

THE  
CONTENT  
MARKETING  
STRATEGY  
CHECKLIST

A BIG FAT,  
ROLL-UP-YOUR-SLEEVES  
GUIDE FOR  
B2B MARKETERS



WELCOME TO



THE

# CONTENT MARKETING ENLIGHTENMENT

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SHARE ME!



# CONTENT MARKETING HAS EXPLODED

**THAT'S GOOD BECAUSE YOU'VE FINALLY GOT A WAY AROUND THOSE ANNOYING BARRIERS THAT BUYERS TEND TO ERECT WHEN THEY SENSE OLD-SCHOOL MARKETING.**

But it's bad because it means you're competing against a tidal wave of shiny new content from competitors, analysts, thought leaders, bloggers and wannabes.

**Bottom line:** good content isn't enough any more. You need *insanely great* content that's on-strategy and incites action. And you need to deliver it in a consistent, ongoing program.

To do that, you need to step back a little and think about what you're trying to accomplish and who you're trying to motivate.

This the era of *Content Strategy* and it will separate the pros from the amateurs.



# WHY CONTENT IS SO CRITICAL.

## CONTENT IS SO CRITICAL

because people care about their own problems much more than they care about your products.

When you capture your company's expertise and package it up to help your prospects do their jobs, you earn people's attention instead of simply assuming you'll get it.

Content also fuels the three most important weapons in the B2B marketing arsenal:



### Search

If you don't rank on your keywords, you won't get the traffic. Great content propels you up the search rankings.

### Social

Content gives you something to bring to the social party – you don't want to engage empty-handed, do you?

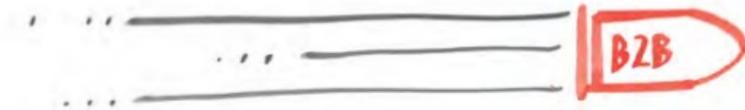
### Outbound

It may be out of fashion but outbound is about to make a comeback. Content gives you an offer for your outbound calls-to-action, driving up response rates.

In short, content is what makes the B2B world go round and the revenue meters sing 'ka-ching!'.

**If you're not getting good at content, prepare to lose market share.**

But you can't just churn out piffle...



## HERE'S A BIG-ASS CHECKLIST TO HELP.

The first part of the checklist is designed to help you hone your content marketing strategy and build the foundations of an ongoing content marketing program.

The second part should help you attack your very next piece.

We hope you won't just read the checklist. We hope you'll print it out and start scribbling away. Use it when you're writing your content marketing strategy, developing a new piece – or whenever you hit a roadblock.

You may need to do this exercise for each product line or one for each region or whatever. But these are the kinds of questions you'll need to answer if you want your content marketing to go faster than a speeding bullet and leap over tall buildings in a single bound (or a series of carefully nurtured smaller bounds).

## HELP US HELP YOU.

If you think we've missed anything important or got something totally wrong (how very dare you), [do give us your comments](#). We want to improve this sucker as we go forward.

(And we'll post updates on how the Checklist campaign is doing on [Velocity's B2B Content Marketing Blog](#) – so do come back).

**Ones we prepared earlier.  
You mean you haven't read  
these yet?**

.....  
[The B2B Content Marketing  
Workbook](#) – a primer.

.....  
[The B2B Marketing Manifesto](#)  
– a frothing rave.

.....  
There's your bedtime reading  
for tonight. Enjoy.  
Night-night. Mwah.



GET OUT YOUR

---

PENCIL

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# THE --- BIG --- PICTURE

TO HELP YOU  
THINK ABOUT YOUR  
WHOLE CONTENT  
MARKETING PROGRAM:



# GOALS

## START BIG AND WORK YOUR WAY DOWN:

Capture what *the business* wants to achieve in the next 6-12 months.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Write down what *marketing* needs to achieve in the next 6-12 months.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Think about what you'd need to change to make these goals happen – and aim high. This isn't just about business as usual.

Prioritise the most important things content can do for you, including:

- Building awareness
- Educating buyers
- Moving leads along the purchase path (nurturing)
- Engaging with all influencers
- Serving existing customers
- Cross-selling or up-selling
- Generating new sales leads
- Establishing your expertise

FOR EACH GOAL YOU CHOOSE, IDENTIFY THE METRICS YOU'LL TRACK.

**Get buy-in on these. Everything depends on clear goals that everyone agrees on – and build them into your analytics!** (see page 25).

**For this B2B Content Marketing Strategy Checklist, the goals are:**

.....

To raise awareness of Velocity among B2B marketers who want to harness the power of content marketing.

.....

To nurture people who downloaded and liked the B2B Marketing Manifesto or the B2B Content Marketing Workbook, moving the right ones one step closer to picking up the phone.

# TARGET AUDIENCES

**SUMMARISE EACH BUYER PERSONA IN A FEW BULLET POINTS AND PRIORITISE:**

Persona 1

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

Persona 2

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

Persona 3

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

Persona 4

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

Persona 5

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

We like to use short, visual personas that include psychographics not just demographics.

**For the Big Fat B2B Content Marketing Strategy Checklist, target persona #1 is:**  
.....  
Martha Watton, 43  
.....  
CMO of a fast-growing £400m software company  
.....  
Ambitious, confident & impatient  
.....  
A big believer in the power of content  
.....  
Her results from old-style campaigns are flattening out  
.....



For more on this check out our [Buyer Persona Resource Round-up.](#)

# TARGET

# BUYING

# STAGES

**EACH PIECE OF CONTENT SHOULD CAUSE A PROSPECT TO MOVE TO THE NEXT STAGE OF THE BUYING JOURNEY.**

Fill in your top personas and use AIDA or whatever buying stages you prefer:

	Awareness	Interest	Desire	Action
Persona:				
1				
2				
3			'ROI' BLOG POST	
4				
5				

Some pieces of content can serve in several different cells. But you do need a sense of progression – so you encourage people to move along your funnel. That's what lead nurturing is all about.

For this Content Marketing Strategy Checklist, we're targeting senior B2B marketers who are already into the idea of content marketing (like Martha Watton, above) and want to get better at it now. So they're our 'Persona 1' and this piece is in the Desire box (overlapping into Action).

It's a follow-up to earlier pieces like the Content Marketing Workbook that was in the Awareness Box and the B2B Marketing Manifesto (Interest).

**It can be helpful to list the questions that buyers have in each stage of the buying process. Then develop content that answers the questions appropriate to the stage you're targeting. For this piece, these might be things like, "How do I best spend my content budget?" or "How do I decide what content to produce?"**

# TRIGGER EVENTS

**ANOTHER WAY TO TARGET CONTENT IS TO THINK ABOUT THE EVENTS WITHIN THE TARGET COMPANY THAT MIGHT TRIGGER INTEREST IN YOUR SOLUTIONS (A MERGER? A NEW CRM SYSTEM?):**

Personas	.....	.....	.....	.....
Trigger:				
1	.....	.....	.....	.....
2	.....	.....	.....	.....
3	.....	.....	.....	CONTENT PIECE
4	.....	.....	.....	.....
5	.....	.....	.....	.....

**Does each trigger have some way of signaling itself?  
How can you know when a prospect experiences one?**

**For the Content Marketing Strategy Checklist, a trigger event may be:**

A B2B company just hired a new CMO

The prospect just had a content marketing success and wants more

How are these two triggers signaled?  
We could look for news of major marketing job moves. But it's mainly through search and social – including tweets and questions on social forums.



**We wrote about B2B Trigger Events here on this post.**



















## PART 1 SUMMARY

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17

# THE BIG PICTURE

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YOUR CONTENT MARKETING PROGRAM  
IS 39 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO SUCCEED  
IF YOU START BY BEING CLEAR ABOUT  
THE THINGS WE JUST DISCUSSED

THE THINGS WE JUST DISCUSSED.

BUT IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO HAVE CLARITY ABOUT GOALS,

PERSONAS AND BUYING STAGES —

YOU ALSO NEED BUY-IN FROM THE WHOLE TEAM.

THIS UP-FRONT INVESTMENT WILL PAY DIVIDENDS.





# TOPICS

## FOR EACH CELL IN YOUR PERSONA / BUYING-STAGE MATRIX, YOU NEED TO GENERATE TOPIC IDEAS.

Just as in the 'themes' section above, decide on your content success criteria and score each topic against them:

Criterion:	1	2	3	4
Theme:				
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

A topic is a theme with a spin and a compelling title. It's where you get specific. If a theme is 'SEO' a topic might be '8 Mistakes in B2B SEO' or 'How B2B SEO differs from B2C' or 'Earning authentic backlinks the sustainable way'.

For the Big Fat Content Marketing Strategy Checklist, we knew the theme was Content Marketing Strategy. The criteria for choosing a topic within this theme were:

Very Shareable

Practical and How-To Oriented

Different from our Content Marketing Workbook

Can Produce in 10 Days

The Checklist came out on top quite quickly. It feels right for the stage of adoption most marketers are in now – and it's a good follow-up to the Content Marketing Workbook that explains basic principles.



















































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