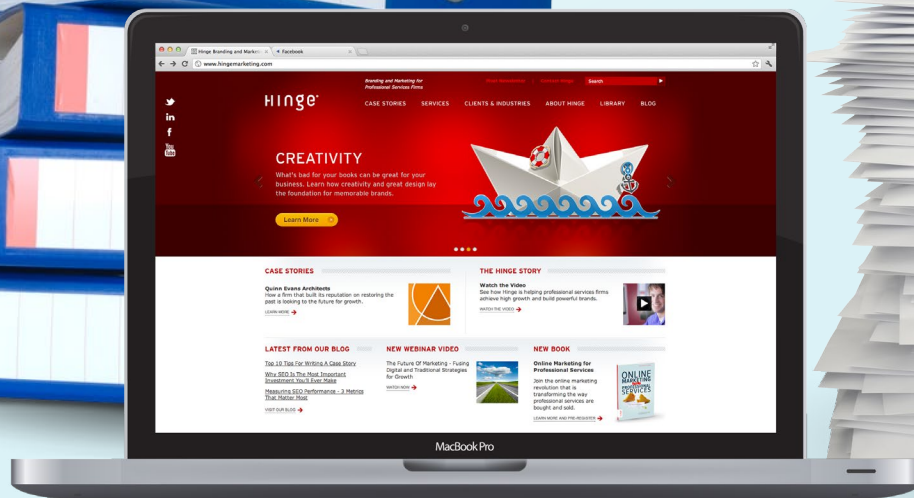

Content Marketing Guide

for Professional Services Firms



The Content Marketing Guide for Professional Services Executives
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About this Guide

What?

A cohesive overview of the business development content marketing approach that is changing professional services.

Why?

There is a revolution, and content marketing is at the heart of it. You need to understand how it applies to your firms professional services marketing.

Who is it from?

This guide was prepared by Hinge, a leader in branding and marketing for professional services firms.

How can Hinge help?

Hinge offers content marketing services in the following areas:

- » Content marketing Strategy
- » Website Redesign
- » Outsourced Blog Writing and Editing
- » Graphic Design and Layout
- » Content Marketing
- » Campaign Management

Additionally Hinge also offers:

- » Branding
- » Award winning creative
- » Research and Strategy
- » Search Engine Optimization
- » Social Media Strategy and implementation

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DEVELOPING YOUR CONTENT MARKETING APPROACH

1 The Case for Content Marketing



Content marketing is fast becoming the approach of choice for branding and marketing professional services. There are several key reasons that this is the case.

We thought it might be a good idea to lay out the case for a content marketing strategy as an approach to growing your professional services firm. We'll also take a look at the limits of content marketing in order to help you make a balanced decision about how it might fit within your firm.

Content Marketing Defined

Content marketing is a strategy based on producing and distributing material that is valuable and interesting to your target audience. That content can come in many formats. Common examples include blog posts, articles, white papers, webinars, videos and books.

But whatever its format, content should be educational, useful or entertaining rather than promotional or sales oriented. Educational content can be very useful in building your firm's brand and developing new clients by giving prospects a taste of how your firm can help them and what it may be like to work with you. Do you come across as authoritative and formal or friendly and approachable?



“Content should be educational, useful or entertaining rather than promotional or sales oriented.”

If your content is useful and engaging, potential clients are more likely to be attracted to your firm, remember you and — when they have a relevant need — contact you. Because prospects are finding you, content marketing is considered a “pull” or inbound strategy as opposed to a “push” or outbound strategy. (There are exceptions, however: content can easily be distributed or pushed out to prospects.)

You may recognize content marketing as a descendent of traditional “thought leadership” strategies. But the emergence of the Internet and social media have helped transform it into a much more powerful force in the new world of professional services marketing.

The Case for Content Marketing

1. Content marketing is a natural fit with professional services. Professional services brands are driven by expertise and client relationships. What better way to demonstrate expertise and let potential clients sample your thinking and approach? If people like what they see and hear, they are likely to include your firm in their pool of potential service providers.
2. Search engines love content. As a matter of fact, the whole purpose of search is to help people find what they are looking for. Nothing greases the skids better than appealing content.

If you are savvy enough to build your content around well-researched keyword phrases, Google will beat a path to your online door. In short, the right people will find you for the right reasons.

3. High quality, relevant content helps qualify and nurture leads and build your brand. Once a potential client has found you, your stream of content will help educate and qualify the prospect as they gain an understanding of your brand. They will either appreciate your value or determine that you are not a good fit.

Either way, this is something they will do on their own. You don’t need to convince them. They will educate themselves, saving you considerable time and expense.



“Nothing greases the skids better than appealing content.”

4. It is less expensive. A recent study by Hubspot revealed that the average cost of a lead generated by inbound marketing techniques (those driven by content marketing) was 60% less (\$134 vs. \$332) than leads generated from more traditional outbound marketing tactics. Now there is a reason you can take right down to the accounting department!

5. Content marketing works around the clock and around the globe. There is no better feeling than to come into the office to find a brand new, well-qualified lead waiting for you. Yum, yum. Sure beats endless hours at boring, uncomfortable networking events.

Equally important, content marketing attracts prospects based on interest and affinity, not just geography. This is key in a world where location is steadily becoming less important. It is a fast track to becoming a national or international firm.

It's easy to see the appeal of content marketing for professional services. But what about the dark side?

The Case Against Content Marketing

1. It's not easy. Developing great content is not always easy. Most content marketing is poorly executed and can easily turn into client repellent and a brand spoiler.

2. It takes time to build up a stock of valuable content. It can take months of steady work to begin seeing results. Folks sometimes get discouraged and give up too soon.

3. You have to keep at it. Just like any other marketing approach, if you stop doing it, it will eventually stop working. The need to keep producing over time can be a big challenge for some firms. But then again that is true for most marketing approaches.

“They will educate themselves, saving you considerable time and expense.”



4. Competition is increasing. As the benefits of content marketing become more visible to professional services firms, more of them are jumping on the bandwagon. The inevitable result is increased competition for potential clients' attention.

Upping the bar inevitably increases costs. This forces firms to become more creative and explore new strategies and techniques.

Is content marketing right for your professional services firm? In the next chapter, we'll show you how you might go about developing a content marketing playbook for your firm.

“Folks sometimes get discouraged and give up too soon.”



Want to do it yourself?

From step-by-step How-Tos to in-depth courses, Hinge University will give you the skills and know-how to elevate your brand.

Check out Hinge University: [HingeUniversity.com](https://www.hingeuniversity.com)

2 Developing Your Content Marketing Playbook



When executed correctly, content marketing allows you to attract and qualify potential clients and build significant trust. Think traditional speaking engagements taken online and supercharged.

But many firms struggle to get started and organize their efforts. We recently conducted a webinar with Content Marketing Institute founder Joe Pulizzi that laid out several fundamental principles that you can use as you develop your own content marketing strategy.

Here are the key take-aways for building your firm's content marketing playbook:



1. Content marketing drives professional services firm growth and profitability:

Our research shows that the fastest-growing and most profitable firms are generating more leads online. And many of them are doing it with basic content marketing vehicles such as blogging, articles, ebooks, newsletters and the like. These pieces are directly supported by search engine optimization (SEO), which helps people find them online.

2. To be effective it must be non-sales focused:

While it is important to present your sales message on your website, content marketing is different. It's about providing useful, non-sales-oriented information.

Some large brand marketers will have multiple independent platforms that function as online publications or content hubs. But for most professional services firms, a blog and/or content library is usually sufficient.

3. Give away the secret sauce:

This is a very important insight for professional services firms and one of Joe's key points. Many marketers are afraid to give away too much information for fear that potential clients will no longer need them.

Well, consider these two observations. First, if you don't educate your prospects, someone else will. Second, if they are planning to do it on their own, they were never going to be your client in the first place.

The more useful your information, the more serious prospects will trust you — and the more likely they are to hire you when the time is right. That's a powerful competitive advantage.

4. Staff the function adequately and appropriately:

Don't make success impossible by under-resourcing the content generation and promotion function. There are at least four distinct roles involved in the process: (1) high level strategic guidance, (2) content production, (3) editorial guidance and (4) promotion (often involving social media). Skimp on any of these, and it's tough to succeed.

The good news is that many firms successfully outsource one or more of these functions. [Full disclosure: Hinge does this type of work for professional services firms.]

5. Leverage your employees and partners to create content:

If you are like most professional services firms, you have some very smart experts on your team. And since your people are your product, it is natural to have them write content.

Now, it's possible that some of your best experts are busy with billable work or just plain bad writers. That is where adequately resourcing the function (see number 4 above) comes into play.



“If you don't educate your prospects, someone else will.”

A skilled writer can conduct a brief interview with the expert and turn it into useful, easily digestible content that attracts potential clients. Even dry technical papers can be reworked and broken down into appealing pieces.

6. Build a community of influencers:

It's not enough to have a trove of great content. It must be shared and promoted to make content marketing work, and social media is fantastic way to get the word out. How? Become a social media sharer.

As you run across other people's content, share it on LinkedIn, Twitter or another favorite platform. But be sure to insert some of your own content occasionally in this flow.

Joe Pulizzi recommends a 4-1-1 formula. For every 4 pieces of other people's content, promote 1 of your own non-sales educational pieces and 1 promotional piece (such as an offer). The goal is to develop reciprocal sharing relationships with influencers that allow your content to be found.

7. Have content at different levels:

Try to make most of your content readily available and easily found on search engines. That means you won't want to put the majority of your content behind registration forms. Think blog posts articles, videos, infographics, and the like.

But more valuable and lengthy material may require the exchange of some information for a download. Just keep in mind that the more detailed, "sales-qualification" information you require, the fewer downloads you are likely to get.

And when you require registration, make sure the follow up content you deliver is not superficial or self-serving. That would destroy the trust you have worked to build.

Keep these points in mind as you draw up your own content marketing playbook.

“The goal is to develop reciprocal sharing relationships with influencers that allow your content to be found.”



3 The Content Marketing Process



Looking to understand the new online lead generation process? Want to harness it to boost the growth and profitability of your firm?

A whole new process is revolutionizing the way professional services firms find new clients. We call it the Content Marketing Model.

Trust and expertise are still important. But these days, time on the golf course and personal referrals aren't the only paths to building relationships. Firms are also building trusting relationships by sharing valuable content and engaging potential clients online.

Busy executives want answers, and they want them now. They want to find out more on the issues and possible solutions relevant to their fields. But they don't want to waste precious time doing it.

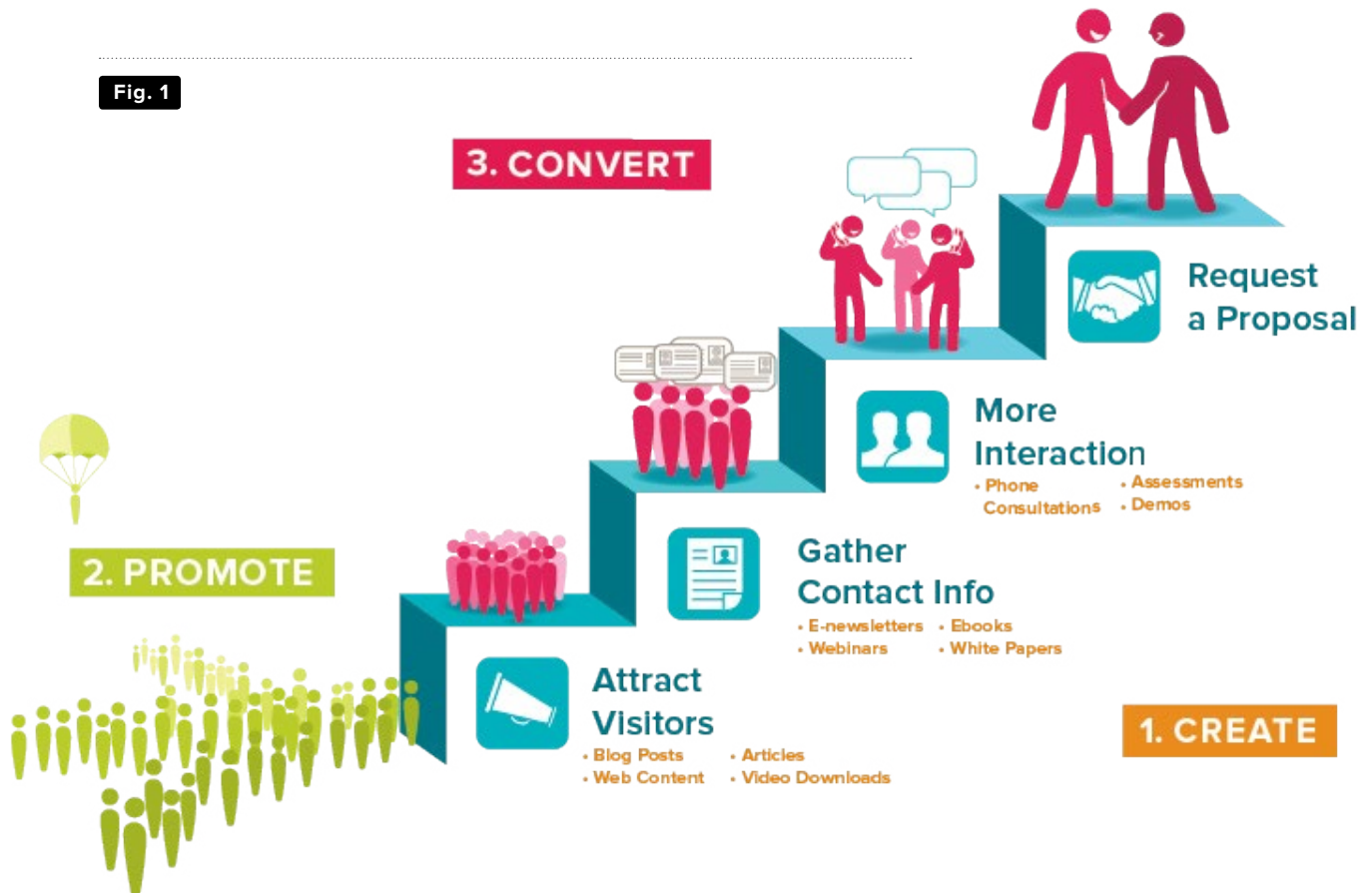


“Busy executives want answers, and they want them now.”

The Content Marketing Model Defined

The Content Marketing Model focuses on building trust and engagement one step at a time. That process is illustrated in Figure 1.

Fig. 1



The process starts when you attract people to your website with useful, engaging content that is relevant to target clients' interests and needs. Such content shows your expertise.

When the content proves useful, potential clients will want more. By offering visitors more valuable and in-depth content, you encourage them to share their contact information with you. Each email address you receive is your first "conversion" (a potential client). It's the start of a two-way dialogue where you can offer still more engaging and in-depth content via email.

Potential clients who remain interested and engaged will take the next step at some point, allowing for more discussion. Perhaps they will respond to an offer for a free consultation or a product demo.

Finally, they will ask for proposals, and you'll have an opportunity to convert them into clients. Each step in the process has allowed them to gain trust in you and learn about your expertise by "sampling" it.

Along the way, you have also been indirectly qualifying them as potential clients. If your content is relevant to them through progressive stages of the buying process, they are qualifying themselves through their continued interest.

The beauty of the model is that potential clients each progress at the pace that is right for their situation. You are not chasing people, trying to "sell them something." They are taking the next steps when they are ready.

So how do you put this model in place? There are three basic processes that work together. Let's look at each in turn.

"The content marketing process involves building trust one step at a time."

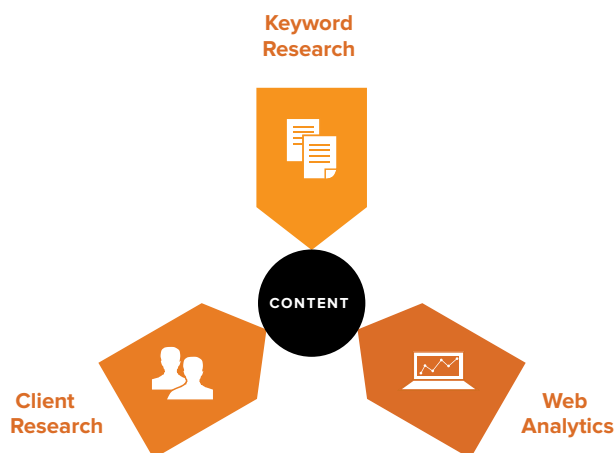


The Three Content Marketing Processes

1. Create. You start by developing content that interests prospects at various stages of the buying process (see Figure 2).

Fig. 2

1. CREATE



How do you know what type of content to produce? That's where research comes in—study your clients and their needs. It's also essential to research keywords in order to make your content easy to find online.

Additionally, be sure you understand and use your website analytics. These tools help pinpoint what topics are of interest to visitors and where your traffic is coming from. Taken together, this information helps you zero in on the most significant and valuable content.

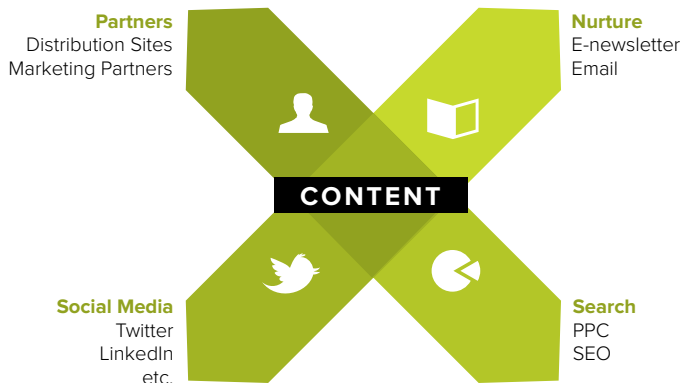
2. Promote. Next, you promote that useful content through a wide variety of channels (see Figure 3). Here is where social media really adds value. Great content and social media sharing go perfectly hand in hand.



“Content is also very well suited to improving search engine rankings.”

Fig. 3

2.PROMOTE



Content is also very well suited to improving search engine rankings. Each blog post represents another long tailed keyword ranking opportunity. That's why SEO considerations are so integral to the process of creating content. It allows potential clients to locate you and your valuable content.


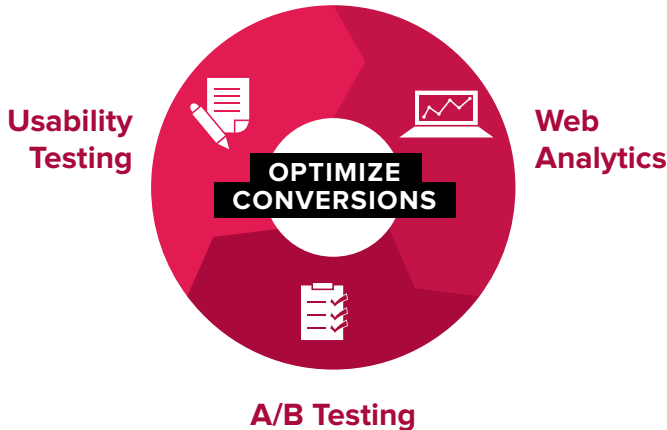
Don't neglect using your marketing partners to promote your content as well. Their support can help extend your reach and integrate online and offline efforts.

Finally, keep in mind that sharing new content is also an effective way to nurture your existing leads. Promote new content through newsletters, email, webinars, and the like.

3. Convert. The third key process is converting visitors into clients. You convert a visitor (see Figure 4) by presenting those offers that move them up the scale of engagement.

Fig. 4

3.CONVERT



Need some help?

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For example, someone reading a blog post may see an offer to download an ebook relevant to that specific post's topic. Because they are interested in learning more on the topic, they decide to download the ebook. In exchange you get an email address that allows you to offer more engaging content.

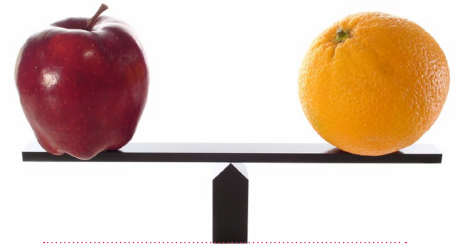
The ebook may contain an offer for a free consultation or a free assessment that the reader eventually pursues. In this way you continually present opportunities for greater levels of interaction and engagement.

Here is where AB testing, web analytics, and usability testing will help you optimize your lead generation process. The information they provide enhances your ability to systematically move prospects up the scale of engagement.

Reducing Confusion

Content marketing is simple in concept but can be confusing in practice. Where do I start? Which tools do I need? How do all of these tools fit together? Hopefully this model helps put them into a practical working context.

Implemented in isolation, these marketing techniques can produce a lot of frustration and wasted effort. But used in concert, within an easily understood model, they can establish a lead generation process that drives both faster growth and greater firm profitability.



“Here is where AB testing, web analytics, and usability testing will help you optimize your lead generation process.”

DEVELOPING GREAT CONTENT

4 Creating Your Content Marketing Library



It is becoming increasingly important to develop unique, valuable content that lives on your website. When you regularly publish blog posts, white papers, articles, speeches, research studies and other content that appeals to your target prospects, you accomplish two objectives:

1. Boost SEO – Every piece of content on your site is another chance to be indexed in search engines. For instance, if you write a post called “How to Hire an Accountant” and someone searches Google for “how to hire an accountant,” that person may end up on your site.

2. Build Trust – Having useful content on your site helps web visitors through the buying process. The more they use your company as a source for education, the more they will grow to trust you and turn to you when they need services.

Content expert Sonja Jefferson explains in her valuable content blog that your material can be split into two categories:

- **Stock** – Long-lasting content with true remarkable value such as research reports and ebooks.
- **Flow** – Everyday content meant for community-type conversation. Examples include blog posts and tweets.

“Every piece of content on your site is another chance to be indexed in search engines.”



At Hinge, our stock and flow differ considerably. Some of our stock pieces, such as our book, *Spiraling Up* and our professional services research studies, require a great deal of research and take months or years to complete.

In contrast, our flow takes on more of a casual tone and is meant to convey our knowledge in smaller chunks.

As a result, we know our stock content incredibly well. When we are networking (in person or online), we often cite our research and other content. Having this body of unique content adds great value to any conversation and generates quick credibility.

If you are interested in building a content marketing library, start creating content today. Create a blog and get writing! But also begin to think about a long-term piece of work, such as an e-book, that you can promote over time. It should be substantive and substantial.

Content marketing is going to generate interest and credibility. But you must have something substantial behind it. The sooner you start creating, the sooner your website activity will spark and generate new opportunities. The next chapter tells you how to generate both stock and flow efficiently.



Want to do it yourself?

From step-by-step How-Tos to in-depth courses, Hinge University will give you the skills and know-how to elevate your brand.

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5 Making Content Marketing More Efficient



The benefits of content marketing are easy to see. What firm doesn't want to position itself as a thought leader, dominate search engines, and flourish in social media groups?

For many firms, content marketing has one major downside—it sucks up time. There are only so many hours in a day, and you'd like most of them to be billable. So when do you find time to write blog posts, shoot videos, present webinars, and compile ebooks?

For all of you who aspire to conquer the world of content marketing, I have a little secret...

It's called content efficiency.

Content efficiency is the practice of repurposing your educational content in various formats. In other words, it's tripling or quadrupling the number of pieces you publish on your website without tripling the number of fresh ideas you have to come up with.

As an example, let's take a look at two technology companies and the content they plan to publish in an upcoming month.

“Content efficiency is the practice of repurposing your educational content in various formats.”



Company 1—No Content Efficiency

- A blog post on business intelligence
- A blog post on portals
- A blog post on Cognos software
- A blog post on video data analysis
- A webinar on a new product that just came out
- A short ebook on document management
- A podcast about a Microsoft update

(Phew, that was a lot of work!)

Company 2—Great Content Efficiency

- A four-part blog series on business intelligence
- A webinar on business intelligence covering the points from the posts
- A short ebook compiled from the four repurposed blog posts
- A podcast of an interview with the ebook author

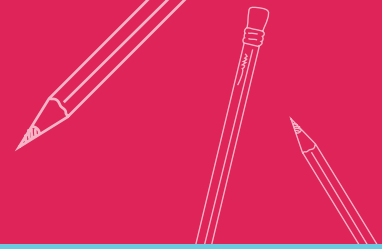
(OMG, that was so easy!)

You'll notice that the number of pieces remains the same; however, Company 2 has to do a lot less mental legwork than Company 1. Establishing a monthly or quarterly theme can go a long way toward making B2B content marketing manageable.

Does every piece of content need to fit the theme? Of course not. Providing a bit of variety always helps keep things fresh. But by tying a many of your pieces to one topic area, you'll find your content producers stressing far less about finding that next new topic.

So before you say “I can’t” to content marketing, try using the content efficiency. Your firm may just find that effective content marketing is very achievable.

6 Top 10 Tips for Writing a Case Story



Does writing a case story feel like a bad trip to the dentist? You are not alone. Most professional services firms seem to struggle with them.

Yet we all know that we should do more. They can be an important part of your content marketing strategy. If done well they can attract new prospects and help close more business.

Here are some of our favorite tips to make the process easier and much more effective.

1. Involve the client very early.

Some clients will shy away from participating and others have firm policies against them. But for many clients, being considered as a case story will be a strong positive. They can look forward to special treatment and the possibility of increased visibility. This not only helps you gain cooperation, it also encourages you to collect good information on the “before” situation.

2. Identify the client.

This is a huge credibility booster and should be done if at all possible. Yes, there are some circumstances where you cannot for ethical or legal reasons. But for many situations it is possible. And when you can, it is very helpful.

“A quote from the client is another great way to add believability and credibility to your case story.”

3. Use a quote.

A quote from the client is another great way to add believability and credibility to your case story. Also consider a quote from the professional from your firm that did the work. This helps make it seem more real and easier to identify with.

4. Include keywords in the title and body copy.

Do an SEO keyword analysis of your topic and include them when you are writing. This will help the search engines find the case story and spread the word. Some common keywords include the name of the client's company and the nature of the service you provided.

5. Use numbers.

Numbers add credibility in a way words do not. They can be useful in describing the magnitude of a challenge, the process you used and, of course, the results you achieved. Don't be concerned if you don't have perfect documentation. Even a few numbers help.

6. Tell a story.

Good stories have a beginning, a middle and an end. They also have a struggle against the odds and a turning point. If it is too easy there is no tension or suspense. Will it work or not? While we are not suggesting turning your case stories into literature, a little bit of old fashion story telling will go a long ways toward increasing reader interest and engagement.

7. Use pictures.

Often overlooked, this is a great way to communicate a setting or give you a quick feel for a client. While most professional services do not easily lend themselves to a picture of the service (try photographing an audit or a computer program) there are other alternatives. How about a picture of the client's facility or their product? Think broader and you will find interesting subjects to spice up your case story.



“Numbers
add
credibility in
a way words
do not.”

8. Avoid jargon.

Have mercy on your readers and avoid industry jargon and acronyms. A surprising number of readers will not understand what you are trying to communicate. Assume you are writing a case story for your aunt to read and you won't be far off. Also make the case story easy to skim. Use short sentences, descriptive headings and bullet points.

9. Use Video.

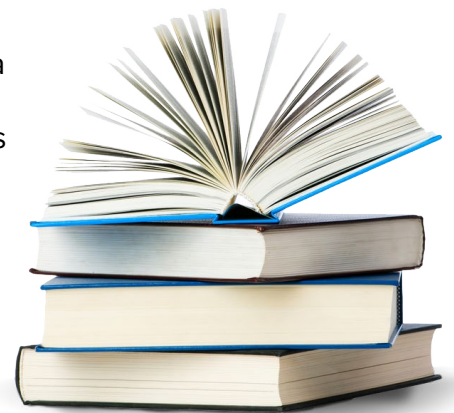
This is an increasingly common approach to telling a professional services case story. A professionally produced video can communicate a client's experience and enthusiasm in a way that words alone cannot. Video is especially appropriate if you have a high profile client who is excited about your service.

10. Get professional help.

You do not have to do it all alone. Using a professional to write a case story or edit a draft you have written can be a very smart move. Given the obvious role that case stories can play in your content marketing campaign it just makes sense to do it right. For many firms, a single new client pays for all the case studies you'll need to write.

Writing a case story doesn't have to be so painful. By using some of the tips we've outlined it can actually be interesting and very profitable for your firm.

“Have mercy on your readers and avoid industry jargon and acronyms.”



Need some help?

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Tips and Blunders

7 10 Tips for Better Marketing Content

As we've just noted, content marketing is fast becoming the way to market professional services. Create great content and you will attract prospective clients who are looking for exactly what you offer.

The next logical iteration of "thought leadership," content marketing is more than a great concept. When implemented correctly it produces impressive results.

But how do you develop great content?

Here are ten practical tips to improve the readability and usefulness of your content. After all, if no one reads it, is it really content marketing?

1. Try to make your content really, really useful.

Forget scholarly. Forget technical excellence. Stop trying to show the reader how smart you are. Write something very useful and very practical.

An in-depth analysis of an issue is fine. But a step-by-step plan for solving the problem it creates is much better. 'How' is better than 'why.'



“Write something very useful and very practical.”

2. Write to a real person.

Think about someone you know in the target audience (you've got a target audience, right?) and write it for them. Some firms create detailed personas of fictional readers to write to. That's fine too.

Remember, audiences don't read things. Individuals do. Write it so the reader feels it's written for them.

3. Your reader is in the 5th grade.

A 5th grade reading level is a great target. Most adults find this accessible and comfortable. This means lose the big words, technical jargon and complex sentence structure.

Your English teacher may have loved it. Your readers won't. Clear, easy-to-understand arguments make you seem smart, not big words.

4. The title is the most important part of your content.

Don't be mysterious or clever. People don't generally read things because they are intrigued. And search engines even less so.

A keyword rich title that says exactly what the piece is about is easiest to find on the web and will attract the right readers. Would you be reading this if it was titled "Principles to Facilitate Reader Engagement in Professional Communications"? Sometimes a provocative or clever title can work, but don't expect a search engine to get your drift.

5. Make it easy to scan.

Numbered lists, bulleted lists, descriptive headers, call outs, short paragraphs and white space are your friends.

Long sentences, long paragraphs, large blocks of copy and long pages are your enemies. Most content is scanned and skimmed. Write accordingly.

6. No sales pitch please.

Content marketing is not an excuse to launch into a sales pitch. It comes across as bait and switch and is an instant credibility killer. Don't be that person. Content marketing is a way to attract and nurture prospects, not close them.



“Most content is scanned and skimmed. Write accordingly.”

7. Always offer a next step.

Offer an additional, related piece of content, another resource, or a sign up for an informative newsletter. More information or a way to maintain the relationship is appropriate and often appreciated. While it may seem similar to a sales pitch, it is not. When prospects are ready for the pitch they will let you know. Subtle is the watch word here.

8. Tell a story.

Once upon a time there was a story. And when people heard the story they listened and learned the lesson.

As time went by they remembered the story and repeated it to their friends and colleagues. And soon they began to contact the storyteller because they wanted to know more.

As word of the story spread, the storyteller made many new friends, grew a fat book of clients and lived happily ever after. The end.

9. More specific please.

Generalities are okay. Specifics are better. Offer a specific example of a general principle. List specific steps rather than a general approach.

Adding specifics may force you to narrow the focus of your content. That is generally a good thing.

10. Add a touch of personality.

As professional service providers, we are taught to be objective and dispassionate. Our writing should be “professional” and even a tad obtuse. That approach does not translate well into content marketing.

Sure, it’s appropriate to take a more academic tone in a research report. But when it comes to your blog posts, try delivering a little personality.

Photos help. So do anecdotes and experiences. Your personal experience can be the foundation of your stories (see number 8 above). Don’t go overboard though. No one cares about your cat.



“Generalities
are okay.
Specifics are
better.”

8 5 Big Blunders to Avoid



So you are ready to jump on the content marketing bandwagon. Smart move. As a matter of fact it is also a popular move. A recent study by the Content Marketing Institute shows that 94% of professional services firms are using some form of content marketing. Ponder that for a moment.

With this level of activity there is bound to be some confusion about how to do content marketing the right way. And that is exactly what is happening. Some folks are making content marketing mistakes and are probably not even be aware of it. Don't be that person.

Let's step back for a moment and consider some of the most common content marketing blunders.

1. The Right Content in the Wrong Place.

So you have developed a really useful piece of content, and now you want to share it. What do you do? Avoid the temptation to share it indiscriminately with everyone you know and in every group you belong to.

“A piece of content that may be very relevant and useful to one audience may feel like spam to another.”



A piece of content that may be very relevant and useful to one audience may feel like spam to another. Sharing the wrong content can actually hurt your credibility. If you are not certain, don't share. If you do not receive positive feedback from your audience, you may have missed the mark.

2. Too Much Detail.

Business executives are busy people. They are looking for content that simplifies and explains complicated, esoteric topics. They want to understand what they need to know.

Content marketing is not the place to cram in every detail. Your potential clients will not be impressed.

They are looking for a professional who can simplify the complex, not one that further complicates what is already confusing. Lawyers, CPAs and IT Consultants are frequent offenders here.

3. Superficial Blather.

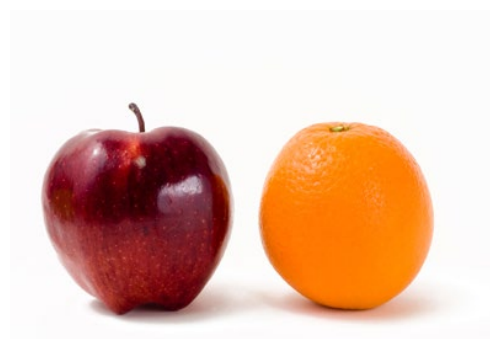
I vividly remember the reaction of one professional services CEO when we suggested that content marketing would be a natural fit with his firm's objectives. It bordered on revulsion as he spat out the word "Never"!

When we calmed him down we learned the reason behind his reaction. To him content marketing was synonymous with superficial. The light content he was envisioning added no value and was not something he wanted his firm to be associated with.

Unfortunately it is true. There are many firms pumping out fluff. In trying to avoid too much detail don't go to the other extreme.

4. Focus on the Right Problem.

This one is subtle but dangerous. It is hard to put yourself in the client's shoes. It's very easy to focus on an issue from your own point of view and offer advice that would make your life easier.



“But don't confuse marketing copy with content marketing.”

For instance, let's say you offer financial management services and many of your clients keep poor records. It would be very easy to fall into a pattern of lecturing clients on the importance of good record keeping.

The client, however, may be more interested in learning about a ways to avoid keeping so many detailed records. Same problem, very different perspectives.

5. No Self-Serving.

The final, and perhaps most widespread, problem in content marketing is creating self-serving content. It is tempting to write content that promotes your firm and its services — all of which may well be true.

But don't confuse marketing copy with content marketing. They are not the same thing.

Content marketing is about sharing your valuable expertise and insight. Marketing copy is about telling the story of your firm. Don't mix them up or you will destroy the very trust you are trying to create.

Avoid these five content marketing blunders and you will be on your way to cracking the content marketing code.

Conclusion

Content marketing is a natural fit with professional services firms.

- » It builds trust
- » Attracts new prospects
- » Nurtures and qualifies them
- » Educated them in what you do and how you approach problems

At the end of the content marketing process they are ready to engage with a professional and don't need to be "sold" or cajoled into working with your firm. They already know who you are and how you think.

The question of effectiveness has already been well answered by extensive research on professional services firms. For most firms it boils down to the simple question of "How?". That is where this guide and the referenced resources help you take the next step.

About Hinge



Hinge specializes in branding and marketing for the professional services. We are a leader in rebranding firms to help them grow faster and maximize value.

Our comprehensive offerings include research and strategy, brand development, award-winning creative, high performance websites and marketing outsourcing.

Hinge conducts groundbreaking research on professional service companies. We have identified a group of firms that grow 9X faster and are 50% more profitable yet spend less than average to get new business. We can show you how they do it.

To view our full library of research reports, white papers, webinars and articles, please visit www.hingemarketing.com/library

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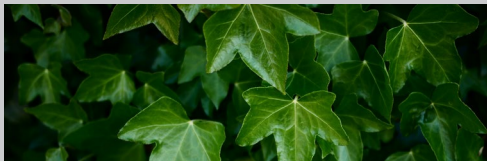
Thank you!

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Visible Firm® Program

Designed to deliver more referrals, higher profits, and faster growth, the Visible Firm® Program will build a powerful marketing platform to engage your audiences and build your visibility. Based on the most extensive research into high-growth firms ever conducted, the Visible Firm® Program will ground your marketing in science and leverage your firm's expertise to draw in the right audiences.

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