



glass ivy

Content Marketing Workbook



Why did we write this?

The purpose of this workbook is to help small businesses owners and brands, like you, to accurately and appropriately leverage content marketing to grow your business. [Content marketing](#) is a powerful tool to expand brand awareness, improve trust, educate your audience, rank better on search engines, and ultimately increase your chances of business success.

The key to a successful content marketing strategy is to fully understand who you are as a business, who your ideal customer is, and how to resonate with them. This workbook does just that.

By working through this content workbook you should have a clear understanding of the type of content you should be producing, how often to produce content, and what style of content to create. Leverage this workbook as a foundation for content marketing success! Grow your business.

For more information regarding what content marketing is and why it's important we suggest the following resources:

- [Glass Ivy Content Marketing](#)
- [HubSpot Marketing Video](#)
- [Hootsuite Definition of Content Marketing](#)

How to Use it

Using this workbook is pretty simple. You will see several Q&A portions and other open ended brainstorming guides. We suggest you take your time evaluating the most accurate answer to these questions, not just filling in the answer you like or wish was true. Some areas may be quick to complete, others you may need to dwell on for a bit. In our experience, most businesses have answers to approximately 70% of these questions with little to no effort. It's the remaining 30% that requires some soul searching to get it right. ***And the 30% is what makes all the difference.*** There are no "wrong" answers, only right and extremely right answers.

Once completed, keep your guide handy so you can reference it during your content marketing journey.



The Method

Step 1

Business & Brand Self Discovery

Who is your company really?

Step 2

Walk a Mile in Their Shoes

Who is your target audience? What do they know?
What do they need to know? What do they want?

Step 3

Make a Plan

Take your findings and leverage them into a
content plan.

Step 4

Get the Ball Rolling

Time to create your content!

LET'S GET STARTED



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Step 1

Answer the tough questions to evaluate your business. Identify your ideal customer/target audience and narrow the focus of your overall marketing scope and messaging. Think, narrow down, and focus.



Audience Worldview

Every good customer gets you another one. Your best customers become your new salespeople. If you had to choose a thousand people to become your true fans, who would you choose? Begin by choosing people based on what they dream of, believe in, and want. Think about the stories people tell themselves and use that to group your customers together.

Example: When Ron Johnson took over as CEO at JCPenney he immediately ended the constant stream of discounts and urgent sales that the store was always pitching. He took that action based on his worldview coming from Apple. As a result, sales plummeted by 50%. He had abandoned Penney's true fans: people who loved the sport of bargain hunting and lost the sense of urgency the sales created. Try imagining the various personas of the JCPenney's core customer vs Apple's core customers

Your Questions:

What is the worldview of the audience you are trying to reach?

What is your audience afraid of?

How will the change your offering impact their status?



Step 1 Continued

Audience Worldview Questions Continued:

How often are you receiving suggestions from your customers to make your product/service better?

Who would miss your product/service if it were gone?

Network Effect

The original iPhone was remarkable. It gained popularity not because of a clever marketing campaign, but because it worked better if your friends or colleagues had one too. A pattern match is business as usual. When the offering you bring matches the story your customers tell themselves, in the way they tell it, at the usual price then you are added to the mix (think of the cereal aisle or a show on a variety of streaming services). A pattern interrupt usually requires some sort of jolt or tension to get people to do something that breaks their usual pattern (getting someone to buy season tickets who normally watches the game at home). To sell a market interrupt you need to create tension.

Your Questions:

What story will you tell? Is it true?



Step 1 Continued

Network Effect Questions Continued:

Why will they tell their friends?

What will they tell their friends?

Where's the network effect that will propel this forward?

What pattern is your business interrupting?

Now that you've chosen your audience, where do you want to take them?

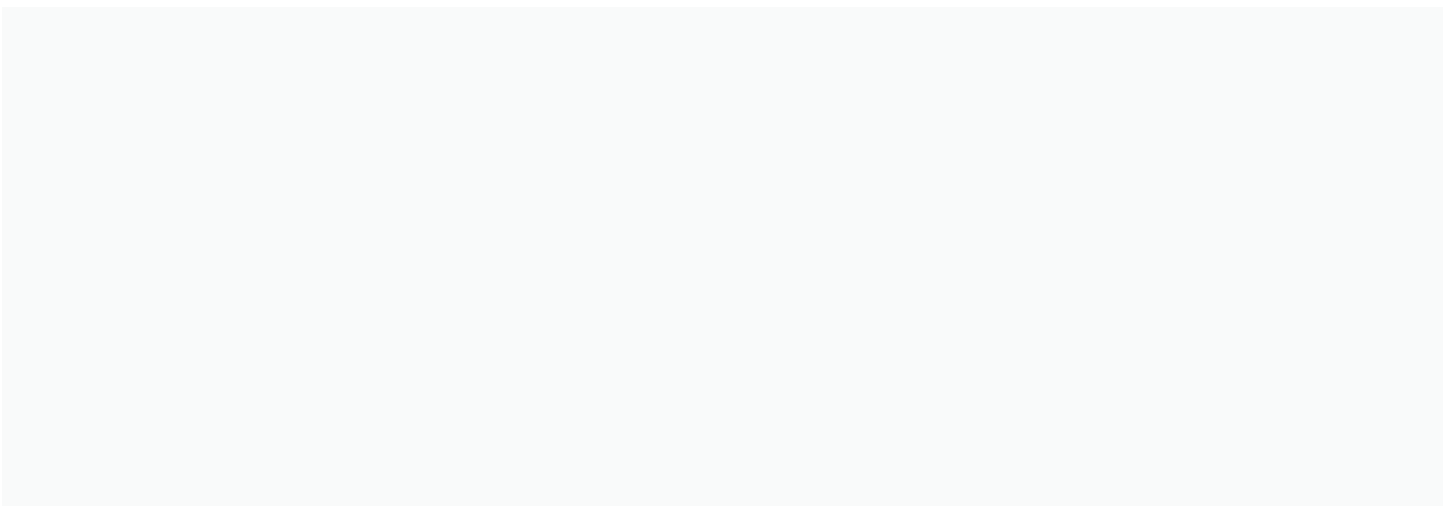


Step 1 Continued

The bookstore that sells coffee...

Until a fire temporarily shut them down, Trident Booksellers and Cafe was one of the most successful bookstores in the country. No matter how cheap and big Amazon got, Trident managed to do pretty well. Mainly because they did something Amazon couldn't, served coffee. They created a place to meet and connect (generating a soft network effect). In effect Trident is actually a coffee shop that sells books.

What is your coffee? What are your books?



Step 1 Continued

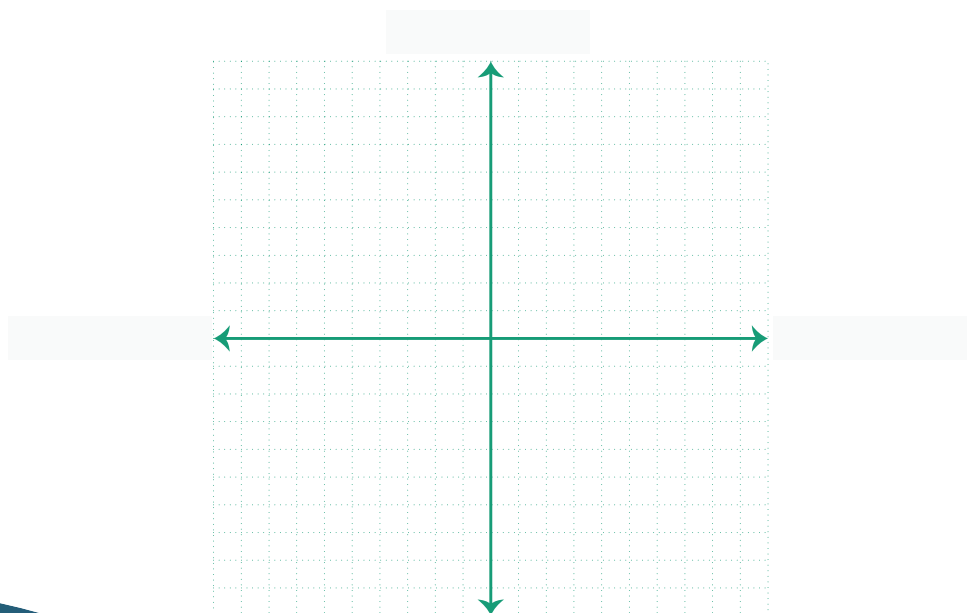
Positioning

Imagine there were six ways to get diamonds across town. On one axis we have speed, and on the other we have security. Both an armored car and the postal service will insure a small envelope of diamonds, but one will take a long time and the other will take an afternoon. If you aren't concerned with security, a bike messenger could run them across town even faster. If you don't care about speed or security, you could just mail them via snail mail. In the chart below you can imagine where USPS, Fedex, the bike messenger, and the armored truck would fall if security was on the y axis and speed of delivery was on the x axis.

Some common attributes that can be used for each axis:

- Speed
- Price
- Performance
- Ingredients
- Purity
- Sustainability
- Obviousness
- Maintenance costs
- Safety
- Edginess
- Distribution
- Network effect
- Imminence
- Visibility
- Trendiness
- Privacy
- Professionalism
- Difficulty
- Elitism
- Danger
- Experimental
- Limited
- Incomplete
- Innovative

On each axis choose something that people care about. It could be something like convenience, price, healthfulness, performance, popularity, skill level, or efficacy. Then map where you fall on each axis versus alternatives focusing on the emotions the features invoke. We are looking for extremes where you stand out from your competition.



Step 2

What do you know that your audience doesn't? What should your ideal client understand that they might not? The goal of step two is to take what you have identified about your business and customers (past, present, and future) to formulate a starting point for content idealization. Get your creative juices flowing!



What they don't know

Make a note of all the things that your past, present, or potential customers have asked you about your business/industry/products or services.

Industry Learning Curve

Oftentimes there is specific jargon, best-practices, costs, and processes that are unique to your industry. Make sure you understand what these items are so you can articulate them to your target audience. By educating them, you are preparing them to purchase quicker and make informed decisions.

List out things about your industry the average person might not know or fully understand.



Step 2 Continued

What you want them to know

What do you wish your audience understood about you or your business? Look back at some of the unique identifiers we captured in step one and illustrate how you might pass this information along to potential customers.



Step 3

Time to start. Let's plan how to take what you've discovered and make it usable content. Let the content marketing journey begin!



The Topics

Reference step 2 for this action item. The key to making your content successful is to first identify what your target audience wants or needs to know (hint, step 2) and then decide how they would look for this information.

List your “what they don’t know”, “learning curve”, and “what you want them to know” ideas in concise search terms. I.e. How to buy a car. How much do interior design services cost? Five ways to cut your grass. Why is flossing my teeth important?

The Content Style

Next, take your list and determine how you think these questions or topics would best be answered. Will it be easy to answer in a written blog post? Is it tedious and requires a step by step video? A few popular content mediums to choose from include: Blog Posts, [Social Media Content](#), Downloadable Items (like this workbook), A Graphic, or a Video.

For information regarding when to use each content format we suggest referencing [this article](#) by the Digital Marketing Institute. Keep in mind what current digital marketing infrastructure you have in place. You may need to introduce new tools such as a YouTube page, Blog, or an EMail subscription system.

Mark what type of content each topic will be.



Step 4

Build out your content!

You have a deeper understanding of who you are, who your audience is, you've discovered what your customers want to hear, and you've evaluated the best medium for these items. Now it's time to flush out your content.

Whether you've decided to make videos, write a blog, or create a guidebook, be sure you are staying focused on the core of your customer's curiosities. Be concise. Channel your business' uniqueness.

Before publishing or sharing your content, review this checklist to make sure it fits the bill:

- Does my audience care about this information?**
- Will it help my audience make purchasing decisions?**
- If my audience is trying to find an answer, will this item be easy to locate? *I.e. did I include verbiage and titles that match how someone would search for this information.***
- If someone asks me to elaborate on this topic, am I prepared to do so?**
- Do I like this content? Do I feel it aligns with my business goals, message and overall vibe?**

If you can confidently answer yes to all of these questions, you're ready to go!

It's Time to Share.





We Hope You Enjoyed!

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