100 MISTAKES BUSINESSES MAKE

WHEN STARTING, OPTIMIZING AND SCALING CONTENT MARKETING PROGRAMS

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Welcome!

Thank you for ordering Tempesta Media's e-book: 100 Mistakes Businesses Make When Starting, Optimizing and Scaling Content Marketing Programs. Implementing your content marketing program is no easy feat. Each stage of a content marketing program — starting, optimizing and scaling it — each come with their own set of barriers, and odds are you will not be able to craft a flawless program right from the start. However, you can still create a successful one.

Insightful expertise across hundreds of customers and industries

Tempesta Media has worked with hundreds of companies across 100 industries globally to help make their content marketing programs a success. Over the past nine years, our service delivery organization has uncovered hundreds of challenges within customers' content marketing programs.

Some were easy to overcome. Others required significant changes to how customers presented themselves online. Through these engagements, we have uncovered over a hundred common issues that companies typically encounter. They are outlined in this e-book, along with recommended solutions.

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We hope that this guide helps you get your content marketing program off on the right track so that you can generate great results for your company.

Need help?

If you need assistance with your content, social or influencer marketing program, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at www.tempestamedia.com or by phone at (312) 371-0555 x730. We can develop a custom, technology-forward solution for your company.

Regards,

Michael Marchese

Founder and CEO

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Implementing your content marketing program is no easy feat – starting, optimizing and scaling it all come with their own set of barriers, and odds are you won't craft a flawless program. However, you can prepare yourself to craft a successful one.

Here are the top 100 common mistakes to help you shape yours to be as effective and profitable as possible.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Starting a content marketing program   5-25

Optimizing a content marketing program   22-54

No images within your content

No relevant images within your content

Not enough images within your content

Optimizing solely for SEO

Not optimizing for SEO

Not developing pillar content pages

Not assigning content to each stage of the buying funnel

Publishing sales pieces, not informative/educational content

Not adding estimated reading time

Publishing sales pieces, not informative/educational content

Not writing compelling meta titles and descriptions

Not using compelling titles with content

Not using a lede that is tied to your target audience

Presenting yourself as an expert, when you're not

Not having consistency in formatting and voice across content

Not setting the readability level for your target persona

Not adding calls to action at the end of each content piece

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Optimizing a content marketing program   22-54

[Not incorporating curated content with original content as part of the program](#)

[Not monitoring user-generated content](#)

[Having content formatting and special character errors within your content](#)

[Not including a focus keyword phrase for each piece of content](#)

[Not implementing a prospect newsletter](#)

[Viewing blog posts as the only solution for SEO](#)

[Not including links to relevant research sources in your content](#)

[Not embedding internal-facing links within your content](#)

[Not using varying content types in your content marketing program](#)

[Not making your website and your content mobile-friendly](#)

[Including links to research sources that are more than one year old](#)

[Creating meta descriptions that do not accurately represent the content](#)

[Trying to do it all in-house](#)

[Not determining the goal of each piece of content before creating it](#)

[Not varying content length](#)

[Not consistently publishing new content](#)

[Not providing significant value to the reader](#)

[Not adding supporting content regularly to support your pillar content pages](#)

[Not improving content that is performing well](#)

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Optimizing a content marketing program   22-54

[Not writing for an online audience](#)

[Not making the experience with your readers interactive or getting feedback from your readers](#)

[Forcing humor into your content](#)

[Introducing politics into your content](#)

[Not using the original source for your link (e.g. linking to a source that then links to another source for the original data)](#)

[Failing to get feedback from your influencers](#)

[Calling out mistakes in other people's content](#)

[Not using social media to promote content](#)

[Not adjusting your social post text to match the appropriate audience](#)

[Not adjusting your social post text to match the specific formatting requirements of each social network](#)

[Forgetting to include relevant hashtags in your social posts](#)

[Adding too many hashtags in your social posts](#)

[Forgetting to include relevant hashtags in your on-site content](#)

[No regular performance reports](#)

Scaling a content marketing program

Not setting up a regular cycle for reviewing new content marketing technology and tools that can help your company scale more quickly and cost-effectively

Not using outsourced managed content services

Not having a common workflow dashboard for in-house and external content resources

Not maximizing ROI by repurposing content

Not regularly performing a SWOT analysis on your own program and your competitors

Not incorporating multiple internal executives' voices as part of the content marketing program

Not using external experts at regular intervals to analyze your content marketing program to identify areas for improvement

Not mining your existing social media following for potential brand ambassadors

Not amplifying content that is performing

Not implementing an influencer program to amplify content

Not creating content that targets news feeds

Not using your affiliate program to promote your content

Not customizing content for each of your customer segments

Not amplifying content to prospects through email

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Scaling a content marketing program   54-70

Not setting up a tactical content marketing program review cycle

Not adding a link to your blog, most recent article or pillar content page within your email signature

Not sharing your content with your customers

Not regularly promoting older content that is still relevant and high-performing

Forgetting to promote internal pages of your website

Not rewarding employees who share your content

Not sharing your content with your employees

Not customizing content for each of your prospect segments

Not republishing previously published content to your social media networks
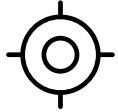
Forgetting to update previously published content

Not leveraging your employees to amplify your content

Not incorporating user-generated content into your content marketing program

MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN STARTING A CONTENT MARKETING PROGRAM

![Tempesta Media logo]

No clearly defined, measurable goals of the program

Most companies appreciate that content marketing is a great way to drive results with a good ROI. In their rush to get the program up and running, however, they fail to define clear and measurable goals. Without goals, the program will lack focus, which can lead to slow progress and cost overruns. To ensure that your content marketing program has direction and that every effort has focus, have at least one measurable goal before you start your program. An example of a good goal would be to increase your leads by 50%.

No clearly defined, accountable budget

As with any business plan, your content marketing program needs to have a budget with a certain amount allocated to different tasks within the program. Without these numbers in place, you can't successfully manage your cost or evaluate your ROI. This leaves little room for measuring the efficiency of your content marketing plan. Before you begin your program, research the cost of creating your desired content types and decide how much your business has to dedicate to these different avenues.

Not allocating enough money for content promotion

Content marketing requires money. Without money, you can't pay your writers, editors or managers. And if you can't retain their services, then you likely won't be able to maintain a content delivery schedule at all - much less at scale. In order to distribute your resources for best results, you need to clearly define your marketing goals and which marketing avenues or tools will help you reach those goals. For instance, if your primary goals are currently centered around generating brand awareness, then you need to determine the proper budget to allocate for your efforts to complete those goals.

No executive sponsor

An executive sponsor has a broader sense of the company's vision, strategy and goals. They can be a great asset in ensuring that a content marketing plan is not only successful in driving results but also fits into the purposes of the company as a whole. Unfortunately, many businesses fail to involve an executive sponsor in their content marketing plan. Without this executive taking ownership of the project, there may be some miscommunication problems between the employees and the senior executives that halt progress. Choose an executive sponsor that will help ensure that the project runs smoothly.

No project manager

Many businesses fail to assign a project manager to their content marketing plan, which can lead to a very disorganized program. A project manager will help to ensure that everyone stays on task and that they all have a competent leader to report to. Without this essential role filled, projects will lack productivity and efficiency. Choose a person who shows a high level of leadership skills and preferably someone who has a higher level of understanding of content marketing to be your project manager.

Not developing an internal content review process

When you upload content under your brand name, there are no "take-backs." Your content plays a huge role in attracting specific audiences and influences how those users view the brand. Without a clear and consistent internal review process, your content may come across as unfocused, unnecessary or unprofessional. The best way to avoid this mistake is to assign a dedicated team to reviewing content. This team should have clear guidelines in place about preferred brand voice, targeted personas, word count parameters and other key factors.

Trying to add "content marketing" as a responsibility to an already busy employee

Many small business owners view content marketing as an "add-on," and try to delegate the responsibility for coordination and management to one of their employees. As a result, the company's content marketing program is basically dead on arrival. Content marketing is not only a full-time job for an individual employee or (more frequently) an entire team but it is also an investment that should be taken seriously. Whether you go with an in-house team, an outsourced agency or a hybrid approach, make sure that you have dedicated staff working on your content marketing program at all times.

Not defining who in the company has the final word in approving content

"Passing the buck" is a problem deeply rooted in human nature. In a marketing context, confusion as to who has the final say in approving content is a common symptom of this disease. Unfortunately, a lack of clarity in the content approval process often leads to a ton of unnecessary edits, delays in publishing content, and a bunch of wasted time and effort. You can prevent this by designating either a committee or (more commonly) a content marketing manager to be the final word on what gets uploaded. If the buck stops there, that's good news for everybody.

Not getting all internal stakeholders to commit to a content review timeline

It can be hard to get everyone on the same page, and that goes for timelines and deadlines around the content review process too. If the marketing team, managers, C-suite executives and any other key stakeholders have conflicting ideas about how long the review process should last (or when milestones along the way should be reached), then you'll likely be faced with a disorganized content delivery schedule that is in constant need of adjustment. Good communication and persistence are key here. You need to clearly define a workable timeline for the review process (think of a visual aid, like a chart or graph), and get the go-ahead from *all* internal stakeholders before moving forward.

Not making your company executives available to be interviewed for new pieces of content

Company executives are busy people and are often pressed for time. However, by not periodically interviewing your executives for new content, you're actually missing out on a golden opportunity to boost your brand's credibility, inject personality into your content and further position yourself as a thought leader. Make sure to reach out to your executives at least once every couple of months and schedule an interview to be leveraged in a new blog, article, white paper or video.
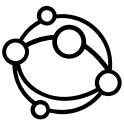
No Google Analytics or similar tracking program implemented

Many businesses are overwhelmed by the wealth of information that Google Analytics or a similar tracking program delivers, and they tend to shy away from using such applications. Even though these programs might seem intimidating, the information that you gain can help you create a program tailored to your customers and business strengths. Without using one of these tools, you won't know where your efforts would be best placed or which goals are more attainable and the most accessible avenues to break into. To get your program off to the right start, take the time to use Google Analytics to gain insight into your website's best-performing pages and on-site queries to personalize your content to your customers.

Failure to develop a target persona

Speaking of your customers, knowing your target persona is a very crucial part of your content marketing plan. Some businesses fail to tailor their content to a target persona and can fail to reach the right audience. Target personas help you to create content that will solve a problem your customers face or help them reach the goals they have, making your content more valuable. Take some time to sketch at least one of your target personas. Use this persona to develop a content marketing program that will be more valuable to your customers.

Failure to create a style guide for capturing your voice in content

A style guide outlines the voice that your content will emulate. For most businesses, their content is written by multiple people. Without a style guide to follow, your various pieces of content will have no brand voice in which people can relate. This will cause a lack of brand consistency, which can lead to a lack of trust and authority. Write a style guide that outlines your goals, target audience, formatting preferences and writing style for your team members to follow.

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Not having relevant social media accounts open and activated

When companies focus their content marketing program solely on pieces for their own website, they miss out on the reach and credibility that social media can offer. If you have not yet opened and activated social media accounts relevant to your target audience (whether on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn or other platforms), then you're placing an inordinate emphasis on organic search traffic. And if you're a newer company, that traffic may not be coming your way for a while. To sidestep this issue, open and activate social media accounts on platforms that your target demographic uses. Perform de facto A/B testing by publishing small pieces of content to your social media accounts, and see how your audience reacts.

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## Not developing a list of target keyword phrases to use in developing content

When you are trying to reach a specific audience, you need to know what words those people use when they are searching the internet. This list of keyword phrases is often overlooked when businesses develop a content marketing plan. Without first doing some research and deciding on which keywords to optimize for, your content marketing plan could have the best written and engaging content on the web but never be seen by your target audience. First, find out what language your customers use in a search engine, choose which phrases you will target and then develop your content to optimize for these phrases.

Not analyzing your competitors' content marketing programs prior to starting

All marketers learn to study their competition to succeed, so why do businesses fail to do this for their content marketing plan? Without analyzing the strategy that your competition is using, you have no way of knowing how to fill the gaps that your competition has left behind and how to help your brand stand out. Find your top three competitors' sites and do a site analysis to see what keywords they are optimizing. Check out their social media presence and figure out how you can improve on their methods. Whatever advantages you can get will increase your odds of rising above your competition.
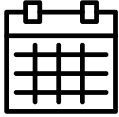
Not creating an editorial calendar

Many businesses can create great content but have no written plan as to when they will publish their different content pieces. Without this chronological schedule, your content marketing plan will lack an organized, consistent presence on the web. An editorial calendar, especially if you transform it into due dates on an actual calendar, will help you prioritize articles and meet deadlines. Try a digital editorial calendar that incorporates due date and content review reminders to promote a routine and timely process.

Measuring the performance of your content marketing program like a media buy

Many marketers are tempted to think of content cost and performance in terms of more traditional ad spend. The problem is content marketing is a different process than other forms of advertising. For example, a TV spot often yields instantaneous reach, whereas a blog post may only begin attracting significant traffic share weeks or months after the initial upload. You need to ensure that when measuring the performance of your content marketing program, you're using the *right kind* of metrics (such as time on site, unique visitors and returning visitors).

Building your content marketing program to be too broad

While it may be tempting to produce a wide variety of content, making your focus too broad can quickly become counterproductive. As an (extreme) example of this mistake, imagine a car detailing company that publishes home improvement content - even if their blogs capture some traffic, no legitimate business goal would be served by providing such content. In order to avoid this pitfall, you must clearly define your target demographics and tailor hyper-relevant content to their needs - and only their needs.

Thinking that you can achieve scale by creating all content in-house

If you're just starting up a content marketing program, odds are that you don't have the infrastructure in place to go from 0 to 100mph overnight. Consistency is key in content marketing, and as your program ramps up, you'll need to keep pace by regularly delivering a variety of content to your consumers. If your in-house team can't keep up, your brand will lose credibility. You'll likely need to partner with a reputable outsourced content marketing agency to keep the machinery oiled and the wheels turning.

# Taking too long to create your content marketing strategy

There's no such thing as a perfect content marketing strategy. However, many companies spend several weeks (or even months!) on the development of a refined, elaborate plan. The problem is, by doing so they delay their exposure to the consumer base and set back their timeline for ROI. It's important for you to have a strategy in place, but it's also important for you to remember that almost any content marketing strategy will need some tinkering after deployment. In short, take a few days to create a sound strategy - but don't delay its implementation without a really good reason.

Not giving your content marketing program at least six months to begin generating top-funnel results

Content marketing is not a sprint - it's a marathon. The first leg of that marathon is generating brand awareness within your target demographic. If you're not patient, then you may end up pulling the plug on your program just as it's beginning to yield results. When it comes to content marketing, you need to play the long game. Make sure that both senior management and your marketing team understand that if they keep focused on an effective program, they'll eventually reap the results.
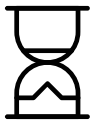
Not giving your content marketing program at least 12 months to begin generating bottom-funnel results

It may take six months or longer for your program to yield significant top-funnel results. It may take at least *12 months* for the program to generate customer conversions. Again, a lack of patience can cause your company to quickly lose all the ground gained throughout the lifespan of the content marketing initiative. If your company has C-suite executives, it's imperative that you have at least one advocate to encourage patience if other executives become frustrated. As an alternative, be prepared to present your case for patience so clearly and convincingly that all of management's fears are allayed.

![Tempesta Media logo]

Waiting to begin creating content until your content marketing strategy is in place

They say that fortune favors the brave. It may be daunting to begin creating content while your strategy is still under construction. However, if you wait to publish content until you have a fully formed marketing strategy in place, you may lose out on several benefits. For instance, you'll miss the opportunity to analyze your audience's reaction to your content - a reaction that could inform the ongoing development of your strategy. The key: Don't be afraid to put your content out there. Publish, publish, publish! You can always make adjustments later.

idea   planning   strategy   success

Building a content marketing plan that goes from 0 to 100MPH

Building a content marketing program from the ground up is an exciting prospect. However, you may be tempted to bite off more than you can chew in your plan's early stages and end up overextending your resources. Overworked, stressed-out copywriters, coordinators, editors and managers either won't be able to deliver the desired volume of content or the quality of the content will suffer. It's imperative that you map out the growth of your content marketing plan to an appropriate scale. For example, increase the number of weekly posts incrementally over the first six months of the program, and review your team's workload every 2-3 months.

MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN OPTIMIZING A CONTENT MARKETING PROGRAM

No images within your content

Images can spice up just about any 1,000-word blog post and provide a real boost to reader engagement and readability. For instance, a study found that users, on average, are 300% more likely to read image captions than the body text itself. In other words, if your content doesn't feature images, then you're missing out on the chance to engage a large percentage of potential readers. Of course, there's a simple fix to this problem: Always include images within your content.

No relevant images within your content

The website for an avocado farm shouldn't have pictures of banana trees floating around its body text. Those images would be irrelevant and would give the company a bad look. In the same way, if your content contains irrelevant images, not only will it make SEO an uphill battle but it will also damage your brand's credibility. To avoid such an outcome, make sure that each image included within your content is relevant to the topic under discussion, provide an appropriate filename for indexing purposes and create an engaging caption that matches the image and contains keywords for SEO purposes.

Not enough images within your content

Even if your content contains *some* images, you need to ask yourself if there are *enough* images on hand. A number of images on a page can break up the monotony of large blocks of text, especially for longer articles. Without a sufficient number of images, readers may get bored and decide to bounce. As a general rule, try to include an image for every 250 words. Additionally, when you prepare images for a piece of content, remember to compress them for optimal load speed.

Optimizing solely for SEO

Search engine optimization is crucial to the success of content marketing, no doubt about it. Nevertheless, many companies fall into the trap of optimizing *solely* for SEO. This approach comes with several issues. For example, SEO-driven content that is boring and uninspired won't appeal to human users, and SEO that ignores mobile responsiveness will cause you to lose a huge subset of potential visitors. While SEO is essential, you must ensure that your content is user-friendly and delivers real value to your audience.

Not optimizing for SEO

At the other end of the spectrum, many businesses neglect or completely ignore SEO. In fact, one study found that only 28% of small businesses do *any* search engine optimization! Unfortunately, by not implementing SEO strategies, these companies severely limit the effectiveness of their own content marketing program. Google is the digital "front door" through which the vast majority of customers enter a company's website. As such, you need to leverage SEO to ensure that your content enjoys maximum reach through higher spots on SERPs.

Not developing pillar content pages

Many businesses make the mistake of focusing their efforts on pumping out as many articles as they can. They fail to develop pillar content pages on their website that delivers high-quality, evergreen content. Pillar pages rank higher for any given keyword, so lacking pillar content pages comes with great detriment to your visibility. Make sure you focus a good chunk of your marketing efforts on your pillar pages to see more organic traffic to your website.
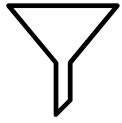
Not assigning content to each stage of the buying funnel

Every stage of the buying funnel has different content that works best for that stage. Failing to assign your content to a specific stage will detract from the results that piece of content will bring. A reader in the awareness stage must be handled differently than one in the decision-making stage. Create content that is clearly tailored to address each stage of the buying funnel to help move each reader to the next stage.

Not adding estimated reading time

Many website developers neglect to post estimated reading times for articles contained therein. However, research indicates that publishing an estimated reading time can [increase overall time on site](#) and reduce bounce rate. Your audience's time is valuable. When they know exactly how long it will take them to read your post, they'll be more inclined to read it because you've put a very short timeline on how long it will take for them to learn something new and valuable. As a result, you should ensure that your pieces of written content come with visible (and accurate) estimated reading times.

Publishing sales pieces, not informative/educational content

Highly promotional, sales-driven pieces of content have their place - at the bottom of the funnel. However, publishing such pieces for consumers that are in the earlier stages of the buyer's journey will likely dissuade them from returning to your website. Make sure that your content is appropriate for your target audience. For example, high-level overviews with soft calls to action (or no calls to action at all) are usually appropriate for users in the awareness stage, whereas comparison charts and more detailed articles are helpful for mid-funnel consumers evaluating their options.

Not writing compelling meta titles and descriptions

Too often you see articles on the internet with generic titles or descriptions that aren't well written because readers won't see those details on the page itself. Where they will see it, however, is on the search page, and it can be the deciding factor of whether they will click on the link or move on to a different website. This is an opportunity to increase your click-through rate that many businesses miss out on. Take the extra few minutes after writing a good piece of content to add a compelling meta title and description.

Not using compelling titles with content

Many businesses will focus all their efforts on writing great content with generic titles. A well-written article with a boring title will have fewer click-throughs than a poorly written article with a catchy title. You know the saying "Don't judge a book by its cover"? Well, unfortunately, that's exactly what your audience will do. They won't click on your article if the title doesn't even grab their attention. Check out this   to get some starter ideas for compelling titles for your content.

Not using a lede that is tied to your target audience

Businesses tend to focus all their content on highlighting their services and forget to include their target audience in the mix. When your content strategy is solely based on sales, your target audience loses interest in your brand. Instead of highlighting services, your content should be focused on the needs and goals of your target audience. Create a lede that immediately shows your audience that you are addressing their needs. It will grab their attention and entice them to read the full article. Then towards the end, if needed, you can tie in a CTA to connect your services with their needs.

Presenting yourself as an expert, when you're not

It can be tempting to cover a trending topic that is industry-adjacent to your business, or those in which you have a vested interest. Nevertheless, if you pose as a subject matter expert without the necessary credentials, it could eventually lead to major damage to your reputation. A good rule of thumb to remember is: If you publish an article on a subject one time, your readers will expect you to do it again ... and again. If it's not within your realm of expertise, restrain yourself. You can always partner with an actual expert on the topic by providing space for a guest post.

# Not having consistency in formatting and voice across content

Earlier in this guide, we discussed how important a style guide is to keep a consistent voice for brand recognition. After their content marketing program gets running, some businesses lack the initiative to adhere to the style guide. As a result, they lose consistency and, ultimately, consumer trust. If a business can't be counted on to commit to an ongoing program consistently, how can they be trusted to fulfill a customer's ongoing needs? Reiterate to your team members how important it is to adhere to the style guide and periodically review both your published content and your style guide to identify any necessary updates they need to consistently match your brand's goals.

Not setting the readability level for your target persona

Not only does readability directly impact a website's SEO ranking, but it also plays a role in the long-term success of a content marketing program. After all, the readability of your content may be what actually converts the sale because, hopefully, you're targeting human users rather than Google's crawler bots. If your content is too difficult for the average consumer to read, then your strategy's effectiveness will be severely limited. Make sure that each piece of content contains an acceptable readability level. In many cases, an eighth-grade reading level is best. Use online tools to double-check an article before publishing it.
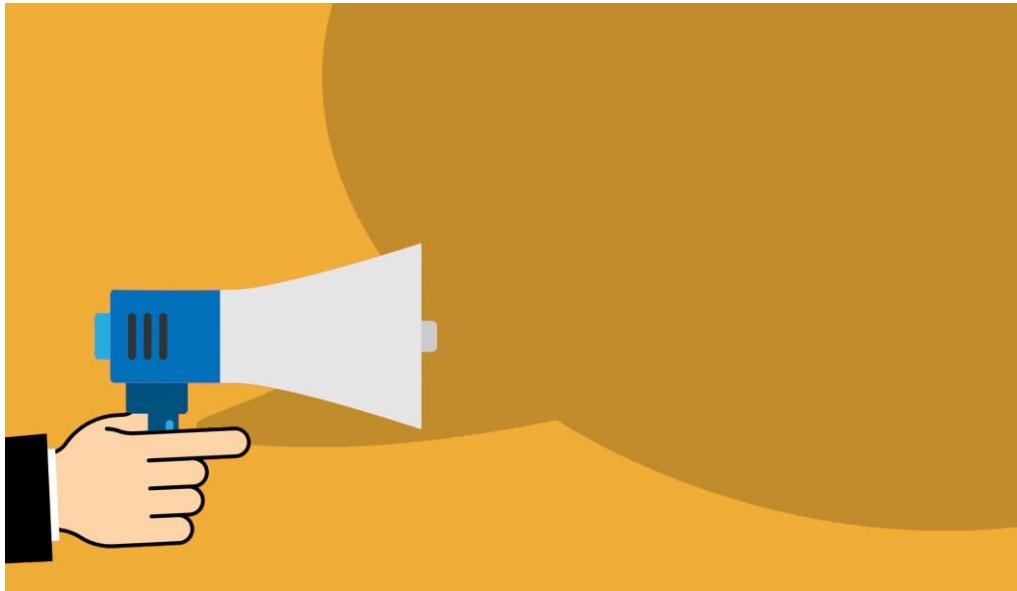
Not adding calls to action at the end of each content piece

A good content marketing program will get plenty of leads, but how those leads turn into conversions is through effective use of the call to action. If you fail to add a call to action at the end of each piece, your readers won't know what their next step is. Whether you want the reader to subscribe to your emails, fill out a form or contact you, you need to tell them with a clear call to action.

Not incorporating curated content with original content as part of the program

At times, businesses are so focused on creating the best content possible that they forget to include curated content as part of their content marketing program. Not sharing content that others create could put your company in a bad light - purposefully neglecting to share valuable information with your audience just because you didn't create it will send a message that you only care about your audience if you get all the credit for their attention. Besides, curated content is a quick way to add new content to your program. It can also help you network within the industry. Keep a balanced amount of curated and created content in your program for the best results.

Not monitoring user-generated content

Your users are one of your largest stakeholders and play a significant role in your company's success or failure. Because of social media, users feel empowered to use their voice to become enthusiastic promoters of your products or vent their frustrations with your firm. A bad review can quickly vault to the top of search engine results pages (SERPs), setting your content marketing program back months. Many social listening services start at only a few hundred dollars per month and can actively scour the Internet and social media for any mentions of your company, good, bad or ugly.

Having content formatting and special character errors within your content

Most marketers aren't coding experts, and even those that are make mistakes from time to time. However, content formatting and special character errors (e.g., visible snippets of code that should be hidden) can result in poor content presentation, embarrassment and loss of SEO punch. To avoid this pitfall, make sure that you have at least one employee available to audit your published pieces of content for such errors.
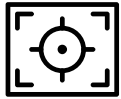
Not including a focus keyword phrase for each piece of content

Content writing can be tricky because you're actually writing for two different audiences: your readers and the search engine. If you don't include a focus keyword phrase for each piece of content, then you'll likely have only limited SEO success. In other words, your content won't get as much organic traffic, no matter how well written it is. To optimize your content for SEO, be sure to generate content that centers around one focus keyword phrase. To get ideas, go back to your master list of target phrases that you established at the beginning of your program. However, also make sure that whatever keywords you choose are periodically mentioned in your content. If your keyword isn't present there, then there's no use in having a keyword at all, even if it is one that is consistently searched for.

Not implementing a prospect newsletter

A newsletter may be a key piece of content to move top-funnel and mid-funnel prospects down the pipeline. If you're not sending out a newsletter to your leads via email, then you're missing out on an opportunity to provide highly personalized messaging to specific segments of your consumer base. Studies indicate that some 83% of companies use at least basic segmentation for their email marketing initiatives. Be sure to implement a segmented newsletter of your own in regards to age, location or other differentiating factors.

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Viewing blog posts as the only solution for SEO

Blog posts play a vital role in any effective SEO strategy. However, they are not the only SEO drivers out there. If you're exclusively focusing on blog posts, then you're missing out on the SEO boost that other forms of content like white papers and videos can provide. Be sure to vary your marketing strategy to account for different forms of content. For instance, identify search terms that return video results and produce content to compete for those keywords.

Not including links to relevant research sources in your content

Just because you want to keep your links fresh doesn't mean you should shy away from including them at all. Good research is always key to bringing credibility to your brand. Your audience will not only know that you've done your homework, but they will also gain more trust in all your other content as well. When you state a fact, back it up with a source.

Not embedding internal-facing links within your content

Internal links may not pack the SEO punch that external back-links do, but if you don't have internal-facing links embedded within your content, then not only will Google's crawlers have a harder time indexing your site, but it may also have a negative effect on your site's SEO score. One of the best ways to implement an internal linking strategy is to follow a siloed, "topic cluster" methodology. If your website contains a lot of articles on home improvement, then make sure that all of your pages on wallpaper and painting link back to your interior decoration pillar page.

Not using varying content types in your content marketing program

One of the primary goals of any content marketing program should be to move customers down the sales funnel. If your strategy exclusively focuses on one consumer subset, then your program will have limited success at best. For example, if you only provide top-of-funnel content to build brand awareness, you may not achieve high conversion rates from bottom-of-funnel leads. Ensure that your program takes a holistic approach to content generation and that there is content available for each stage of the buyer's journey.

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Not making your website and your content mobile-friendly

In 2019, mobile searches accounted for up to 60% of all organic search traffic in the United States. If your website is not responsive to mobile devices, or your content formats poorly on smaller screens, then you're no doubt losing a large proportion of potential users. For this reason, it's important to ensure that both your website and your content are optimized for the mobile audience. Check all aspects of your site: menus, links, images, text sizes, screen formatting and more.
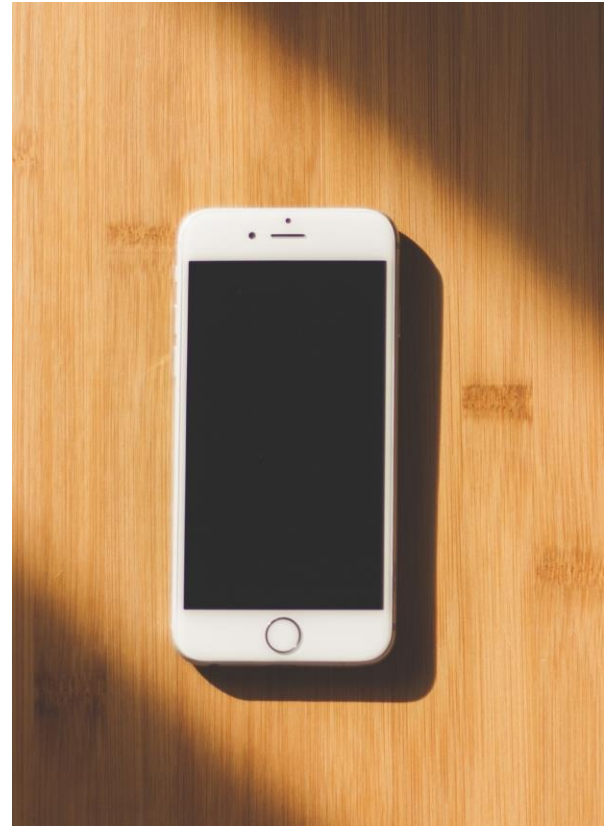
Including links to research sources that are more than one year old

The internet is an ever-evolving source of information, and new discoveries and techniques are always emerging. What was considered a good source last year, may not be considered so now. Using old links with old information on your site could really discredit your content. Make sure you keep your links fresh and updated to avoid having last year's outdated info.

Creating meta descriptions that do not accurately represent the content

Meta descriptions, per Google, act as a "pitch" to your users to convince them that your page is what they are looking for. Unfortunately, many meta descriptions are bland, unreadable or, worst of all, misleading. A meta description that doesn't match the actual content of the page will frustrate searchers and send them scrambling away from your site. Because bounce rate can be a key factor in Google's ranking algorithm, misleading meta descriptions can also undermine the very foundations of your SEO strategy. To create optimized meta descriptions, be sure that each one not only contains your focus keyword(s) but also provides a succinct and accurate description for its associated page.

Failing to give readers the option to share content via email

You have just published a stupendous article that is getting traction. Yet, you're not seeing the virality that you expected. Many times the reason this happens is because companies have made it difficult for readers to share the content. While most companies will include share buttons with their most valued social media networks, few provide a mechanism to easily share content via email. This is especially true for companies, who target Baby Boomers, as they are more likely to use email. Remove the barrier and add an easy-to-use email share button with each of your articles.

Not determining the goal of each piece of content before creating it

A classic "cart before the horse" mistake that many marketers make is to craft a piece of content without having a definitive objective for it. The content in question may be informative, educational and entertaining, but if you don't know where it fits within your marketing strategy, you won't be able to effectively promote it to the right target audience. You must make sure that each piece of content generated by your marketing team comes from a place of real need and is designed to reach a specific goal. Simply asking about the "why" of a proposed piece can avoid a lot of wasted time and effort.

Not varying content length

The length of a piece of content should depend on your specific goals for that content. If you try to make one-content-size-fits-all marketing objectives, you're going to alienate a big chunk of your reading audience. For example, searchers looking for an answer to a specific question don't want to sift through 2,000 words of irrelevant information. On the other hand, customers in the evaluation stage may get frustrated if they can only find thin 300-word posts around the topic they're researching. While long-form content is generally best for bottom-of-funnel user engagement, make sure that the length for each piece of content is appropriate for its primary goal.

Not consistently publishing new content

Even if you have a stellar website with great content, your work is never done. Businesses can work hard to create a website and mark off a content marketing program checklist, then fold their hands and wait. This approach will not work. If you don't provide a constant flow of new content on your site, search engines may think that your site isn't as valuable anymore. Make sure you are consistently publishing new content to keep your website frequently indexed, ranking higher with more keywords, and engaging with your audience.

![TEMPESTA Media logo]

Not providing significant value to the reader

Every piece of content that you put out there should bring value to the reader. Sometimes businesses can get so focused on keywords and SEO that they forget to provide content that the reader will appreciate. This will actually work against your optimization efforts because if no one wants to read your content, your ranking will suffer. Instead, use your keywords in conjunction with what the reader will be interested in to enjoy high SERP spots and increased traffic and engagement.

Not adding supporting content regularly to support your pillar content pages

Your pillar content pages should be the shining stars of your website. Just as the star of a show needs supporting characters to be well-developed, your pillar pages need supporting content to add more depth and meaning to your offerings. Without regularly adding supporting content, your pillar pages could lose rank value as well. Always add fresh content to your website that supports your pillar pages.

Not improving content that is performing well

Businesses often make the mistake of seeing their content perform well once and considering their job done. In reality, once your content is getting noticed, then that's the time to take it one step up and improve it even more. Try to look into the future. Will this content still be relevant? How can I update it to make it evergreen? When your content becomes stagnant, even the well-performing content, you are losing to your competition who constantly updates their information. Keep adding value to your content and never stop.

Not writing for an online audience

In previously traditional content marketing, audiences were more accustomed to longer-form pieces. They were used to receiving detailed monthly newsletters in the mail or reading long press releases. However, in the modern technological world of the internet, today's audiences don't want such time-consuming content - they're used to finding answers quickly and receiving important updates daily, so your content must reflect that. Focus on writing easily digestible content with short sentences and small paragraphs so your audience can find the information they need as soon as they need it.

Not making the experience with your readers interactive or getting feedback from your readers

One of the best ways to get detailed information about your target persona is unfortunately extremely underused: interactive content. Many businesses lack this type of content in their content marketing program. Provide interactive content like quizzes, surveys and webinars as a regular part of your program to promote engagement while providing you with actionable insights and data. Here is a list of 13 different types of interactive content you can use.

Forcing humor into your content

Being funny is good, but trying to be funny, not so much. Unless your content is actually worth a chuckle, don't try to find a way to make it humorous, especially if your topic is meant to be serious. When you try too hard to be funny, your readers will know it. And if your audience is usually formal and serious, any forced humor will come off as cringy and unprofessional. Only add humor to your content if it fits, *and* it really is funny.

Introducing politics into your content

Unless you deal directly with political elements as a business, introducing politics into your content is very dangerous. Even if you cater to a certain demographic, you won't always have just one viewpoint from readers. If you put political ideas into your content, you risk alienating some of them. Keep your content politically neutral.

Not using the original source for your link (e.g. linking to a source that then links to another source for the original data)

Original sources may not always be optimized. You will have to dig a little deeper to find them, but it's worth it. If you link to another source that has done the digging, you risk losing credibility. You can prove that you value giving real data to your audience by finding the original source and linking to it. Make sure you are always linking directly to the original source of any information that you are sharing from outside sources.

Failing to get feedback from your influencers

Businesses utilize influencers because they already have a following and they know how to give the people what they want. If you don't get feedback from them, it's like hiring a specialist to do something they don't specialize in. Listen to your influencers and take their advice to heart. Collaborate with them and they will not only do what they do best - increase your brand visibility - but they will be also more motivated to do it out of mutual respect and partnership success.

Calling out mistakes in other people's content

Another way you can easily alienate some of your readers is by "calling out" another brand or person on social media. Call-out culture equals a bad reputation. Even if a reader agrees with your opinion, you still portray yourself as disrespectful. Instead of focusing on how others do it wrong, focus on what you do right. This way you keep a reputation of integrity and humility.

Not using social media to promote content

Organic traffic is still the best way to get more page views, but it would be foolish not to integrate a way to use social media to promote your content. The internet is only getting more competitive. In order to stay ahead of the competition, you need to differentiate your marketing efforts. Social networks are very targeted and trackable tools that you can use to reach a specific audience, find a new audience through shares and promote engagement of your current customers. Make sure your content marketing program includes shareable content like videos, posts and infographics to promote on social media.

Not adjusting your social post text to match the appropriate audience

Tone is important in marketing. If your brand voice doesn't resonate with your audience, then you're going to lose a lot of potential customers. This holds true for social posts as well: If you're aiming for the quiet, conservative, kitten-loving crowd, then a post that screams "CRUSH YOUR DAY WITH [insert product]! #bigdawg" isn't going to do your company any favors. Before uploading any content to social media, be sure to ask yourself: Who is my primary audience for this post? Does the tone of the post match my audience's persona?

Not adjusting your social post text to match the specific formatting requirements of each social network

Each social media platform comes with its own formatting requirements and limits with regards to post text. For example, a Pinterest post description can run 150-300 words, whereas Twitter only allows 280 *characters* per post. If you're generating cookie-cutter content for all of your social media accounts, then you're either missing out on an opportunity to expand your text on certain platforms or presenting half-baked thoughts on others. One way to sidestep this issue is to assign a dedicated employee or team to each social media outlet your company utilizes and have them adapt your marketing message to the specific requirements of the platform.

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Forgetting to include relevant hashtags in your social posts

The inclusion of hashtags in a company's social media posts may mean the difference between widespread exposure and relative anonymity. If you forget to add relevant hashtags to your posts, then you'll likely miss out on the benefits that come with the rising tide of a hot trend. Always make sure that each social media post has relevant hashtags associated with it. To avoid giving a "spammy appearance," you'll want to limit the number of hashtags per post to   .

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### Adding too many hashtags in your social posts

Hashtags are a simple tool that businesses can use to make their posts easier to find. They can take that tool too far, however, and add too many at the end of their posts. This habit can seem "spammy" and earn you a bad reputation. Additionally, the excessive hashtags can be distracting from the message itself. Try to choose just the most relevant hashtags to include and keep them to three or less.

Forgetting to include relevant hashtags in your on-site content

Just as using too many hashtags in your social posts could hurt your social media presence, forgetting to include relevant hashtags in your on-site content can also be detrimental. When you don't use hashtags to drive traffic to your website, you miss out on the opportunity of gaining visibility to a large audience that follows or searches that hashtag. Choose the most relevant, highly searched hashtags to include with your on-site content - to get a good start, keep up to date on trending topics in your industry.
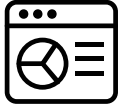
No regular performance reports

If you can't measure it, then you can't improve it. Many companies successfully start a content marketing program but then neglect to implement a policy of regular performance audits. Without periodic performance reports, you may be bleeding time and money without even realizing it. Be sure to have a set schedule for compiling and analyzing performance reports. For example, regularly compare the performance of 300-1,000-word posts around the same topic to determine if article length is a key factor in number of unique visitors or bounce rate.
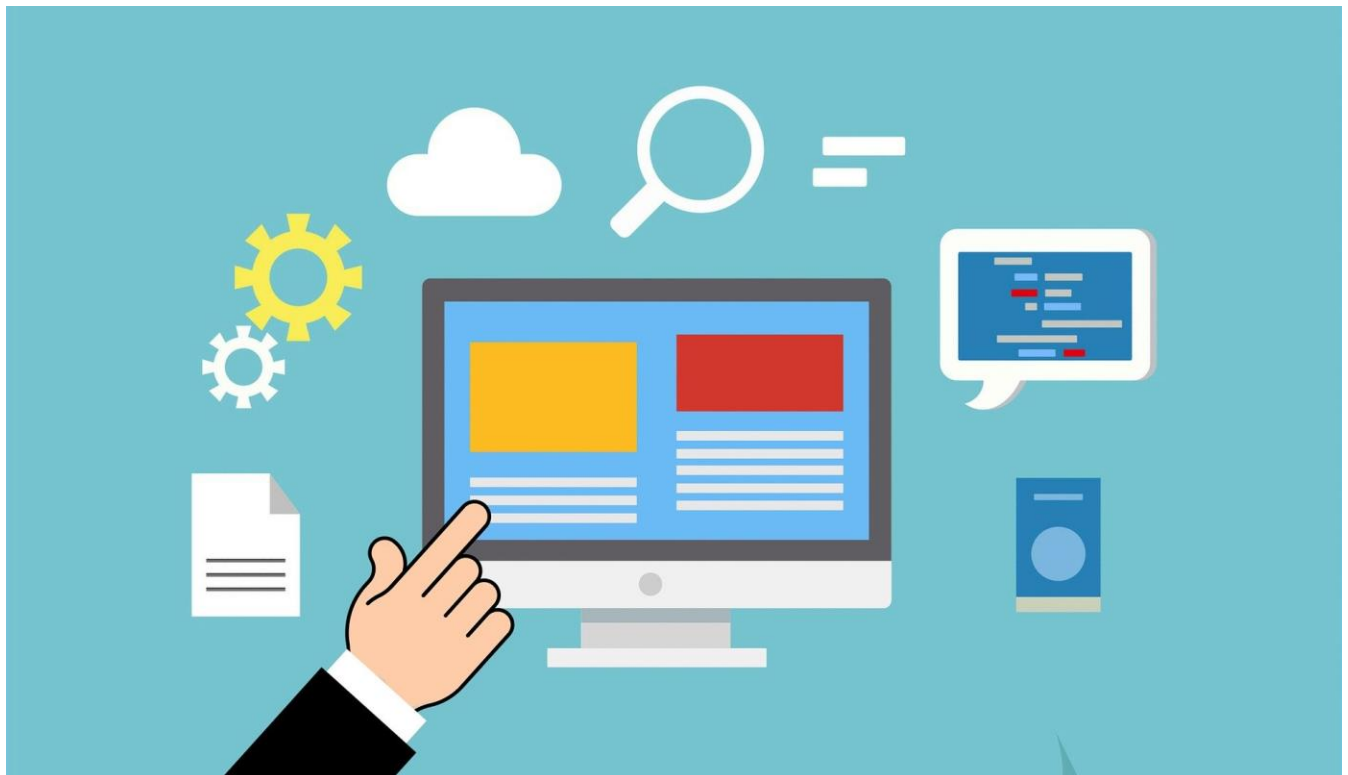
MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN SCALING A CONTENT MARKETING PROGRAM

Not setting up a regular cycle for reviewing new content marketing technology and tools that can help your company scale more quickly and cost-effectively

The content marketing sector is constantly changing. What worked 10, five, or even one year ago may not work today. Without the establishment of a regular cycle to review the potential of new content marketing technology and tools, your company may get left behind as competitors surge ahead. To prevent this from happening, you should designate a team to periodically review innovative new solutions on the market. For example, this team may explore new applications that mine Google's "People Also Ask" results for keyword ideas.

Not using outsourced managed content services

Some businesses, especially smaller ones, simply don't have the resources to effectively scale their content marketing program in house. When you try to take care of it all internally, your employees' time and resources are stretched thin as they try to manage an entire program on top of their other tasks. Partnering with an outsourced content service can take away some of that stress and responsibility. The best part is that outsourcing isn't an "all-or-none" exchange. Many times, you can outsource some of your content tasks while keeping others in house, allowing you to personalize your solution to fit your exact needs.

Not having a common workflow dashboard for in-house and external content resources

In a content marketing program, there could be dozens of pieces of content on your editorial calendar at one time. There can be many different team members in house as well as on your outsourced team. If you don't use a common workflow dashboard for both groups, you run the risk of miscommunication, which can quite possibly result in duplicate content, missed deadlines and inconsistent goals. Make sure that everyone understands your program's goals and plan, and encourage full communication between all team members by implementing a workflow dashboard.

Not maximizing ROI by repurposing content

Creating so much content can be difficult when each new piece takes hours of time and extra cost. You can maximize your ROI by repurposing content that is performing well in order to reach a larger audience and stretch your marketing budget. If you find that one of your 2016 eguides performed well, consider cleaning it up (make it more relevant to today or, better yet, make it evergreen) and republishing it to increase your chances of good traffic.

Not regularly performing a SWOT analysis on your own program and your competitors

A recurring Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis is critical for the "health" of your content marketing program. It is also important to perform a SWOT analysis on your competition. Without this regular analysis, you won't be able to improve your own program, nor will you be able to learn from the triumphs and mistakes of others, such as high-performing keywords or content gaps from your industry peers. Periodically ensure that your program undergoes a robust SWOT analysis. For example, ask yourself what your brand's unique selling proposition (USP) is and what areas require improvement to keep pace with your competitors.

Not incorporating multiple internal executives' voices as part of the content marketing program

To effectively present your business culture and voice, you need more than just one of your executive's ideas and philosophies in your content marketing program. Without the input of these individuals, your content can be one dimensional and miss the mark. Each executive will have valuable input and help you align your content with your business's overall goal. Get feedback from as many execs as you can to craft your best content.

Not using external experts at regular intervals to analyze your content marketing program to identify areas for improvement

The marketing departments within many companies are limited on time and resources. With a full schedule and a long to-do list, marketing managers may not be able to conduct a thorough analysis of the company's marketing program for performance. The problem is, without a periodic audit you'll never be able to accurately identify key areas for improvement, which means you may end up wasting time and money for weeks, months or years to come. You can avoid this mistake by regularly enlisting the help of *external* marketing experts to audit your current program and analyze the results. They'll likely be able to point out vital opportunities for improvement.

Not mining your existing social media following for potential brand ambassadors

Many people make the mistake of looking outside their following to find a brand ambassador. The truth is that you could have the perfect ambassador right there in your own social media following. That individual could be better for the position, as they clearly find value in your product or services because they already support you. Use their appreciation for your business to your advantage by enlisting them as your brand ambassador.

![Tempesta Media logo]

Not amplifying content that is performing

If you have already created good content that is performing, high five! But you still have one more step to go to get your content to stand out in the sea of other well-performing content. You need to "turn up the volume," so to speak, and get your content to even more people. There are many amplification strategies that you can use, and the more you can include the better. If you are at a loss as to how to get started amplifying your content, here is a list to try.
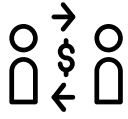
Not implementing an influencer program to amplify content

Influencers are one of the best ways that you can amplify your content. If you aren't using their power, you should be. There are two things you'll miss out on if you don't use an influencer. You lose the opportunity to reach the large following they have. You miss out on the opportunity to make your brand known to a very specific audience. Choose your influencers wisely, make sure they understand your brand's mission, goals and voice, and monitor this program closely to track any changes.

Not creating content that targets news feeds

When companies begin their content marketing programs most choose to start with regularly posting blogs. This is a good way to get your content marketing program, but should not be where it stops. To scale your program up, you need to establish yourself as a thought leader within your space. An excellent way to do this is with news commentaries. News commentaries are short posts, usually 400 - 500 words. They are used to discuss a recent news story relevant to your business and industry. A summary of the new story is written along with your point of view on the subject. News commentaries are one of many different content types that Tempesta Media offers to its customers.

Not using your affiliate program to promote your content

Many companies, who sell online, have referral, loyalty or other affiliate programs in place. These programs are more than just gathering leads and sales. They are excellent platforms for telling your story and amplifying your messages. In the majority of cases, you will find that your affiliates are starving for content from your company and will enthusiastically promote it, knowing that it will help improve their performance with your program. When sharing content with affiliates, make sure you provide them with opportunities to embed their affiliate or referral link within the content. Doing so helps them monetize your content. For you, it is a great way to see which of your affiliates are actively promoting your content.

# Not customizing content for each of your customer segments

If your customers have already found value in your business, you want them to come back and continue to be a customer - and tell others how happy they are with their service. When your content marketing plan isn't customized to them, you miss out on the opportunity to create a lasting relationship with those individuals by making them feel special enough to be recognized. Adapt your content to include customer segmentation. A good example would be a thank you email with a coupon for the next time they use your services.

Not amplifying content to prospects through email

Unlike what some marketers preach, email is not dead. How many times a day do you check your email? At least a few times? If you, as a business, don't use this avenue as part of your content marketing program, you rely on statistics and strategy for prospects to see you. With email, it's a guarantee. Don't write off this tried and true form of content marketing. Keep an email list and use it to your advantage.
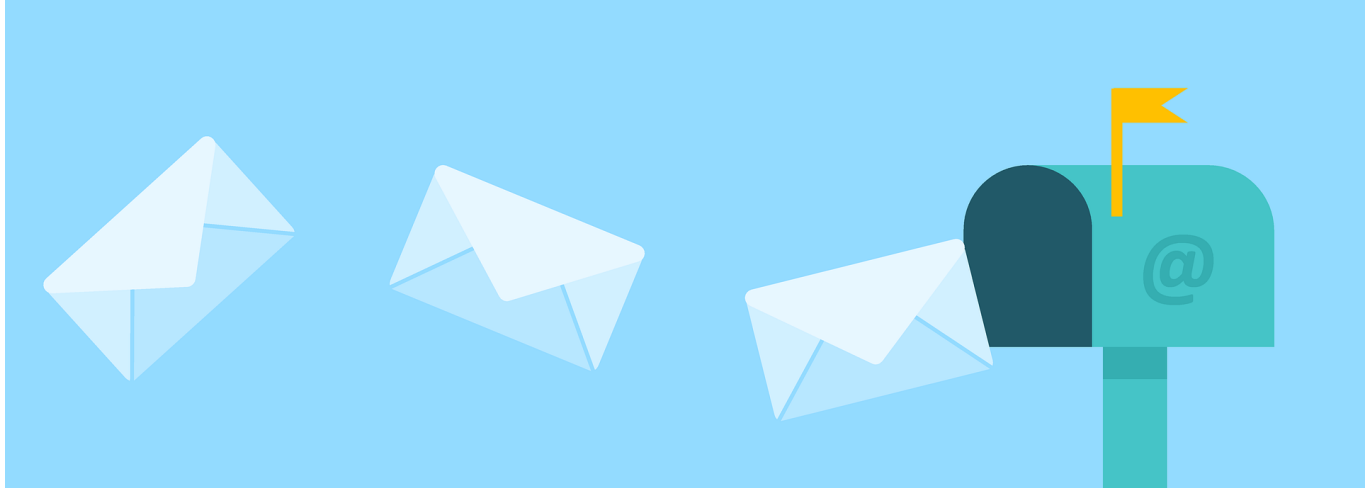
Not setting up a tactical content marketing program review cycle

What could be working yesterday may be out of date today. It's important to constantly review how your content marketing program is performing. What is your weakest area? What is working best? Who should you target more? These questions can only be answered through a thorough review of your content. It should be done on a regular cycle to keep your program producing good results.

Not adding a link to your blog, most recent article or pillar content page within your email signature

As stated before, audiences of today value convenience. If they like one of your emails but you don't provide a link for more information, they won't go out of their way to find your website on their own. Every single email needs a link to your site. This link makes it easy for your prospect to follow through and take the next step. The easier you make it for them, the more likely they'll continue down the sales funnel. Maximize the potential reach your emails could have by adding an internal website link to your signatures.

Not sharing your content with your customers

Just because a prospect has become a customer, doesn't mean they aren't worth more of your marketing efforts. If you don't share your content with your customers, they won't be able to reap the benefits that it offers. The more value that you can offer your customers, the more loyal they will become. Besides that, they can share your content with others, and you could potentially broaden your customer base. Don't just publish content. Share it!

Not regularly promoting older content that is still relevant and high-performing

If you have an "evergreen" piece of content out there that is still yielding a high share of organic traffic, then think about how to keep promoting it. If you fail to do so, you may be missing out on an opportunity to climb in Google's SERP rankings. After all, by traffic share standards, one result that shows up on page one is better than five results that show up on page five. Regularly audit your older content to see which pieces are high performers and then develop a strategy to further promote them.

Forgetting to promote internal pages of your website

Not every piece of content should have an aggressive call to action at the end. In fact, promoting other web pages within your website instead of pushing an instant purchase decision may be much more effective in engaging top- and mid-funnel consumers. If you don't talk up your internal web pages, or at least refer to them via internal linking, your SEO scores may suffer and your user engagement may dwindle. Incorporate internal page marketing as part of your overall strategy. Examine the goal for each piece of content, and see whether internal links or a soft CTA to learn more from another post would be appropriate in context.

Not rewarding employees who share your content

If you're already leveraging your employees to share your content, great! However, if you don't provide any incentives for your employees to share it, then they'll likely forget to do so. Be sure to offer rewards and recognition to spur on employee advocacy. Even a small perk, like an extra break during the workday, can lead to a big spike in content sharing.

Not sharing your content with your employees

When your employees not only *work* for your company but actively *advocate* for your brand, your business will almost inevitably experience growth. Of course, if you don't share your content with employees, then they will be less effective as brand advocates. Be sure to keep your employees in the loop! For instance, send out periodic emails that talk up one of your latest published blog posts to get them excited about the content and your company.

Not customizing content for each of your prospect segments

Just as you would want to diversify your content types to reach all different sorts of audience members, you want to ensure that you are creating content that reaches each of your prospect segments. Then you can personalize your marketing tactics to each segment and easily draw them deeper into the buyer's journey. Take each prospect segment's needs and goals and include them in the content creation process, with a personal nod to their values. This will help develop more trust as the prospect ventures down the sales funnel.
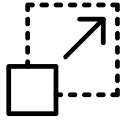
Not republishing previously published content to your social media networks

So many aspects of effective content marketing revolve around amplification. If you're not republishing content to your social media accounts, then you're limiting your content's exposure to a wider audience. In addition, you may be expending unnecessary resources to create new content, when an older piece will do just as well. Every once in a while, cross-check your content goals for social media platforms with previously-published articles from your website to see if there's a good match and then consider republishing to your social media account.

Forgetting to update previously published content

Creating a constant stream of new content takes a lot of work. However, updating previously published articles and blogs can yield many of the same benefits, with a lot less effort. If you forget to update older pieces of content, then you'll likely get penalized by Google for lack of "freshness." On the other hand, by regularly updating your content you are, in effect, boosting its relevance according to Google's algorithm. If your product or service doesn't change very much, considering updating your content by answering user questions or repurposing old articles to focus on more specific customer segments.

Not leveraging your employees to amplify your content

Employees that actively share branded content can be a huge marketing boost. In fact, just one employee sharing three pieces of content a day can result in up to 23 million in additional reach by year's end! If you're not encouraging your employees to actively share content on social media, then you're missing out on a golden opportunity to increase brand exposure - for free! Don't neglect this opportunity. Simply ask your team members to share content that they find valuable with friends, family members and colleagues. Over time, that simple request could yield huge dividends.

Not incorporating user-generated content into your content marketing program

Your users and customers are a tremendous source of content and inspiration for your program. Gather feedback and testimonials (and the permission to use them) and other feedback from your user or customer base. You can do this through individual interactions, mass solicitations or through polls and surveys. The insights that you gather will help spark topic ideas for your content marketing program, improve your product or service and give your customers a vehicle in which they can participate in your success.