations are not accustomed to the pace of content production required to truly be a publisher, and those who go into it poorly prepared can soon find themselves tangled in operational logistics. Often there are many stakeholders involved: the idea generator, the content creator, graphic designers, the Managing Editor, the SEO expert, the social media team, Legal & PR, external agencies, marketing executives. So that the machine operates smoothly, the participation of these stakeholders needs to be defined and the process designed (e.g.: the Legal team will review all content on regulation-sensitive topics within 48 hours of notification from the Managing Editor).

The centerpiece of production is the Editorial Calendar, which should outline who is going to produce what content by what deadline, to what destination, and by what date it will be published. It should look something like this:



The up-to-date version of this calendar should always be available to the stakeholders so that everyone can operate off of the same plan. Additionally the editorial calendar should display other information like persona and buying stage, so that at a glance the Managing Editor can see how well the machine is covering the components of the grid.

It is important to remember that a single idea you develop in your machine can result in many different pieces of content. One theme, for example, can be expressed in an eBook, a video, an infographic and one or more blog posts. Use your calendar to map out the production of these different assets all off of a single concept.

In order to operate effectively every machine must have the proper distribution processes in place. Marketers today have so many channels through which to distribute their content. Your own blog should be the hub through which all of your content should be published. But videos, eBooks and infographics distributed there should also be published through sites like YouTube, Slideshare and Pinterest. Short posts linking back to your content need to be distributed through the appropriate social networks, whether it be Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Tumblr, or Google+. The content you produce that is appropriate for your lead nurturing should be distributed through your marketing automation system to landing pages and email campaigns. Additionally, your content needs to be made available to your sales people so that they can distribute it directly to customers.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION: MARKETO MACHINE

THE RE-PURPOSING OF CONTENT is a core component of Marketo's content marketing machine. As it develops different themes to produce content around, it creates many pieces of content for each theme, each telling a different story around that theme or providing a new angle. For example, Marketo focused on the theme of "lead nurturing" in its content marketing that resulted in the following 12 pieces of content:

- **Workbook:** [The Definitive Guide to Lead Nurturing](#)
- **White Paper:** [Calculating the Real ROI from Lead Nurturing](#)
- **White Paper:** [Best Practices for Lead Nurturing](#)
- **Webinar:** [Using Lead Nurturing and Scoring to Deliver More and Higher Quality Leads](#)
- **Webinar:** [Getting Started with Lead Nurturing](#)
- **Cheat Sheet:** [Lead Nurturing Cheat Sheet](#)
- **Podcast:** [Lead Nurturing: Keeping your Prospects Engaged](#)
- **Blogpost:** [Dreamforce: Using Lead Nurturing and Scoring to Deliver More & Higher Quality Leads](#)
- **Blogpost:** [Lead Nurturing and ROI Content Mapping](#)
- **Blogpost:** [Introduction to Seed Nurturing](#)
- **Blogpost:** [Achieve better marketing results in only 20 minutes a week](#)
- **Blogpost:** [Lead Nurturing with Brian Carroll](#)

Overall, Marketo produces around 20 blog posts and 2-4 longer content pieces (eBooks, videos, infographics, etc.) every month. Such extensive content production requires significant resources. Marketo invests 10% of its discretionary marketing budget into content creation. As for its marketing payroll: nearly every Marketo marketer contributes to content efforts, with a number of the team fully dedicated to content.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION SIDEBAR: ORIGINAL 9



Jeff Davis is the Editorial Director at [Original9 Media](#), a leading content marketing agency. Jeff is a long-time publishing industry veteran, having worked at Time Inc., Hearst, CNET, and finally at CBS, where he was Executive Editor of [BNET](#).

Below Jeff shares how he's translated his experience in running traditional publishing operations into managing content marketing production.

As a guy who practiced “content creation” before it was called such silly terms – I was an editor for 15-plus years at Time Inc., Hearst, CNET, CBS, and other media companies – and who’s now adapting some of what I learned for a content marketing firm, I’ve been part of all kinds of editorial staffs and systems, many of which produced insanely great results – in print and online. Recreating the same sort of creative magic in content marketing operation presents big challenges that smart editors need to overcome (fast) to be successful. A lot of it starts with instilling (and installing) an editorial production system that suits the new rules of the game. Here are a few of those rules we’ve developed at Original9:

Build a great team of writers and other contributors. Editors might have a crack in-house content team writing and producing great stuff, but quality outside contributors are often just as important to add to the mix for a few reasons. First, they know the topics better than you do. Second, they can be the best social cheerleaders for the content they produce for you – which can pay off immeasurably over time.

Recruit for specific skills. A few attributes of great contributors we look for:

- They produce great stuff. Read back through blog archives. Is the level of expertise right? Is the writing snappy and engaging? Do they write frequently enough to cover lots of topics?
- They are social butterflies. Bloggers that are hyperactive on Twitter, LinkedIn, and other social channels bring a lot to the table in addition to just great content – a built-in audience that most likely aligns to yours.
- They expect to be paid, but they don't do it for the money. Important distinction: The best bloggers I’ve worked with over the years are driven primarily by their own passions, interests, and knowledge – not the specific rate on their invoices. Make friends with these folks and strike a reasonable deal for payment; they will reward you infinitely more than a general-assignment freelancer.

Set up a pitch pipeline. Regardless of what content type you produce the most – blog posts, Q&As, infographics, videos, white papers, podcasts – a great finished piece of work starts with a great idea. Organize a pipeline of good ideas by creating an extended group of “friends” – editorial team members, outside contributors, subject-matter gurus, relevant folks in sales or marketing – to suggest story ideas. Award prizes or create other incentives to keep the flow of good stories coming after the excitement of a launch wears off.

Hire journalists for things journalists do best. Expert bloggers are great for the expertise and knowledge, and their social media connections, but what if you need some original reporting or research to develop a more in-depth story? What if you need a great interviewer to tackle a Q&A with a big-name CEO? Hire out a talented freelance journalist (there are many out there) who knows how to pull those assignments off.

Get your clients involved in the process ... More traditional editorial managers often tend (even unintentionally) to put up subtle walls between the “content” people and the “business” people. (This can take many forms, from not including certain folks on an email thread to how you set up a review process.) In the brave new world of content marketing, editors who do that are handicapping their own chances at success – and probably limiting the number of supporters they can have. Product, sales, marketing, and engineering folks that have a stake in the success of your blog are potential contributors, idea generators, and social cheerleaders who can help deliver the buzz and traffic you need later on. Let them know up front what your editorial rules are -- dealing with promotional content, conflicts of interest and other issues – and they can become invaluable supporters of your work.

... including feedback & approvals. If clients want to review drafts and suggest edits, don’t crinkle your nose – just make it easy for them to do so, and include it early in the process, not later when it’s more difficult to reverse course on a story or blog post. Of course, you won’t agree with everything you see, but you’ll earn their support on judgment calls by including them in the process. And if you’ve laid out your ground rules ahead of time, you should be able to avoid big conflicts.

Organize an assembly line for each content type. Once drafts are filed, what’s your process to get the piece to the finish line – quickly and efficiently? A typical process might go like this:

- Pitch – one of your contributors sends in an idea
- Assign – an editor approves or rejects
- Draft – contributor files the draft copy
- Edit – initial editing and feedback from an editor
- Approval – client provides feedback, good or bad
- Format/layout – source photos, add links, do an SEO check, etc
- Final read – a top editor waves the checkered flag
- Post/publish – You’re live!

Make sure that assembly line doesn't stop at "post." Just as critical as clear workflows for creating great content is a clear workflow for promoting that content when as soon as it's live. What's your process to make sure you're sharing the content across all your relevant social channels, starting with Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook? Who does what? Again, set up a simple workflow that doesn't tax everyone's time, but ensures that every piece of content will get a baseline minimum level of promotion, and it's baked into your production process as painlessly as possible.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT



SO YOU'RE PUBLISHING content now! Your machine is up and running! Congratulations! However, creating the content is just half of your task. The other half is getting visitors to that content, which is the Audience Development component of the Content Marketing Machine. Audience Development breaks down into 4 major buckets:

- Influencers
- Search
- Paid
- Syndication

Influencers. Influencers are the most important component of Audience Development. Begin by identifying the influencers in your space: the individuals and organizations in your topic that have lots of visitors to their sites, followers to their Twitter accounts, etc. In other words, these are the places on the web where the prospects who you want to read your content hang out.

Your objective is to win links from these Influencers to your content. Get started by building relationships. Retweet their tweets. Comment on their blogs. Get into a dialog.

Once you've gotten on the influencer's radar and are crafting content with the end objective of the Influencer link in mind, ask yourself: what content would be of enough interest to this Influencer that they would want to share it with their audience? Or try to bring the Influencer into the process from the start: tell them that you are working on a piece of content and would appreciate their feedback or a quote. Each piece of content should have its own "mini marketing campaign" that looks to gain traffic-generating links from relevant Influencers.

Search. Winning these Influencer links is the key to getting referral traffic to your content. It is also the biggest way that you can improve in the second bucket in Audience Development: search traffic. In the past, SEO was a "black hat" game where technical tricks won high rankings. No more. Now you must win links from authoritative influencers, and then the Search Engines will improve your rank, driving more traffic.

To succeed in search, monitor how your content efforts move the search needle. First, identify the search keywords that your personas will search for. Be sure to target and optimize your content for the appropriate keywords. Then monitor keyword by keyword how your content efforts--both content produced and quality links earned--are affecting your search ranking and your search traffic.

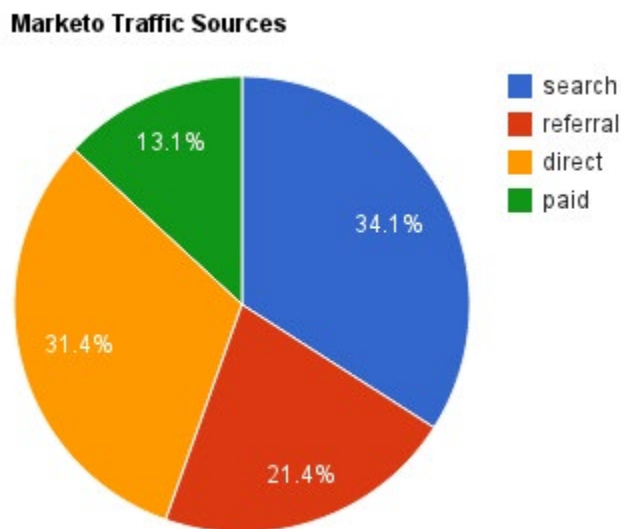
Paid. Despite all of the inbound, organic goodness that Content Marketing centers on, paid traffic does have a place in the mix. Whether it is SEM, Facebook ads, sponsored Tweets, or paid Email newsletter distribution, using paid tactics to drive traffic is part of the Content Marketing Machine. What's interesting to note however, is how Content Marketers are using paid to drive traffic to their content pages (about the prospect's interests) instead of their product pages (about the marketer's products). The process of developing a relationship with a prospect built on informative content is so powerful that marketers are using their media dollars to increasingly drive traffic to their content.

Syndication. Finally, the content you produce need not be limited to your own properties, whether your site, YouTube account, Slideshare account, etc. The most straightforward way to earn a link from a site where your prospects frequent is to get your own content published on that site. Be sure to insert a link or two in your content that links back to your own site. But beyond links, syndicated content also begins to develop a relationship between you and your prospects before they have ever visited your site. Particularly at the beginning, others sites may have a lot more traffic than yours does, so syndicating content is a great way to get your traffic off the ground.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT: MARKETO MACHINE

MARKETO'S AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT efforts have generated great success for the company. It generates over 64,000 unique visitors to its content marketing pages (Blog & Resources) every month.

Marketo uses a wide variety of tactics to build and sustain this audience, including Influencer Development, SEO, Paid Media and Syndication. Here is a breakdown of their overall traffic sources:



Marketo actively cultivates and sustains its relationships with key influencers in its topic. When content is relevant to a certain influencer's audience, Marketo reaches out to let that influencer know. Whether or not Marketo itself has relevant content for a given influencer, it makes sure to stop by their site and leave a comment or retweet their tweets just to maintain their relationships.

When Marketo looks to earn a link from a specific influencer, they will ask their link targets for an opinion way ahead of publication of the content. This strategy has proven to dramatically increase the likelihood of earning the link.

In Search, Marketo begins with a keyword map, which produces a ranked list of its top organic keyword targets (in terms of keywords and the key pages where those keywords live). Marketo optimizes as much of its content as possible so that it funnels visitors and search engines to the pages listed in the keyword map. Most of their content is given an "SEO scrub" before it goes into production.

The results of Marketo's SEO efforts are reviewed in monthly reports that detail key metrics such as SEO traffic to its main website, SEO traffic to its blogs, traffic from target keywords, rankings for

target keywords and links to key pages. This information is compared to goals that the team has set and is benchmarked against major competitors.

In addition to organic efforts, Marketo also uses paid media to develop its traffic. Marketo invests significantly in paid media--\$300K / month--across a wide array of channels, including PPC, display advertising, retargeting and paid email blasts. These campaigns are monitored carefully and reviewed in monthly demand generation meetings where the performance of different campaigns is analyzed.

Beyond their own properties, Marketo syndicates its content to a number of industry publications, including TechTarget, Crain, Madison Logic, and Emedia. Marketo has found that mid-stage content works best in syndication, and looks to answer questions like what to ask vendors when choosing a marketing automation tool or how to overcome the complex marketing automation buying processes.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT SIDEBAR: DISTILLED



Tom Critchlow is VP Operations for Distilled and currently heads up their NYC office. Distilled is a leading SEO and online marketing agency that works with Fortune 500s and startups alike. Find out more about Tom [on twitter](#) or [on the Distilled blog](#).

Below Tom shares his insights on how Distilled helps to develop audiences for their clients' content marketing.

We've been working on content and marketing strategies with clients for years now and by far the biggest pushback we get is about results. When we talk about developing content for clients they either don't understand the value content can have or they've produced content in the past and never gotten results from it.

The reason they don't get results is because they lack audience development. While PR agencies, creative agencies and ad agencies can all produce exceptional content they have been glacially slow at adapting to the web. What sets smart online marketing agencies apart is that we've been tracking, measuring and refining our outreach and results driven content for years. When we start with a content strategy the very first question is "who cares?". Who and where is the audience that will engage with this content and crucially, how can we structure our resources to not only produce the content but also get it in front of the right audience.

While this doesn't seem revolutionary we are able to differentiate because we understand that a popular blog is almost certainly more valuable for content placement than a major content outlet. This whole idea is encapsulated perfectly in an article called The Tim Ferris Effect which directly compares the value of writing a guest post vs. an opinion piece for the New York Times:

"There's a big difference between being exposed to a large audience, and being exposed to a comparatively smaller (but still large) audience which is ridiculously passionate."

As SEOs we've had to focus on the actual link placement for years. And this ruthless training has set us up perfectly to leverage the Tim Ferris effect and engage with weird and wonderful sites of highly engaged users that "traditional" PR agencies either miss out or don't know how to engage.

And the whole process starts with outreach. Before we start creating content we understand the target audience intimately and we use this to weave hooks into and craft the style of the content

perfectly to our audience. This makes the actual outreach and engagement easy since the content is so well suited to the audience.

I'll share a real story - we wanted to create a beer infographic for a client. So we made something fun, it was light hearted and frivolous. But when we came to actually seed the infographic to the online beer community we instantly realized that they wouldn't take it. They wouldn't take it because the community doesn't talk about frivolous things - they engage passionately with deep knowledge about the beer making process, home brewing and tasting notes. So we scrapped the content - we went back to the drawing board and produced content that was researched more deeply and had more of an in-depth look at the beer industry. Everyone loved it and the content was picked up and shared far and wide. But that cycle of creating and scrapping content was expensive, so ever since that campaign we always do the audience research before developing the content.

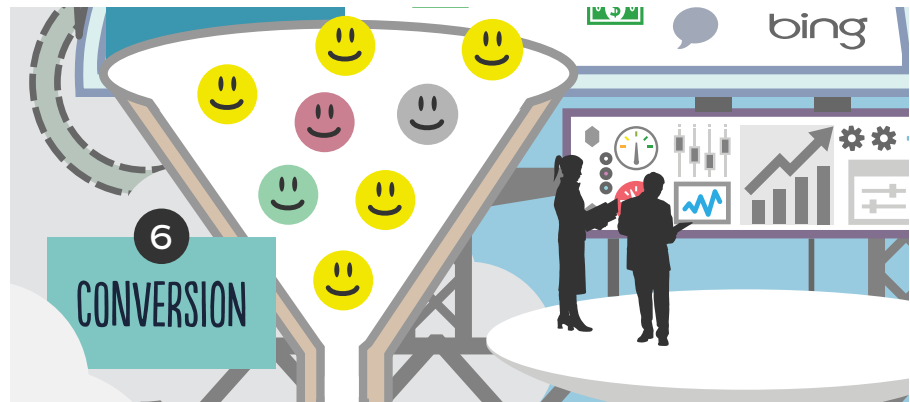
So now, we produce content just like [John Steinbeck did](#):

“Forget your generalized audience. In the first place, the nameless, faceless audience will scare you to death and in the second place, unlike the theater, it doesn't exist. In writing, your audience is one single reader. I have found that sometimes it helps to pick out one person—a real person you know, or an imagined person and write to that one.”

Find that one single community of highly engaged passionate people, produce content that they love, reach out to them to let them know about the content.

That simple (but not easy!) process will guarantee that your content doesn't fall flat. It guarantees that you'll get results.

CONVERSION & NURTURING



AS YOU PRODUCE great content, earn links to that content, and drive traffic to your site, your Content Marketing Machine is really humming. At this stage, we focus on the final steps in the machine:

- convert site visitors into leads
- nurture leads into customers

Some of your site visitors will click over, learn about your product, and immediately contact sales or start a trial (i.e. become a lead). But this is only a small portion of your new visitors. For the rest, your objective should be to convince them to come back again. So make sure you are prominently displaying related content to first-time visitors in order to convince them that your site is worth returning to. Also make it easy for them to become a “subscriber,” whether that be following you on a social network (Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.), subscribing to your RSS feed, or signing up for your email newsletter. All of these channels put links to your content in front of your audience on a regular basis, helping drive return traffic.

As these visitors return, continually optimize your site for lead conversion. Experiment with the location and the message of your conversion offers. Use A/B testing. While typically shorter-form content like blog posts are freely available, longer-form, higher-value content like eBooks are positioned behind form gates where users need to submit their contact information before downloading.

Once the user submits such a form, they are a lead and the game changes. They are a known entity and should be nurtured into a ready-for-sales qualified opportunity through your marketing automation system. This transformation from lead to qualified opportunity is measured through lead scoring, which will score both how valuable a lead is (i.e. company revenue, industry vertical, lead title and role) and how ready the lead is to buy. The former component of the score can be immediately tabulated once the form is completed. The latter--the nurturing you must do--is the work that remains.

The content created by your content marketing machine is the fuel that will drive the lead nurturing process. Now that the lead has given you permission to email them, your marketing automation

system will enable you to be much more precise in the content you deliver directly to their inbox. Return to your content grid from the plan stage and see what your approach should be with each persona at each state in the process. In your marketing automation system you can now configure campaigns that will deliver a series of content pieces that correspond to your grid. As the lead's score increases and they show more purchase intent, your campaigns should transition from top-of-funnel educational content to industry-oriented pieces such as analysts' reports and buyer guides, and finally to solution-oriented and company-focused pieces such as product white papers, testimonials and ROI calculators.

The sophistication of marketing automation systems allows you to put different leads on different paths depending on how they respond to your outreach and their readiness for your solution. Rather than the one-size-fits-all solution in your content approach at the top of the funnel, your marketing automation system enables you to personalize your content delivery at this later stage in the process. Your campaigns respond to the readiness of each lead and provide them the right content at the right time to drive them toward becoming a qualified opportunity.

CONVERSION & NURTURING: MARKETO MACHINE

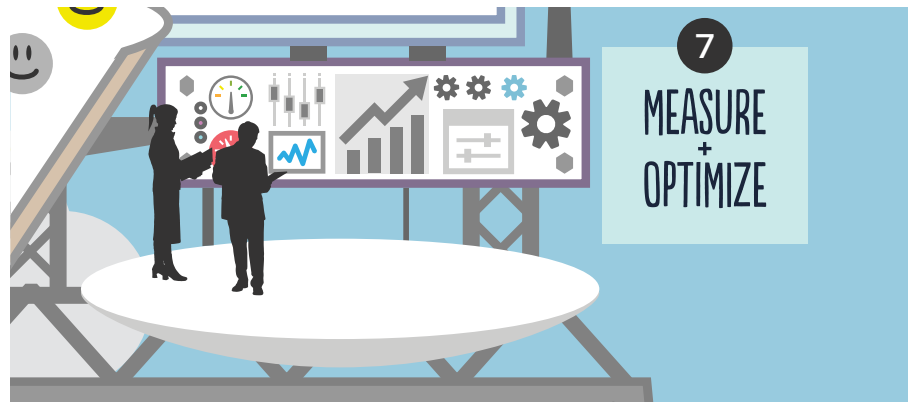
AT THE TOP OF THE FUNNEL, Marketo focuses on form submission conversion from its site visitors, so that it can know who the visitors are, enter them into their marketing automation process, and nurture them down the funnel. Form gates are typically placed only on higher-value / longer-form pieces of content (eBooks, white papers, etc.).

Marketo utilizes extensive A/B testing to improve conversion performance at all junctions in the process: click through rates from the blog post to the landing page, and form fill rates on the landing page itself.

Once a potential customer converts to a known entity by completing a form, Marketo uses its own system to nurture them down to a qualified opportunity. Marketo uses a “4-1-1” principle at this stage to calibrate the content it delivers to leads: for every 6 communications, 1 should be “hard sell” content (e.g. “sign up for a Marketo demo”); 1 should be a “soft sell” (e.g. “attend this Marketo event”); and 4 should remain informative and educational, focusing on the lead’s interests. At this stage, the lead has not committed to purchase, so 4-1-1 achieves a balance in keeping the communications largely helpful, but also moving the lead down the funnel.

Marketo measures the qualification of a lead, or its lead score, according to three factors: 1) the quality of the lead (size of the company; fit of the company to Marketo’s service); 2) the level of overall engagement from the lead (how much content the lead has consumed); and 3) the specific purchase intent exhibited by the lead (e.g. if the lead has visited the Marketo pricing page). All of these factors are measured through its own marketing automation system, and Marketo adjusts the content it delivers its leads as they move closer and closer to becoming qualified opportunities.

MEASURE & OPTIMIZE



YOU BEGAN your Content Marketing Machine with a blueprint, in the form of a content grid that laid out your plan for how to attract potential customers and move them through your funnel using content. This initial plan guides your creation and operation of your Content Marketing Machine, but guess what: it was only an initial hypothesis and much of it is likely wrong!

But that's OK. Such is the case with most all new business initiatives. What's important is to have the structure in place to monitor how your machine is running, so that you can understand what is working, what's not working, and how you can improve.

So monitor metrics at every stage of the machine and ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have enough ideas coming in?
- Whose ideas are creating the successful content?
- Is your production process slowing things down?
- Are you producing a good distribution of content across your different personas?
- Which channels that you publish your content to are providing the best results?
- Which influencers are providing the most traffic?
- What authors of yours are winning the most links?
- Is your paid media driving traffic cost-effectively?
- What types of content are attracting new visitors?
- What content is keeping them around and moving them down the funnel?
- Are all of your personas being satisfied at each buying stage?
- Should some of your grid hypotheses be revisited?

No Content Marketing Machine is perfectly calibrated from the start. But with the right metrics in place that monitor the machine at each stage in its performance, the machine can be continuously improved to yield better and better results.

MEASURE & OPTIMIZE: MARKETO MACHINE

MARKETO focuses on the following metrics in its Content Marketing Machine:

- Overall Traffic: Unique Visitors
- Traffic by Source:
 - Referral Visitors
 - Organic Search Visitors
 - Direct Visitors
 - Paid Visitors
- Brand Searches: an indication of how much brand awareness is generated through content
- Prospects Generated Via Website: How many marketing database “names” came through the website
- Web Prospect Conversion Rate: What proportion of site visitors become prospects
- Cost per Prospect

MEASURE & OPTIMIZE SIDEBAR: MONETATE



Rob Yoegel oversees all content marketing initiatives at [Monetate](#), a leading provider of A/B testing software. Prior to joining Monetate, Rob was vice president of e-media for a business-to-business and consumer enthusiast publishing company. His other professional experience includes leading a regional technology-focused recruitment magazine along with other editorial positions.

In Rob's description of his operation's approach to content marketing metrics, it is noteworthy how much Rob ignores the typical "vanity" metrics of social media marketing and is instead laser focus on the bottom line business objectives: leads, opportunities, and new business.

Metrics must be an important part of any content marketing program. In addition to analysis around content consumption, content marketers need to pay attention to metrics that reveal information about the entire purchase process.

I often hear that hiring a journalist is the first step to launching a content marketing program. Unfortunately, many of these people don't have an analytics background and never considered purchase process metrics (leads and sales) important to them. This has to change... right away.

At Monetate, our content marketing metrics focus on actions instead of reactions. Whether metrics tell you that you are doing something good or bad, make sure you can do something about it. If it's good, figure out how you can improve; and if it's bad, ask yourself how to fix it. Specifically at Monetate we focus on the following content marketing metrics:

- Number of Resources Published (eBooks, Case Studies, Infographics, White Papers, Webinars, etc.)
- Number of Blog Posts
- Tweet Reach
- Leads Driven
- Opportunities Driven
- Business Closed
- Leads Influenced
- Opportunities Influenced
- Business Influenced

Our purchase process metrics involve not only looking at new names (leads), qualified prospects (opportunities) and closed business, but consider leads and opportunities from other sources—

such as referrals or trade show contacts—who subsequently downloaded an eBook, case study or white paper, attended a webinar, or interacted with us in another way.

Act on these metrics in a way that improves your results moving forward. With this in mind, our content marketing program drove triple-digit percentage increases in new and influenced leads and opportunities in less than one year.

In addition to purchase process metrics, content consumption is very important to monitor. Inbound referral traffic—how many visitors come to Monetate.com from other websites—is one of the most critical of our content consumption metrics, providing a window into how our content is resonating with our target audience. By closely monitoring inbound traffic, we saw an increase from 20 percent to 46 percent in just a little over six months!

As a content marketer, it's important to examine metrics important to your business on a regular basis so you can respond more quickly. If your only interaction with metrics is on a monthly basis, you likely will be reacting to the metrics when you can't do much about them.

While looking at your reports on a monthly basis is often not enough, daily analysis can be too much. The key is to find the right balance for your organization. Try reducing the number of key performance indicators (KPIs) you're looking at and focus on the metrics that matters most to your organization. Our content marketing metrics dashboard has just nine KPIs.

Evaluating these content consumption and purchase process metrics will help you understand how well your content marketing program drives results.

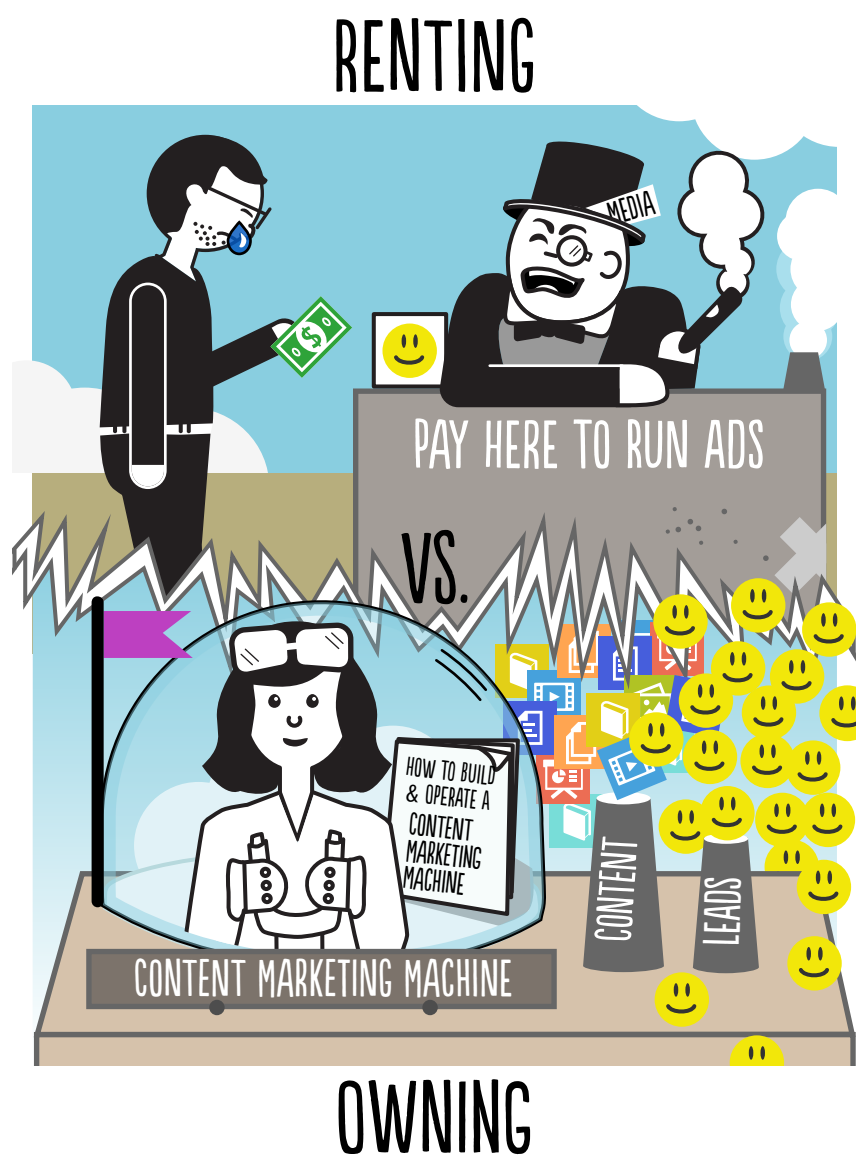
BUILDING YOUR OWN MACHINE (VERSUS RENTING SOMEONE ELSE'S)

CONTENT MARKETING is fundamentally different than traditional marketing, i.e. advertising. In advertising the marketer rents the attention of someone else's audience: the marketer pays the media to be able to put the marketer's message in front of the media's audience. Despite the problems of advertising, renting has immediate results because the media already has an audience.

Content Marketing takes longer, particularly because when you start you have no audience! But don't be deterred! Just like the difference between buying and renting a house, with Content Marketing, you are building equity as you build your audience.

Over time, your audience becomes an incredible asset: a perpetual source of leads and new customers at an extremely low cost relative to traditional marketing. You can continue to turn to that audience for new leads, but do not have to "pay the rent" every time, making content marketing leads extremely cost effective.

So go build your Content Marketing Machine! Its benefits take time, but it will fill the top of your funnel and drive prospects down it with more success and less expense than any marketing strategy you have ever used.



THE CONTENT MARKETING MACHINE

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List the main concerns of **your customers**:

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List **your brand's** main points of value and expertise:

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Find the sweet spot. List the topics around which your customers' interests and your expertise intersect:

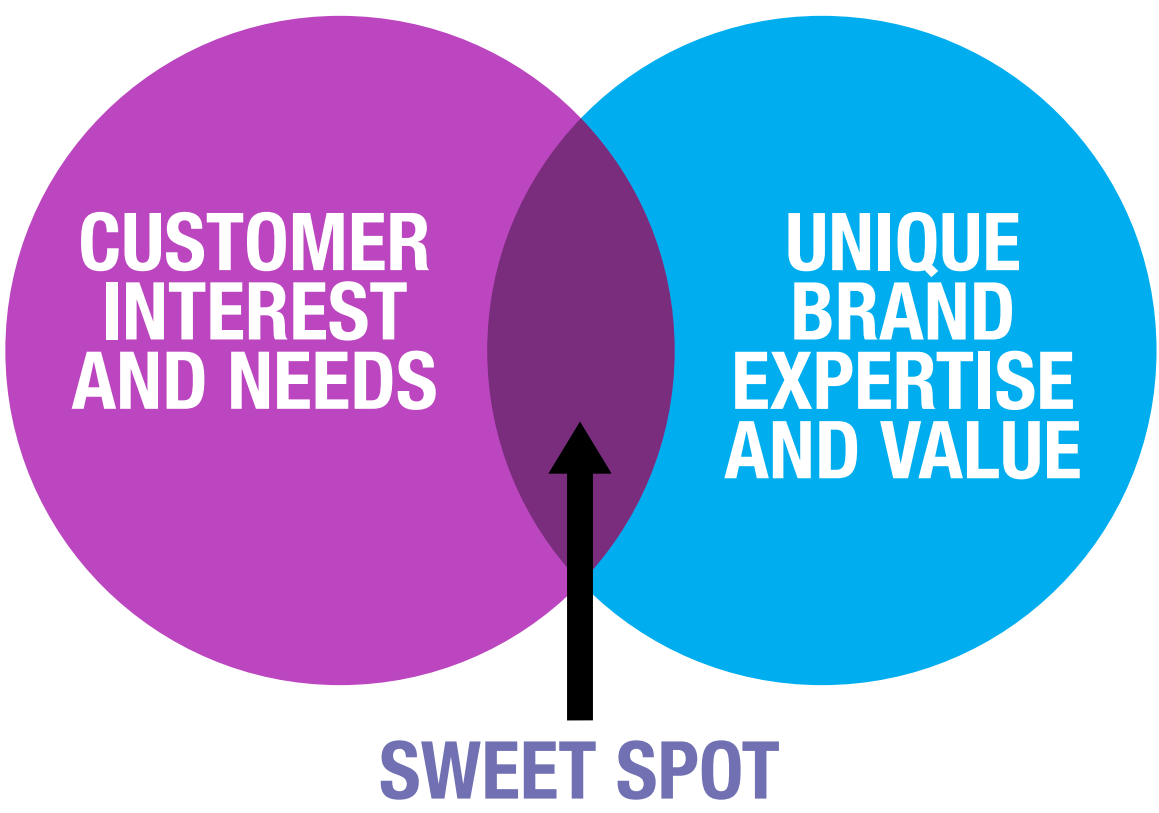
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PERSONA 1 Name:

Who:

[Provide a description of the actual person. Add real characteristics like age, gender, experience to make the person more life-like]



What:

[Talk about what the persona does day-to-day, what are their responsibilities]

Biggest Challenges This Year:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

[What are the objectives and issues this persona is facing this year]

Hopes/Dreams/Aspirations:

.....
.....
.....
.....

[What are the longer-term goals of this persona? These can be professional and personal]

Notes:

PERSONA 2 Name:

Who:

[Provide a description of the actual person. Add real characteristics like age, gender, experience to make the person more life-like]



What:

[Talk about what the persona does day-to-day, what are their responsibilities]

Biggest Challenges This Year:

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[What are the objectives and issues this persona is facing this year]

Hopes/Dreams/Aspirations:

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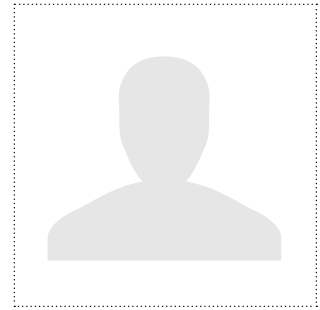
[What are the longer-term goals of this persona? These can be professional and personal]

Notes:

PERSONA 3 Name:

Who:

[Provide a description of the actual person. Add real characteristics like age, gender, experience to make the person more life-like]



What:

[Talk about what the persona does day-to-day, what are their responsibilities]

Biggest Challenges This Year:

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[What are the objectives and issues this persona is facing this year]

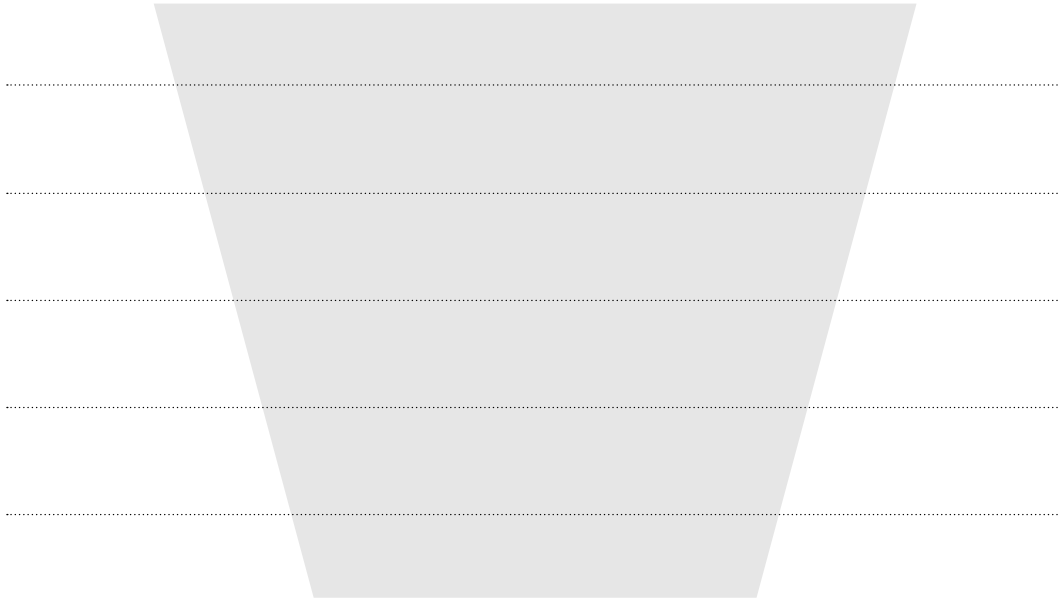
Hopes/Dreams/Aspirations:

.....
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.....

[What are the longer-term goals of this persona? These can be professional and personal]

Notes:

List the stages in **your buyer's process**:



A light gray funnel-shaped graphic is centered on the page. It is wider at the top and tapers towards the bottom. Six horizontal dotted lines are drawn across the funnel, providing a template for writing the stages of the buyer's process.

List your buying stages on the vertical axis, and your personas on the horizontal.

In each of the resulting cells, fill in what issues and concerns each persona has at each stage? What questions do they need answered?

Buying Stage	Personas		
[person issues at this stage]			

Within the grid, now answer, what sort of topics and themes would respond to the concerns and questions of the persona?
What are some sample headlines of content pieces for each cell?

Buying Stage	Personas		
	[topics & headlines]		



Who will be your team's Managing Editor, who will be the principal coordinator of your content efforts?

.....

Who will be on your content Leadership Team? This group will regularly review content metrics, absorb customer and audience feedback, and refine your content grid and strategy.

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Who inside your organization will be contributors of content?

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Who outside your organization will contribute content?

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This group could include freelancers, agencies, customers or guest posters.

How will you get **regular inputs of content ideas** based on customer interest?
Approaches can include social listening, ideas from customer-facing colleagues (e.g. sales, support) and prospect interviews and surveys. For each, describe the process and who is responsible for managing it.

IDEAS INPUT 1

Input:

Responsible:

Process:

.....

IDEAS INPUT 2

Input:

Responsible:

Process:

.....

CONTENT TYPES

- Inputs & Actions
- Approvals
- Editorial Calendar

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

What will be your major content types? e.g. Blog Post, Video, eBook, etc.
Note, a content piece of similar format (e.g. Blog Post) can result in more than one Content Type if it requires different process (e.g. Standard Blog Post, Link Roundup Blog Post).

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PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

WORKFLOW

For each Content Type, list out all of the required **inputs and approvals** required to take the content from idea to completed project. Some examples include: Submit First Draft; SEO Review; Copy Edit; Add Graphics; VP of Marketing approval; Legal Approval; Publish Content; Tweet Out Link to Content.

For each Input or Approval, note who needs to take an action. Arrange these actions into the right sequence to define your workflow for each Content Type.

CONTENT TYPE 1

Input / Approval	Responsible

CONTENT TYPE 2

Input / Approval	Responsible

ANNUAL CALENDAR

Take some of the topics that you've assembled in your **Plan**, and begin to plot them out on your Editorial calendar, so that you can plan what content you'll write when.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

EDITORIAL CALENDAR

January	February	March
[topic 1] [topic 2]		
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December

MONTHLY CALENDAR

As you lay out your monthly topics and themes, start to lay out real deadlines and publish dates on a day-to-day basis. Ideally it should include information such as theme, content type, persona, author, etc. in this calendar so that you can make sure you are properly distributing different types of content. This daily-level calendar becomes the backbone of your content operation. What are some sample headlines of content pieces for each cell?

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

EDITORIAL CALENDAR

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
[content 1]	[content 2] [content 3]			

INFLUENCERS

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Make a list of the key influencers in your topic. These are the individuals and organizations who have sites with lots of unique visitors, Twitter accounts with lots of followers, i.e. they own the places on the web where your prospects hang out. Note information like their site address, Twitter handle and email. Rank them by their number of followers or number of monthly uniques (you can use [Compete](#) to find this metric).

Influencer	Site	Twitter	Email	Uniques	Followers
[Influencer 1]					

For each high-impact Influencer with whom you don't have a relationship, lay out a process through which you'll reach out and work on building a relationship.

Influencer	Follow on Twitter	RT on Twitter	Comment on Blog	@ on Twitter
[Influencer 1]				

Once you have a relationship, reach out to Influencers around your content. Get their input; ask for a quote. After publishing, work them for links. Keep track of which Influencers provide the most links and traffic. These relationships are critical to your success.

Influencer	Uniques	Followers	Links Provided	Visits Provided
[Influencer 1]				

List the SEO Keywords you are going to target. These should be the keywords that prospects would be searching around issues and interests in your sweet spots. Each keyword should be evaluated for 1) how much query volume, i.e. potential traffic, it has and 2) how competitive it is (i.e. is it easy or hard to gain rank on it) and 3) your current rank for the keyword. Each piece of content should be targeted at one or more keywords and the three factors should determine your strategy for which you go after.

Keyword	Query Volume	Competitiveness	Current Rank
[keyword 1]			

As you create content focusing on certain keywords, your content should all link to a particular page or URL focused on that keyword. In that way you are focusing all of your SEO value on a particular page, in order to optimize its ranking. Keep a “SEO Keyword Map,” as shown below, where for each keyword you list the target URL to which your content should link, along with any particular instructions for that keyword’s strategy.

Keyword	Target URL	Instructions

NURTURING CAMPAIGNS

Plot out the content you are going to deliver to leads in your lead nurturing. For earlier stage campaign, the mix should be more informative, less promotional. The mix shifts as prospects move down the funnel.

CONVERSION AND NURTURING

CAMPAIGN 1

Persona:

Stage:

Sequence of Content: [eBook A]

..... [infographic B]

.....

CAMPAIGN 2

Persona:

Stage:

Sequence of Content:

.....



Kapost is content marketing software that helps marketers and content creation professionals organize their content marketing efforts into a structured business process. Unlike complicated project management tools, Kapost specializes in the ideation, production, distribution & analysis of content marketing activities so brands can deliver relevant content to their audience which helps build trust and revenue.

Kapost also operates the Content Marketeer, a source for all things content marketing. Here you'll find case studies, how-to's & best practices from leading personalities in content marketing.



Easy, Powerful, Complete

Marketo uniquely provides easy-to-use, powerful and complete [marketing software](#) that propels fast-growing small companies and global enterprises alike. Marketo's [marketing automation](#) and sales effectiveness software – including the world's first integrated solution for [social marketing automation](#) – streamlines marketing processes, delivers more campaigns, generates more win-ready leads, and dramatically improves sales performance. With proven technology, comprehensive services and expert guidance, Marketo helps thousands of companies around the world turn marketing from a cost center vinto a [revenue driver](#).

Known for providing breakthrough innovation and fueling explosive growth, Marketo was recently named one of “[America's Most Promising Companies](#)” by Forbes, the [#1 Marketing Software Vendor](#) on the INC 500, and the [#1 fastest-growing private company](#) of 2011 by the Silicon Valley Business Journal. In both 2011 and 2012 the company received the [CRM Market Leaders Awards Winner for Marketing Solutions](#) by CRM Magazine.

For More Information:

Over 2000 companies have selected Marketo. For more information on how you can gain the combined benefit of cost effective lead management automation and seamless connectivity to the power of Microsoft Dynamics CRM, contact us at: +1.877.260.MKTO or sales@marketo.com.

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