



let's get
STRATEGIC

LINDA POPHAL

Considerations for 2024 Content Marketing Planning

As we draw closer to another new year, it's time for organizations to begin considering their content marketing strategy for 2024. The past year has seen some significant changes in the communication and marketing landscape, and marketing leaders will need to consider them as they prepare for the year ahead. Here we take a look at effective strategic content marketing planning for 2024.

STRATEGIC PLANNING: WHAT'S INVOLVED

Strategic planning is the process of considering a wide range of inputs (internal and external) related to strengths and weaknesses (internal) and opportunities and threats (external) that could impact—positively or negatively—your ability to achieve your goals. A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis is generally done in a brainstorming session after participants have reviewed information that might include the prior year's sales and revenue data, customer satisfaction data, and marketing and digital marketing results. Specific goals are identified; then, based on the SWOT analysis, strategies and tactics are developed that are designed to achieve those goals. Content marketing planning, of course, is one subset of an overall corporate marketing plan—and, likely, also a subset of an overall marketing plan. As an area of focus, content marketing planning might incorporate or consider certain key things.

KEY ELEMENTS OF CONTENT MARKETING PLANNING

Cath Brands, CMO at the Flintfox intelligent pricing platform, says, "As part of our 2024 content marketing planning process, we are collecting, analyzing, and utilizing data from this year and the previous few years, as well as taking future trends into consideration to make our content plans and decisions for 2024 and beyond." Sales data can be particularly useful if you can get it, notes Michael Power, CMO at design company DTF Transfers. "I'd highly recommend getting sales to send their 2023 data to you for review," he says, acknowledging that this can sometimes be a challenge. Still, Power adds, it's important for companies to bridge the typical gap between the sales and marketing functions: "You want to see what sales can offer you about customer behavior to help inform the kind of content you create next year."

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Vaibhav Kakkar, CEO and founder of Digital Web Solutions, a company that helps agencies accelerate their growth, recommends that content marketing planners keep the following in mind:

- An audience-centric approach is still critical, and it requires a deep understanding of changing consumer behaviors and preferences.
- Search intent optimization is gaining significance as search engines are continuing to prioritize user intent.
- Leveraging emerging technologies, such as AI-generated content and voice-search optimization, will be core elements of content strategy for 2024.



- Incorporating social and environmental responsibility into content strategies is likely to resonate with consumers who are conscious of environmental, social, and governance (ESG).

Maintaining a consistent brand message throughout the year is important, but it can be challenging, Power says. For some, this may involve “getting your central themes out early and planning large content initiatives early in the year, so you can launch them in spring and maximize your reach ahead of the summer slowdown,” he explains. Scheduling will, of course, depend on each organization’s unique sales cycles.

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HOW 2024 PLANNING IS LIKELY TO BE DIFFERENT

Despite consistencies in the approaches content marketers will take in 2024, there are some key changes and new impacts. “I’d say the chief question we’re asking ourselves right now is, ‘How can we best plan to repurpose content?’” Power states. “In our AI age, creating new content is no large issue, nor is it hard to come up with ideas.” Additionally, in 2024, Power’s company is looking at going more modular. “The ebooks we write in the first quarter can become white papers in the third quarter, informed and expanded by the data we collect in the first half of

the year,” he says. “Surveys we run on social media turn into blog post data later on.”

The biggest difference that Brands anticipates for 2024 “is in the tools and systems that are actively being used to plan for next year’s content strategy.” Most of these “are new, so we’re looking to adapt and get the most out of them.” The rapid emergence of generative AI and the widespread availability of other tech tools will obviously impact content marketers and their planning in ways that can be challenging to anticipate at this point.

Flexibility, adaptability, and ongoing measuring and monitoring will be more critical than ever. Despite the massive changes facing most marketers, Kakkar points out that the power of storytelling remains undiminished: “Connecting with audiences through compelling narratives that evoke emotions will continue to be a cornerstone of successful content marketing in 2024.”

BEST PRACTICES

As you approach your planning for 2024, there are some important best practices to keep in mind. An often overlooked one is including employees in the planning process and making sure they understand the plan and their role in helping to achieve it. “Employees who help plan out and execute our content marketing campaigns are now actively involved in the content strategy, and their experience and knowledge are incredibly valuable and important for our overall decision making,” Brands says.

Luke Battye, managing partner at the Sprint Valley consultancy, agrees that customer-facing teams can be an especially important source of input. “Your team may be your fastest—and cheapest—route to uncovering insights that can make your content strategy more powerful,” he says. “Use these teams to surface insights or unmet content needs and use them as a panel to review early concepts you’re exploring to help validate your thinking,” Battye suggests. “These teams are your in-house customer experts. Treat them as such!”

To succeed in 2024, Kakkar says that strategic content marketing planning “demands an audience-centric, multi-format, and technology-driven approach that emphasizes authenticity, ethical considerations, data insights, and impactful storytelling.” By addressing these considerations, “businesses can navigate the evolving digital landscape and forge meaningful connections with their target audiences in the year ahead.”

LINKS TO THE SOURCES

Flintfox
flintfox.com

DTF Transfers
dtftransfers.com

Digital Web Solutions
digitalwebsolutions.com

Sprint Valley
sprintvalley.com



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