



Content
Marketing
CRASH
COURSE
For
Creative
Entrepreneurs

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It's funny, when I speak to creative entrepreneurs about content marketing, some get it and want to know more, some nod their heads (I think they get it,) and some totally glaze over.

Really, content marketing isn't new, the words may seem different, but the message is the same:

Use your words to connect with your ideal audience and make them loyal customers.

In this Crash Course for Content Marketing, we're going to cover:

- The Audit
- Knowing Your Audience
- Developing Your Voice
- Creating Your Strategy
- Performing Your Plan

First I want to clarify the difference between copy and content.

I know it sounds like “blah blah, words, um, marketing...” and then trails off into a dark little corner somewhere.

Content is not just your copy, though your copy is certainly part of your content.

Copywriting is the words you create in order to get your ideal client to take a specific action – sign up for my newsletter, take advantage of my special offer, check out my latest blog post. It's sales pages, direct marketing pieces, catalogs.

Content is the valuable information you create that's specific to your ideal audience.

Content marketing is content with a marketing purpose. Content Marketing is using your valuable content to market your message, through the medium of your choice, to get your content out into the world.

It's how you get your valued information, into the hand of the people that want it most, through medium such as blog posts, email, audio, video, e-book, white papers, articles, special reports.

The key to developing a winning content strategy is...**Don't pick all of them!** It's exhausting. Choose the medium that works best for you.

Be persistent and consistent!

Content Strategy is ... ready...the ways you're going to get your content out to your audience, on regular basis, in order to create YOUR community?

How you succeed in your content strategy is by using the media you feel comfortable in.

For example, you hear it all over social media and you hear marketers say "you need to use video!" But, if you can't fathom the thought of being in front of a camera, or even using your iPhone to take a video selfie, then video is not the medium for you.

Here's the thing, if you feel pressured into using it, your video content will suck!

Yes, because you don't feel comfortable using it, or feel comfortable in front of a camera, so you'll feel awkward, or you'll feel shy, or you'll feel inauthentic.

Maybe audio is your thing.

I know, you're thinking..."another thing to add to my business to-do list!"

When you create your content strategy for your business, it'll work for you and take a lot less time than you think – and will get you way more business in the long run.

Why?

You'll be connecting with the right people that want to hear what you have to say!

It may seem confusing right now, mainly because I'm using words and "jargon" you may not be used to, but in just a few minutes...you're going to get it!

We always, or in most cases, need to start at the beginning. Our beginning is The Audit.

1. THE AUDIT

I know, it sounds scary right?

It does get your attention, but it's not meant to be scary. The audit is about taking to take a look at what you're doing now with your copy and your content.

Are you blogging? Sending a newsletter?

Once you pinpoint what you're doing, it gives you a baseline to work from.

It's not meant to be shameful or depressing either, or to show you what you're NOT doing and make you feel like a loser for not doing it.

You don't know what you don't know.

We all have to start somewhere – which is usually the beginning. We may want to jump into the middle, but if we don't know what we need at the start, we'll only get confused, frustrated and lost.

You have to take a look at what you're doing now in order to figure out what you need to change or learn in order to create a plan that will get you moving forward toward your goals.

2. KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE

You may already feel you know who your audience is.

They are the MOST important piece to your marketing puzzle, so it's worth it to go deeper and really get to know them on an intimate level.

When stone masons of the ancient world would build an archway, they knew that the keystone was the most important stone in the construction of the archway. If the keystone was not solid and strong, the structure would give way.

Choosing the keystone took skill and knowledge. Shale, made up of clay, minerals, and mud, would crumble under pressure. Limestone, a sedimentary rock composed of minerals, calcium, and the skeletal fragments of marine organisms, would disintegrate in the rain.

Granite, made up of quartz, feldspar, mica and other minerals is the hardest stone in the world. People trusted that an archway built with a granite keystone would withstand weather, the environment, and the ages.

Your audience is the keystone your business.

Knowing the demographics of your audience is a start. The age range, median household income, socio-economic status, and type of career are like the foundation stone (going back to the archway analogy.) Foundations are the base of the structure, and most are made in a similar way.

You can create an archway like everyone else – using the same stones – and there will be no distinguishing features to make the archway unique.

If you're building a row of small cottages to house the masses, then the archways will probably all look the same – and may be made with any old local stone. Nothing stands out.

If, however, you're building a castle, do you want some ordinary archway?

No!

You want a magnificent structure!

You'll search the world for the stone that has the highest quality, the most beautiful color and the strength that not even Hercules could take down.

You want people to stand in awe as they walk through.

You get the picture!

As the keystone to your business structure, do you want an audience that's average? Do you want a product that's hard to distinguish from your competitor?

Do you want row-houses or a castle?

The more defined and specific you can describe your ideal customer as your keystone, the stronger and more perfectly they will support your business.

Why is this such a big deal, you ask?

When you can create content that speaks directly to your ideal client, they'll feel like you not only know them, but that you really get what their problem is and have a solution that fits their needs.

Why is Starbucks so successful?

They know their ideal clients intimately! That is why they can make a cup of coffee that people will gladly pay \$5 for.

Is it about the coffee?

No, it's about the lifestyle that Starbucks creates for their ideal customers.

You can go into any store around the world and "feel at home," that you're "with your kind of people," and that "your best friend" just made your coffee.

That is knowing your audience!

Don't go anywhere – we're just getting started!

Here are some questions to get really get to know your ideal customer (or avatar.)

Age range:

Male or female:

Married or single:

Children or no children:

Type of career:

Where does this person live – city, country, suburbs:

“Wait, why so specific? I want to sell my products to everyone!”

Have you ever tried to market to everyone? It’s exhausting! You don’t know who you’re talking to, what they want, if they have the money or the interest in what you have, and...if they even care.

You’ll see why this is so important when we create your strategy and start writing content.

Let’s keep going, shall we?!

Now we’re going to get really specific!

What color hair:

Where does she buy her coffee (the local deli, Seven-Eleven, Starbucks):

What magazines does she read:

Does she have hobbies:

Any siblings – brothers, sisters or both:

Does he have disposable income:

Where does he like to take vacation:

How does she exercise (yoga, hiking, running, elliptical):

How does he spend his free time (a couch-potato, cosplay, base-jumping, plays the harp):

Does he commute to work (how long) or work from home:

What kind of pets, if any:

Is she a creative or a logical thinker:

Now it's your turn, what are some characteristics of your ideal client:

As you start to “see” your ideal customer, know her likes and dislike, understand how she feels about her work and what she likes to do in her spare time, you'll be able to create copy and content that speaks to her. She'll feel as if you “get her” and that creates trust!

3. DEVELOPING YOUR VOICE

Everyone has their own unique style of communicating to the world. Here, we're going to clearly define your unique voice.

One thing I've learned as an entrepreneur and marketer is that your voice matters!

If you try to speak in someone else's voice, you'll fall flat!

Your voice is how you talk to your audience so they hear you.

Here's what I mean.

I get a kick out of Erika Napoletano. She did a great TED Talk in 2012 called *Rethinking Unpopular*. It really hit home with me. I started following her online, reading her blog posts and following her on social media. She's a bit of a hardcore trash-mouth. That doesn't bother me in the least - in my corporate days, I was one of the only women account

managers in electronics distribution, which was a very male dominated industry.

Now, I can talk like a brawny sailor with the best of em, if I need to, but I prefer to be brainy and geeky and use my “big” words.

If I tried to write my content in the voice of Erika Napoletano, (p.s. she’s a brainy, geeky, sailor) it would be very out of character for me. What does that mean?

People wouldn’t know the real me and they’d probably be able to tell I was trying to copy someone else’s style. I would sound inauthentic.

Trying to be like someone else doesn’t work. People can spot a fake from miles away, and that means...

RUN...she can’t be trusted.

It also means that I’d be attracting people that aren’t my ideal client.

How do you find YOUR Voice?

It’s easy, just be you!

Speak (write) from your heart. If you’re passionate about a topic, let it show in your writing.

If cute and fuzzy kittens are your thing, and you found that it’s your ideal client’s thing too, you can add analogies and metaphors about cute and fuzzy kittens into your content and really capture her heart. (Just don’t go too overboard.)



As you hone your copywriting and content skills, you’ll be able to write persuasive copy that sounds authentically you – not like a used-car salesman – which expresses your message clearly and concisely throughout your content marketing.

4. CREATING YOUR STRATEGY

Creating your strategy sounds more time-consuming than it is.

This is not like a corporate planning session that will take hours of time and countless meetings.

Remember our definition of content strategy?

Content Strategy is how you get your valued information out to the world through medium such as blog posts, email, audio, video, e-book, white papers, articles, special reports.

Creating your content strategy is about developing your content and planning how you're going to get your content to your ideal audience.

I talked in the beginning about the kinds of medium that content gets distributed: email, blog posts, video, audio, podcasts, article writing, white papers, guides, special reports, guest blogs, and more.

The most important aspect of your content strategy is that you create it in the medium that you feel most comfortable.

I'm a writer and a speaker, so I LOVE writing blogs, email, articles and speaking at events. The thought of doing video makes me want to run in the other direction.

That being said, I have done video. An old program I offered, *On-Purpose Business Building* was an 8 week video program. I was so proud of that program! I spent hours on the videos – worked the lighting, edited to content so I wasn't a talking head, and loaded it with worksheets and downloadable content. It was beautiful!

After I completed the program, I got down on my knees and thanked the stars that I was done!

I would rather do audio than video!

So, in any of my next programs I'll do audio. It may have video components, but I'll deliver material through my voice...only.

What is the medium you prefer? (Remember, if you don't feel comfortable doing it – don't do it! If you think you want to at some point, find the resources to sharpen your skills, and then try it. You just may like it!)

Write it down here:

5. PERFORMING YOUR PLAN

You got it – it's action time!

With all the work you just finished, did you think you were going to be off-the-hook and not put your plan into action?

One thing I truly believe in is being accountable to yourself, and all the potential you have inside of you. It's easy and it's hard to be a solo entrepreneur because wear all the hats. There are times we want to set a project or activity (like marketing) aside for a "better" time.

The thing is, there is no better time to perform your content marketing plan than now!

You, and your marketing, will be the reason you have banner sales months or dry spells that rival the Sahara desert...in the dry months.

You've got this! Don't let a little thing like "more work, because you have a plan" scare you away.

This is actually the easiest part!

With technology and automation, you can plan your content strategy AND implement it in 1-2 days a month if necessary.

With email marketing, you can create weeks of autoresponders that will deliver specific content to your valued customers.

You can write a month's worth of blog posts and ...schedule them out.

I'm including a blank content marketing calendar I created to help you plan your content strategy. [CLICK HERE to download](#)

It's blank so you can customize your calendar for each month...and for each year. It will help keep you accountable and on track with your content marketing strategy.

Create a theme for each month. This will help you target your content to the problems and solutions that your ideal client faces on a regular basis.

Pick the days of the month that you're going to distribute your content.

Maybe you blog on Sundays, send out your newsletter on Thursday morning, and do a podcast on Friday afternoons.

Be diligent in developing your strategy – and stick to it!

One thing to notice is...what's working and what's not.

What's getting you the most opt-ins to your newsletter? What's getting you the most podcast subscribers? What is producing the most revenue for your business?

If something isn't working – change it.

Don't be afraid of change! Change is your friend.

Marketing companies test ALL the time. They find out what type of medium gives them the best ROI (Return On Investment) and creates revenue for the business.

If you're in business, this has to be on your mind. That's what turns you from a hobbyist to a full-fledged business owner.

The cool thing is...you're not tied to any ONE method.

And as creative (and people that get bored with the same-old-same-old) you CAN try new things that will get your content noticed and grow your business.

(One word of caution – beware the bright-shiny-object syndrome.) Because we are creatives that get bored if we do the same-old-thing time-and-time again, we tend to look for the “new thing” that’s the magic pill, the end-all-be-all to our marketing conundrum, the answer to our prayers. As a business owner, you need to be very discerning, especially when you’re first starting out.

We’ve all heard about the shining stars that became an overnight success! The thing is, it took them 20 years to get there!

I kid you not. They found out what worked, and what didn’t. They changed their strategy. They were okay with doing something new. They rinsed and repeated!

They were persistent even when things got boring.

Performing Your Plan is only as good as you’re willing, and committed, to implementing it.

This is your business!

This is your choice!

This is your baby to create what you want!

You are a creative entrepreneur.

You are a business owner.

You are a content marketer!

This is your Ba6 (basics) permission slip to be a kick-ass marketer of your creative business!

Now, get out your pen and notebook (or Evernote or Word) and start putting together content that will knock the socks off of your ideal customer.

You can do this!

If you like this crash course and want more tips on content writing, content marketing and content strategy, hop on over to www.Ba6Marketing.com and sign up for my weekly tips, writing exercises and marketing guidance. My intent is to give you everything you need to write great copy and produce awesome content so you connect to your tribe and make them life-long loyal customers!

<3

Your Content Marketing Guide,

Christine