Content strategy Implementation Guide

Simon Kingsnorth



These materials are most effective when used in association with the book Digital Marketing Strategy

DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

Content strategy Implementation Guide

This guide is designed to give you a step by step guide to implementing your content strategy.

Other guides are available for other digital marketing channels. To best understand how this fits into your broader strategy see the book Digital Marketing Strategy by Simon Kingsnorth.

How it works

The guide is designed to be as easy to use as possible. Each guide is broken down into simple, key steps to take to ensure your strategy is as effectively and smoothly implemented as possible. So less of this chat and let's get to the detail.

1 Understand the key pillars of content

Is it credible, is it shareable, is it you? If you can answer yes to these three questions, you've understood how to create content that resonates. Timely, legitimately useful(fun, interesting or informative) content that is authentic for your brand, is infinitely more shareable than something that is of poor quality or nakedly follows a trend. AI tools can be used to assist in creating content but always maintain human oversight and ensure ethical use of AI.

2 Consider these content opportunities

When it comes to content, most people think first of blogs, guides and other text-based products, but there are plenty of other ways to draw your audience's attention. Short-form videos, think TikTok, Instagram Reels, or YouTube Shorts, are dominating attention spans, while interactive formats like quizzes, polls, and shoppable videos keep users engaged. Audiobooks and podcasts are immensely popular and relatively cheap to produce, likewise for infographics and memes. Live streaming can be done from anywhere there is internet. Tools like calculators and pension planners help bring in qualified leads through search. Virtual and augmented reality are now being used more frequently in retail, training, and event content. Meanwhile, Web3 is opening the door to decentralised publishing, token-gated content access, and immersive experiences across digital communities.

3 Consider your target audience and motivation

In order to determine what medium will best relay the message, it's necessary to be sure about who you are advertising to and where they are in the buying cycle.

Podcasts are great for growing a loyal following of under-40s keen to buy services, but for Baby Boomers, white papers and testimonials make more sense. For B2B marketing, consider using an Account-Based Marketing approach to tailor content to specific roles within your target organization.

4

Organizing your people for content strategy

Creating effective content starts in the C-suite. When the IT, PR, SEO and marketing, branding and strategy departments work in silos, they often end up working against each other because there is no company- wide content plan. It's up to the CEO to create a culture and physical office space where departments are able to collaborate freely.

5

Developing content processes

Because content is a creative process, it's tempting just to dive right in and see what happens. While this is fun, it's not especially efficient or sustainable. A better idea is to think carefully about campaign objectives and strategy, analyse the data, sharply define your target groups and ring fence time for ideation. Only then does the content planning and creation begin. Consider using AI to streamline content production tasks, such as drafting first versions or creating variations for testing.

6

Establish clear objectives

Content is meant to help achieve business objectives, not content objectives. Are you looking to create awareness, change an existing perception, increase engagement, drive sales, or improve customer loyalty and satisfaction? Of course, these objectives don't exist independently to each other, but it's worth thinking about their priority order.

7

Understand the data

You know your target audience, but do you know what your competitors are doing or how exactly existing content pieces are performing? Brand guidelines tell who you think you are, but surveys, focus groups and interviews, along with keyword research, tell you how your customers see you. AI can analyse large data sets to detect trends and audience sentiment, and suggest smart objectives based on this.

8

Build target groups

Most marketers labour under the illusion that customers already love their brand. The truth is, customers mostly don't care about you. To better reach them, find out what problem they're having, where they like to hang out (Facebook, the pub, Medium) and how they like to be told about your solution (ads, referrals, information products). Use tools like site analytics, CRM data, social listening, and AI-powered platforms to uncover real behavioural trends, not just assumptions.

9 Ideation

Anyone can contribute to content ideation, and often it's helpful to have input from a perspective outside the project. The only requirement is that all participants are familiar with the research. Brainstorming is a very common ideation method, but I prefer the more structured brainwriting, which gives 108 options in less than 30 minutes. AI can now support every stage of marketing, including the creative phase - use AI tools to generate ideas, summarise audience pain points, or suggest high-performing content based on recent trends.

10 Creation & Planning

With all the research and thinking taken care of, now the challenge is telling the content creators, either agency or in-house, what you need. In addition to regularly scheduled (proactive) content, you will need to make a plan for what to do if there is an upset in sports or politics or someone famous in your field dies. When done properly, reactive content can result in very high levels of engagement. Slow approval processes or patchy holiday and out-of-hours cover could mean mishandling the moment or missing it altogether. Mitigate this by assigning responsibilities, escalation paths, and pre-approved templates. Consider using AI tools to accelerate basic content drafts and approvals, especially during holidays or weekends.

11 Distribution

Companies can choose from three distribution channels to help get their message out. Owned channels, the company website and social media profiles are the most reliable, because you can post information about anything near-instantly. Earned media - journalists, podcasters, social media users - can bring strong engagement, but it is not easy to control. Paid distribution can be adverts in traditional and social media, making use of content distribution platforms or paid search advertising. Consider whether your audience uses decentralised platforms that require new distribution formats.

12 Measuring success

The last step is to find out how well a piece of content really performed. This is done with metrics which quantify volume and reach (social media reach and backlinks), engagement (bounce rate, amplification, social triggers) and acquisitions and value (conversion percentage and cost-per-lead/sale).

Measuring failure is important as well. Not all content will perform as planned, and there is much that can be learned from looking at where things went wrong. Use dashboards and AI-powered analytics to detect performance patterns and surface hidden insights. Predictive metrics can also help estimate the future impact of a content piece before it's fully deployed.

13 Consider international content

What works in your home market may not necessarily work in another country. Though it seems near-impossible to Westerners, Yandex or Baidu are much more popular than Google in Russia and China, and the percentage of people with smartphones varies widely even within a country.

Digital maturity, device usage, platform preferences, and regulatory environments vary widely by region. Consider localised content calendars, platform selection, and timing based on regional behaviour.

Jokes that work in the UK often don't translate in the U.S, and Black Friday sales aren't much use in Ghana. When it comes to the content itself, it is essential that it is created by native speakers. There isn't much that erodes brand authority as quickly as a website full of unidiomatic howlers. Unless that's your thing, in which case, fire up Google Translate and get to it.

