

Content Marketing Workbook

A Beginner's Guide to Leveraging
Content Marketing for Your Business

LAIRE®



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INTRODUCTION

Your Content Marketing Transformation

Welcome to the Content Marketing Workbook! Here, you'll learn how to apply content marketing concepts to your business and turn yourself into a lean, mean content marketing machine.

To start, what exactly is content marketing?

Content marketing is a strategic marketing and business process focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content. This content is meant to attract and retain your target audience and, ultimately, drive higher engagement and profits.

When done correctly, content marketing helps create a relationship with your audience. A relationship, when built on the foundations of authenticity and value, leads to trust — and if your audience trusts you, they'll be more willing to do business with you when they're ready to make a purchasing decision.

Your content should attract the right people to your site, convert those people into leads, and help nurture them into becoming customers. But it doesn't stop there. Your content should always delight your customers, too, and turn them into organic promoters of your brand.

In a nutshell, content marketing is really just the art of communicating with your prospects and customers without having to directly sell to them.

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN IN THIS WORKBOOK

The activities and guidance in this workbook will help you fine-tune and grow your content marketing capabilities. Each section is based on learnings from each class in [HubSpot's free Content Marketing Certification course](#). This way, you can apply what you learned to your business. If you need help, refer to the helpful links below each activity.

We recommend saving this workbook to your desktop so you don't lose your progress as you complete each section.

Let's get after it!



Building a Content Creation Framework

Why does your business need a framework for creating content?

Successful content marketing strategies require publishing a lot of content for each buyer persona and stage of the buyer's journey. When you're creating content on a large scale, you don't have to try to reinvent the wheel with each piece of content.

Instead, you should have a clear and repeatable process in place that allows you to produce blog posts, eBooks, case studies, and more in an efficient manner.

Let's put this framework into practice.



READING

What does an editorial calendar look like? Find out by reading [How to Create an Editorial Calendar](#).



ACTIVITY 1

An editorial calendar is the first step toward achieving a sustainable content creation process. Use these [free templates](#) to create an editorial content calendar for your business.



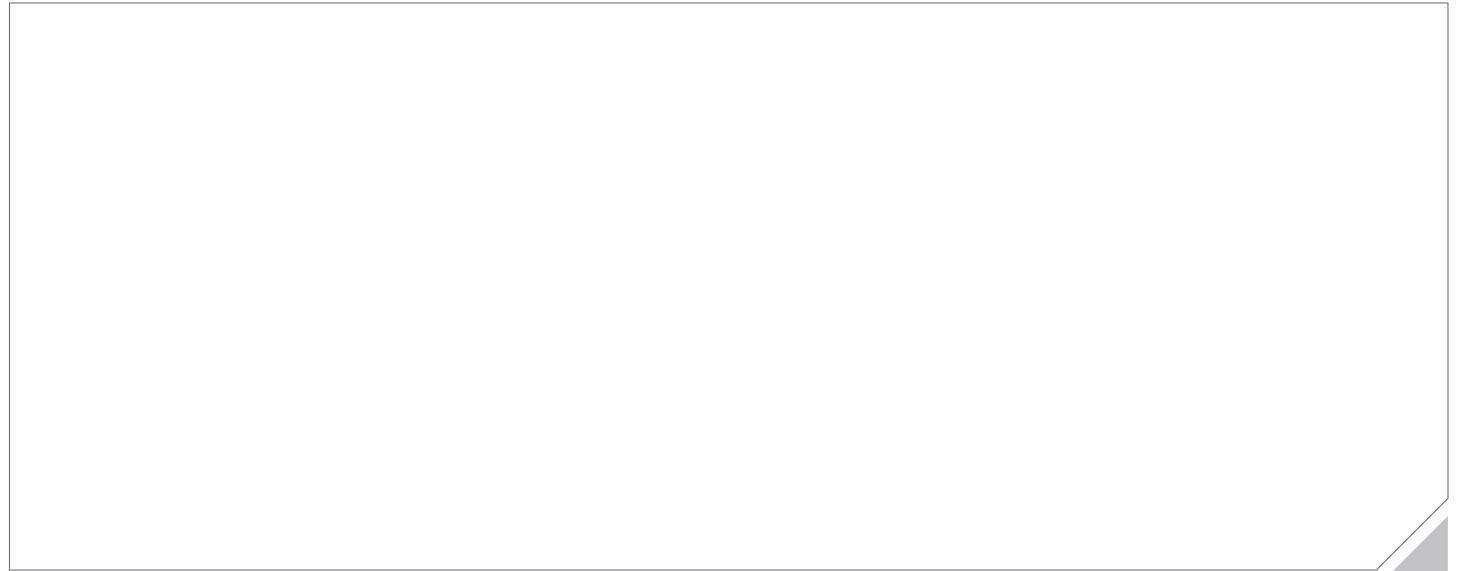
ACTIVITY 2

Just because you've created a piece of content doesn't mean it's ready to be shared with the world. Content needs a review system that double-checks if the content has been edited, whether search engine optimization (SEO) best practices have been implemented, and if it matches your brand's voice and style guide.

A content review process should include the following:

- ◆ Defined content creation and approval roles to create accountability and ensure alignment of responsibilities (content creators, content reviewers, and editors, etc.)
- ◆ A defined content creation and approval process before publishing content (rounds of approval with specific details for each round)
- ◆ A document that tracks the content creation and approval process based on deadlines (helps organize content)

Outline a content review process for your business. Doing so will help ensure your business is proud to put its name on each piece of content it publishes.



If you get stuck, please refer to video two at the [3:24 timestamp](#) in the “Building a Content Creation Framework” class in the Content Marketing Certification.



SECTION 2

The Power of Storytelling

Everyone loves a great story.

People want to feel connected to a group — to belong — and stories create this connection. They give us a reason to communicate and relate. Stories are stimulating and give us something to believe in; stories make us feel better, smarter, safer, or even loved.

Business storytelling is similar. It's about creating alignment between your business and your prospects and customers and connecting with them on a deeper level.

Let's put storytelling into practice.



READING

What makes employees and customers buy into a company? [Find out in the Executive Summary: The Golden Circle With Simon Sinek.](#)



ACTIVITY 1

Simon Sinek says, “People don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it.”

Why does your company do what it does? In the box below, **write your business’s why:**

If you get stuck, please refer to video two at the [0:14 timestamp](#) in “The Power of Storytelling” class in the Content Marketing Certification.



ACTIVITY 2

Regardless of the story you're trying to tell or how you're trying to tell it, storytelling has three essential elements — characters, conflict, and resolution.

In the box below, **outline your business's character** (the primary person you're trying to reach and educate or inform):

In the box below, **outline your business's conflict** (the problem it's trying to solve):

In the box below, **outline your business's resolution** (the solution it offers):

If you get stuck, please refer to video two at the [2:30 timestamp](#) in “The Power of Storytelling” class in the Content Marketing Certification.

Generating Content Ideas

A content generation process will allow you to come up with a consistent flow of original, high-quality, and relevant content ideas.

There are four things you should keep in mind when generating content ideas:

1. What are the reading habits of your buyer personas?
2. What are your competitors doing?
3. What are people talking about on question-and-answer sites like Quora?
4. What can you learn from your SEO efforts?

Let's put idea generation into practice.



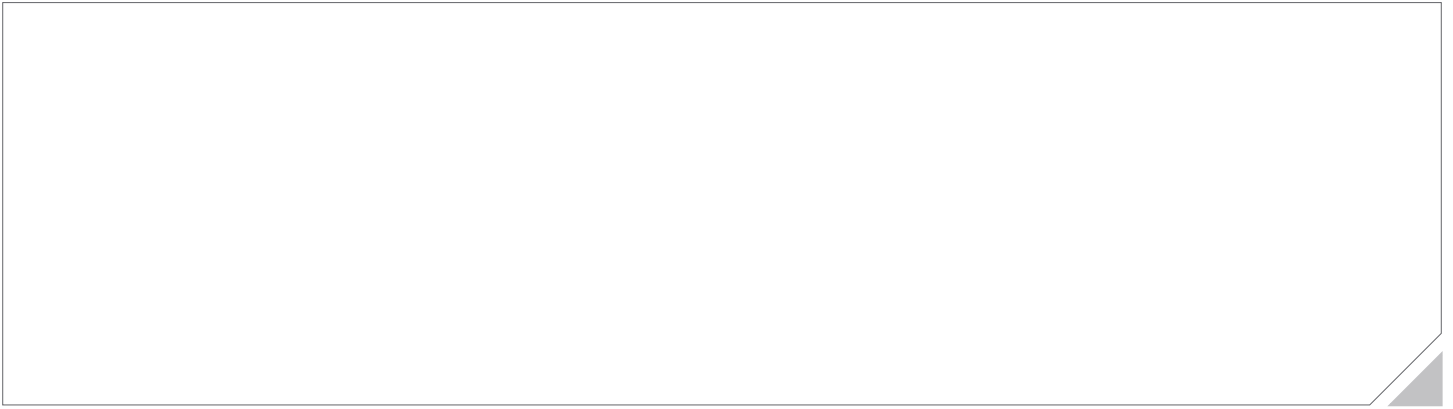
ACTIVITY 1

Keeping the above in mind, make a list of five ideas for your next content piece in any format — blog post, guide, eBook, infographic, etc. Each idea should be educational or informative about your industry, not your brand. Most people don't know who you are yet, so you need to attract them with valuable thought leadership content.

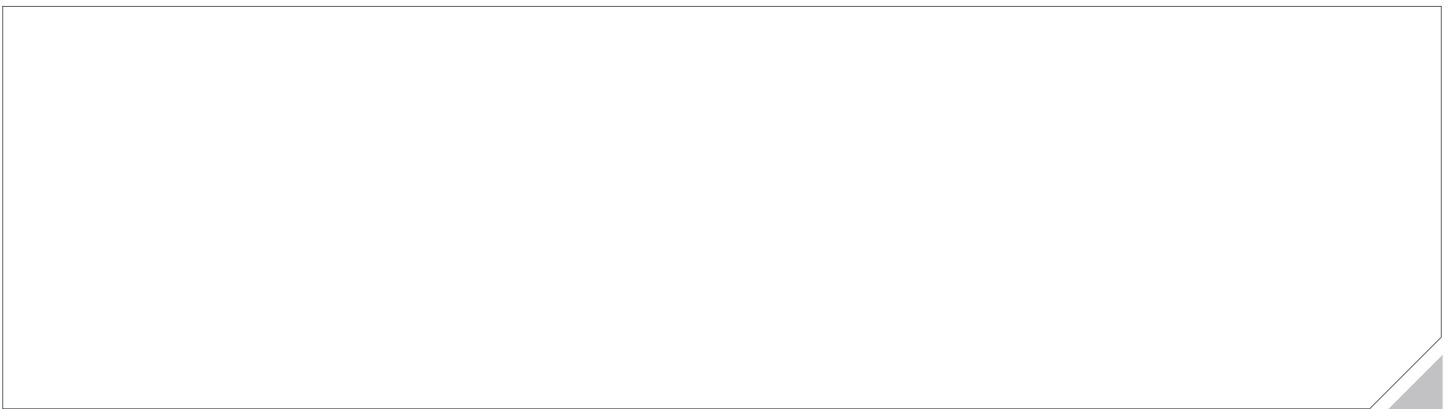
Content Idea 1:

Content Idea 2:

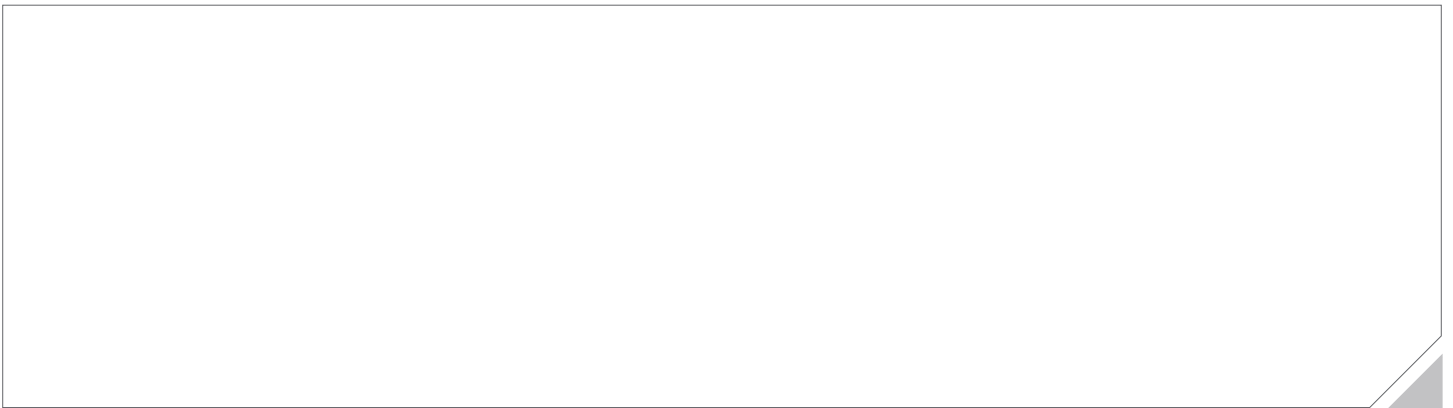
Content Idea 3:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin gray border, intended for writing a content idea. It has a small gray triangular corner piece in the bottom right corner.

Content Idea 4:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin gray border, intended for writing a content idea. It has a small gray triangular corner piece in the bottom right corner.

Content Idea 5:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin gray border, intended for writing a content idea. It has a small gray triangular corner piece in the bottom right corner.

If you get stuck, please refer to [video three](#) in the “Generating Content Ideas” class in the Content Marketing Certification.

Planning a Long-Term Content Strategy

When it comes to creating content, you want to remain as reactive and agile as you can to make the most of your time. Having a plan will give you and your team the ability to stay on top of upcoming initiatives, remain organized, and proactively manage the content required for your marketing tasks.



ACTIVITY 1

Perform a content audit and an event-based audit for your business using [this template](#).

If you get stuck: please refer to video two at the [2:56 timestamp](#) in the “Planning a Long-Term Content Strategy” class in the Content Marketing Certification.



READING

What does a detailed buyer persona look like? Find out by reading [Buyer Personas: Discovering and Talking to Your Ideal Clients](#).



ACTIVITY 2

Your content marketing efforts should always be targeted to at least one of your buyer personas. Based on the above reading, list your primary buyer persona's traits in the boxes below.

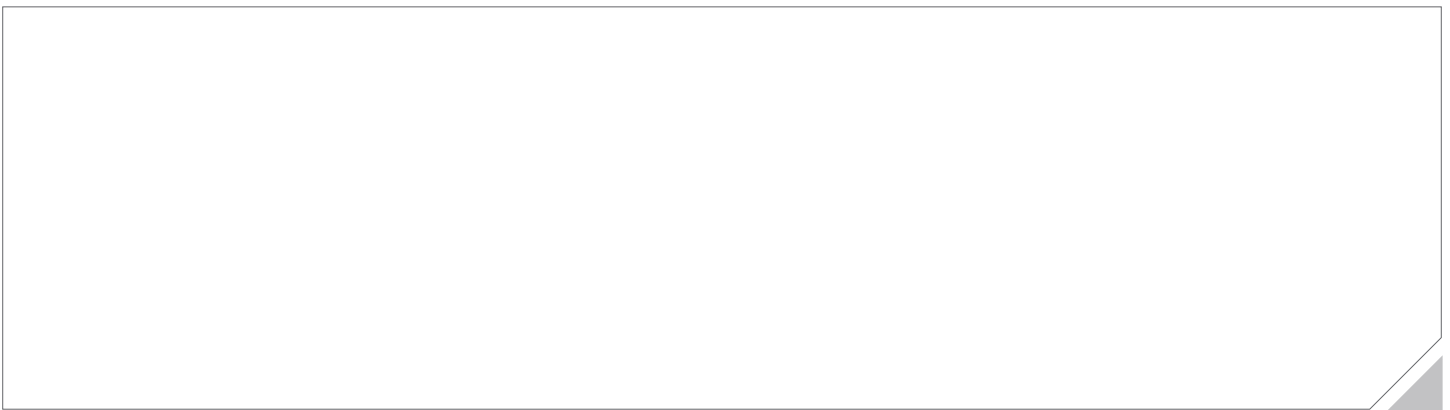
1. What's your primary buyer persona's background? (Job? Career path? Family?)

2. What are your primary buyer persona's demographic traits? (Male or female? Age? Income? Location?)

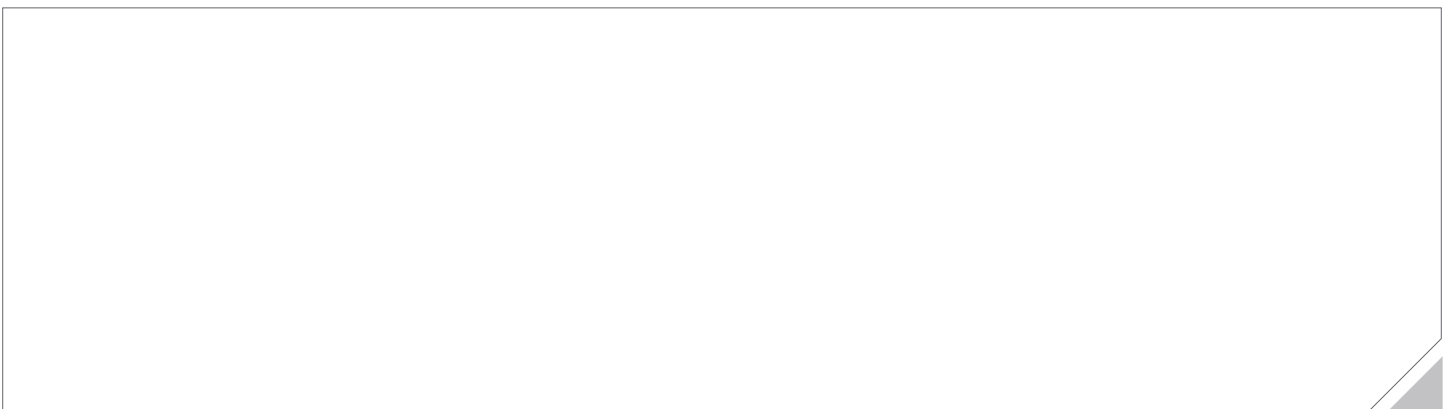
3. What are your primary buyer persona's identifiers? (Demeanor? Communication preferences?)

A large, empty rectangular text box with a thin gray border and a small gray triangle in the bottom right corner, intended for handwritten notes.

4. What are your primary buyer persona's goals? (Primary goal? Secondary goal?)

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5. What are your primary buyer persona's challenges? (Primary challenge? Secondary challenge?)

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If you get stuck, please refer to video two at the [8:17 timestamp](#) in the “Planning Long-Term Content Strategy” class in the Content Marketing Certification.



ACTIVITY 3

Identify the buyer's journey for your primary buyer persona. The goal is to help them through the awareness, consideration, and decision stages. And while there's no magic number for the amount of content within the buyer's journey, let's start with identifying three pieces of content — one for each stage of the buyer's journey.

We recommend starting with a comprehensive, educational, awareness-stage resource like a guide or eBook. This way, you can prove your value and give insights into your industry, which is a great way to start building a relationship.

1. Awareness-stage resource format (e.g., eBook, guide): _____

Awareness-stage topic (think of this like a working title — what do you want to communicate?):

2. Consideration-stage resource format (e.g., checklist, case study): _____

Consideration-stage topic (think of this like a working title — what do you want to communicate?):

3. Decision-stage resource format (e.g., consultation, demo): _____

Decision-stage topic (think of this like a working title — what do you want to communicate?):

If you get stuck, please refer to video two at the [9:00 timestamp](#) in the “Planning a Long-Term Content Strategy” class in the Content Marketing Certification.

SECTION 5

Becoming an Effective Writer

At its core, effective content is relevant and useful to your audience. It makes your reader — not your company — your number one priority. Your writing should use your audience's language and show that you understand their pain points, challenges, and goals. It should be produced to help people and provide value, and not just sell them your products or services.

Let's put effective writing into practice.



ACTIVITY 1

For almost every piece of content you create, coming up with 5 to 10 different headlines is a great writing exercise.

In the box below, write 5 to 10 different headlines for your business's next blog post.

If you get stuck: please refer to video two at the [0:12 timestamp](#) in the “Becoming an Effective Writer” class in the Content Marketing Certification.





ACTIVITY 2

Content can always use another set of editing eyes to make sure it's grammatically correct and consistent with your brand style guide.

Select one of your blog posts and review it with a fresh perspective. Make sure your content follows common grammar and style best practices, such as:

- ♦ Use contractions
- ♦ Write with simple language
- ♦ Use the active voice
- ♦ Be clear and concise
- ♦ Use short sentences and paragraphs
- ♦ Cut fluffy words from your writing
- ♦ Adhere to a style guide
- ♦ Use “you” and “your” rather than “we” or “our”
- ♦ Avoid jargon
- ♦ Use the appropriate voice and tone

Did you find any grammatical or style mistakes? If so, what are they, and how will you fix them?

If you get stuck, please refer to video three at the [1:15 timestamp](#) in the “Becoming an Effective Writer” class in the Content Marketing Certification.



Repurposing Your Content to Extend Its Value

Great content is the foundation of your content marketing plan.

It attracts new visitors to your site, strengthens your online reputation, and builds trust, which ultimately leads to converting prospects into leads — and eventually customers. However, it can take a lot of time and effort to create effective content consistently.

Repurposing content allows you to extend its value by changing it to serve a different purpose, like transforming the messaging of a blog post into a social media post or a video. The messaging is the same, but the channel or format in which it's consumed is different.



ACTIVITY 1

Instead of creating long-form content like a guide or an eBook from scratch, identify its concepts and contents first. This way, you can create smaller pieces of content in the short term (like a blog post series) that grow into your long-form content resource.

Identify the topic and format for a long-form piece of content. Consider using the awareness-stage guide or eBook you identified in the “Planning a Long-Term Content Strategy” section.

Awareness-stage resource format (e.g., eBook, guide): _____

Awareness-stage topic (think of this like a working title — what do you want to communicate?):

If you get stuck, please refer to video two at the [8:30 timestamp](#) in the “Extending the Value of Your Content Through Repurposing” class in the Content Marketing Certification.



ACTIVITY 2

Identify five supporting short-form subtopics for your content offer. Each supporting subtopic should be strong enough to be a stand-alone piece, but when combined with other supporting subtopics should help build your long-form content resource.

Supporting subtopic 1: _____

Provide a brief explanation of this supporting subtopic.

Supporting subtopic 2: _____

Provide a brief explanation of this supporting subtopic.

Supporting subtopic 3: _____

Provide a brief explanation of this supporting subtopic.

Supporting subtopic 4: _____

Provide a brief explanation of this supporting subtopic.

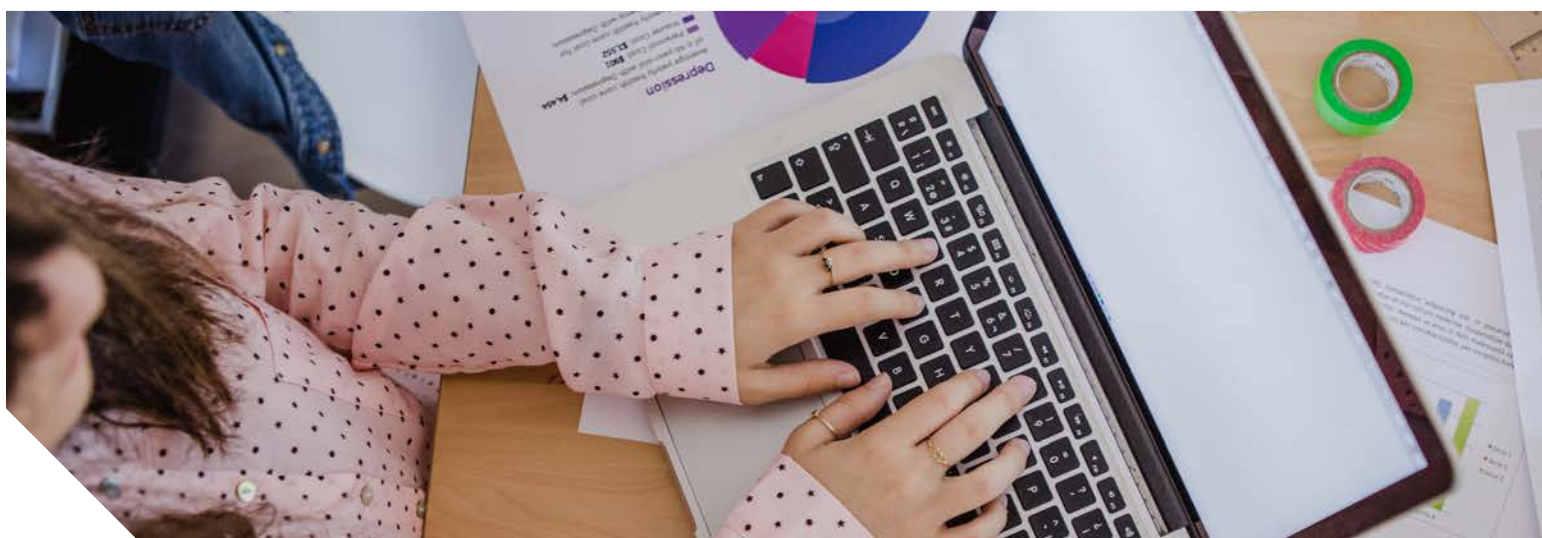
Supporting subtopic 5: _____

Provide a brief explanation of this supporting subtopic.

If you get stuck, please refer to video two at the [8:58 timestamp](#) in the “Extending the Value of Your Content Through Repurposing” class in the Content Marketing Certification.

ACTIVITY 3

Format each supporting short-form subtopic into a blog post. Use the editorial content calendar you created in the “Building a Content Creation Framework” section, and schedule each blog post based on your team’s content production cadence.



How to Effectively Promote Content

No matter how you came across that latest piece of content online, it was likely an example of content promotion.

What is content promotion? Essentially, it's the distribution of content through a variety of marketing channels. These channels include social media platforms, blog posts, email campaigns, and live events, just to name a few.

As a content marketer, it's important to understand how to leverage these promotional channels to connect with new audiences and prospects in the right place, at the right time.

Let's put content promotion into practice.



ACTIVITY 1

Each marketing channel provides a different user experience. Simply copying and pasting the same message across all your marketing channels may save you time, but it doesn't provide the best experience for your audience. Furthermore, you're missing an opportunity to optimize messaging based on that specific marketing channel.

Select a recent blog post your business published and write a unique promotional message for at least three of your marketing channels, like Facebook, Instagram, or email. Remember, each channel offers a different user experience. The goal is to tailor the message to the user experience on that particular channel.

Blog post title: _____

Channel: _____

Message:

Channel: _____

Message:

Channel: _____

Message:

If you get stuck, please refer to video two at the [7:07 timestamp](#) in the “How to Effectively Promote Content” class in the Content Marketing Certification.



ACTIVITY 2

You spend a lot of time creating content to only share it on social media once. You can easily share the same piece of content multiple times without deterring folks by refreshing the social post’s messaging. Using the same blog post from Activity 1, compose five different social media posts for one channel using interesting snippets from the content to serve as the post’s five varying messages.

Blog post title: _____

Channel: _____

Message 1:

Message 2:

Message 3:

Message 4:

Message 5:



Measuring and Analyzing Your Content

A content generation process will allow you to come up with a consistent flow of original, high-quality, and relevant content ideas.

There are four things you should keep in mind when generating content ideas:

1. What are the reading habits of your buyer personas?
2. What are your competitors doing?
3. What are people talking about on question-and-answer sites like Quora?
4. What can you learn from your SEO efforts?

Let's put idea generation into practice.



READING

How do you track and prove the value of your content marketing efforts? Learn more by reading [Justifying Your Marketing Budget to Your Boss](#).



ACTIVITY 1

It's always helpful to set a SMART goal to align with your business's performance metrics. What does SMART stand for?

- ♦ **Specific** — Your goal should be clear and communicate what's expected, why it's important, who's involved, where it's going to happen, and which constraints are in place.
- ♦ **Measurable** — Your goal should have concrete criteria for measuring progress and achievement.
- ♦ **Attainable** — Your goal should be realistic and possible for your team to reach.
- ♦ **Relevant** — Your goal should matter to your business and address a core initiative.
- ♦ **Timely** — You should have an expected date that you will reach the goal.

Work with your team to identify a SMART goal for your content that aligns with one of your business's key performance metrics, such as brand awareness, engagement, lead generation, customer conversion and sales, customer loyalty and retention, and website performance.

Write your SMART goal in the box below:

If you get stuck, please refer to video two at the [3:09 timestamp](#) in the "Measuring and Analyzing Your Content" class in the Content Marketing Certification.



ACTIVITY 2

It's important to properly track the performance of your SMART goals and keep key stakeholders in the loop.

List the name and position of key stakeholders who should stay informed on the progress of the SMART goal identified in Activity 1.

Not every stakeholder is created equal. Some prefer granular details while others want high-level progress updates. List the communication cadence for each key stakeholder as well as their preferred format of communication (i.e., detailed report vs short email).

If you get stuck, please refer to video three at the [0:53 timestamp](#) in the “Measuring and Analyzing Your Content” class in the Content Marketing Certification.

Measuring and Analyzing Your Content

The goal of a growth marketer is to identify new opportunities that will help build and engage your organization's audience. This approach is important for content marketers, as it can help them find new ways to communicate with their audience, whether it be a new marketing channel or a piece of content to test. Let's put growth marketing into practice.



ACTIVITY 1

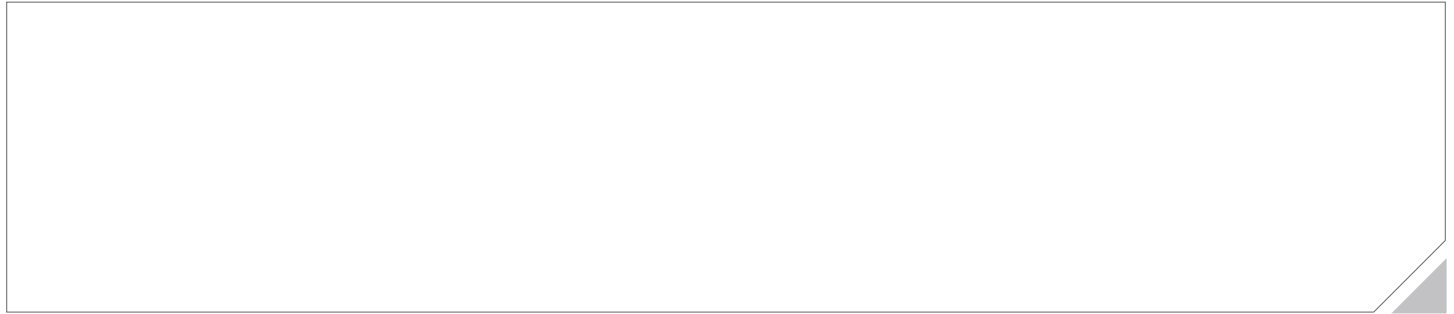
Before running your next marketing test, you first need to identify your business's marketing channels. This way you can organize your initiatives based on importance by channel.

Organize your marketing channels by filling in the bullseye framework fields below.

1. Identify your business's inner ring — These are your three top-performing marketing channels that account for the majority of your business revenue (blog, social media, paid ads, etc.).

2. Identify your business's middle ring — These are your six secondary marketing channels that help drive business revenue but are not as effective as the inner-ring marketing channels.

3. Identify your business's outer ring — These are your marketing channels that are the least helpful with driving business revenue. This ring includes marketing channels you're currently active on as well as marketing channels you've yet to become a member of. It's important to identify as many relevant marketing channels as possible for your business.



If you get stuck, please refer to video two at the [3:12 timestamp](#) in the “Developing a Growth Marketing Mentality” class in the Content Marketing Certification.



Creating Topic Clusters and Pillar Pages

Content marketers are constantly battling for the attention of their audience. If you want to create effective content that converts visitors into leads (and eventually customers), you need to create a helpful, positive user experience that solves for both the searcher and the search engine, not just one or the other.

Here's how your content can solve for both: Create targeted clusters of relevant content that each cover a specific core topic in depth. These targeted clusters then need to lead to a centralized hub, known as a content pillar.

What is a content pillar? A content pillar (or pillar page) is a website page that covers a broad topic in depth and is linked to from a cluster of related content.

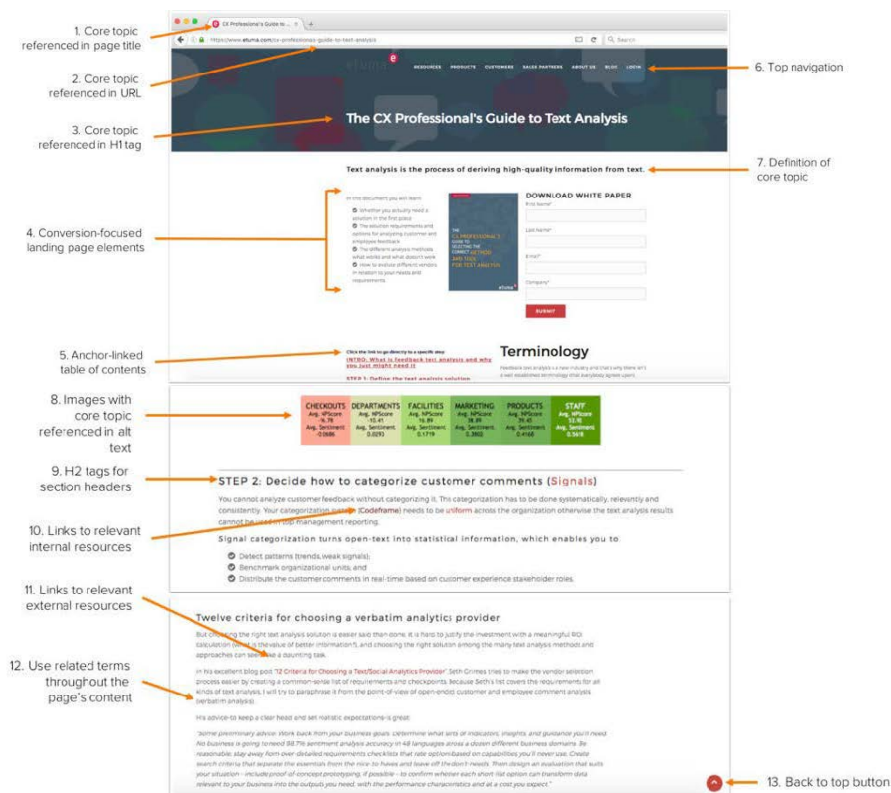
Let's put creating topic clusters into practice.

ACTIVITY 1

Select a guide or eBook that you've created and deconstruct it into an ungated, conversion-focused content pillar page.

Make sure the guide is awareness- or consideration-stage focused and supports at least one or more of your products and services.

Below is a list of the content pillar page layout tips to consider.



If you get stuck, please refer to video two at the [17:38 timestamp](#) in the "Creating Topic Clusters and Pillar Pages" class in the Content Marketing Certification.



ACTIVITY 2

Create a topic cluster by inserting a link in all similarly themed content that points to your pillar page. Doing so will help solve for both the searcher and the search engine. How?

It will solve for the searcher as you'll be connecting them with the most relevant resource possible on a specific topic. It will solve for the search engine as the search engine web crawler will be able to travel through linked content and identify the topic cluster.

If you get stuck, please refer to video two at the [15:54 timestamp](#) in the “Creating Topic Clusters and Pillar Pages” class in the Content Marketing Certification.

THE RESULTS

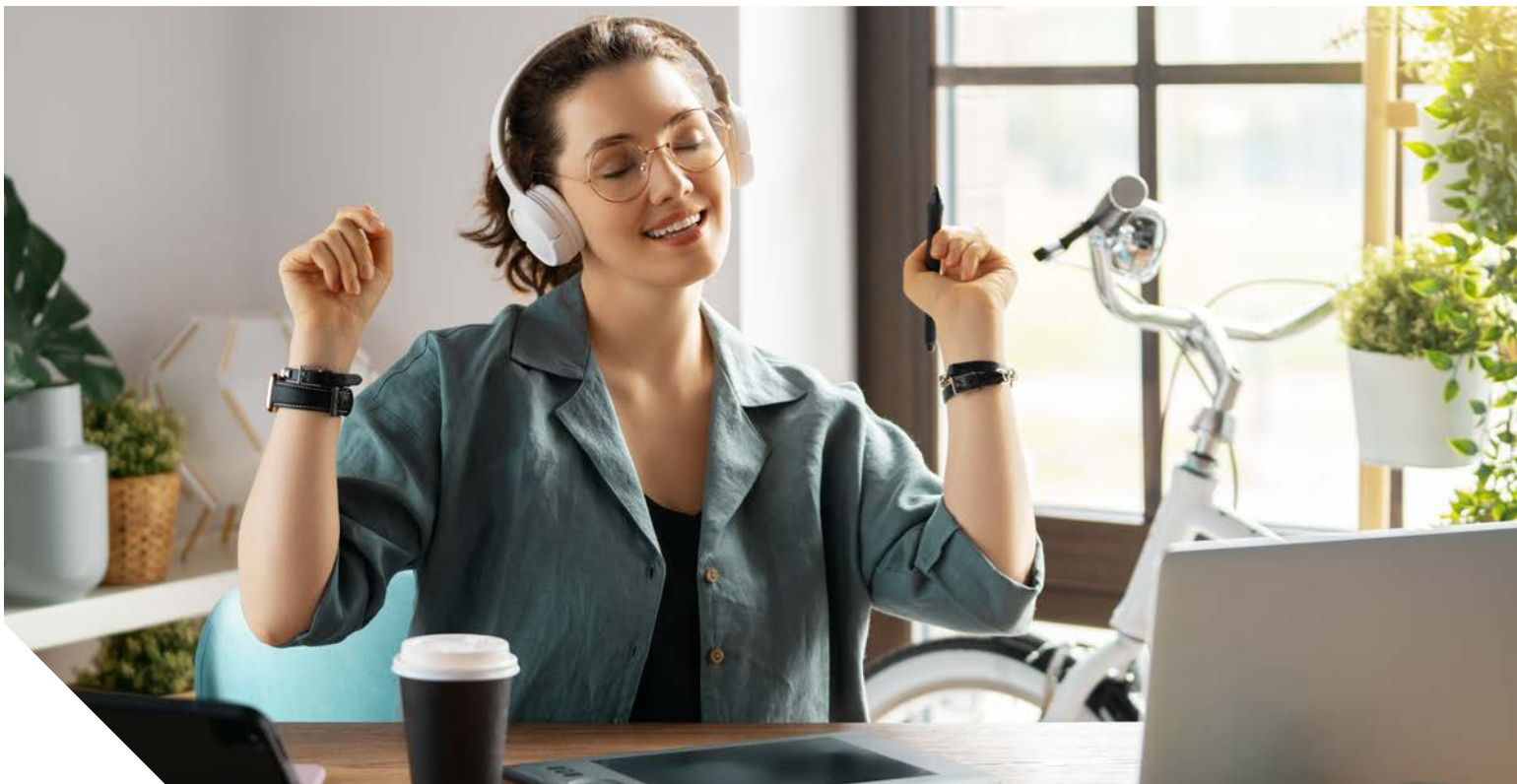
Your Completed Workbook

Congratulations!

By completing the activities and readings in this workbook, you've taken the first step toward transforming yourself into an efficient content marketer. Pat yourself on the back.

Hopefully, this workbook helped you gain valuable knowledge and create tangible resources that will help kick-start your business into a content marketing machine.

The next step is to continue to build your plan and stay consistent in your approach. Always be on the lookout for new content opportunities that provide value to your audience. Remember, they're the reason you're doing this in the first place — if you want to start a relationship with them, give them the care and attention they deserve.



The LAIRE logo, with 'LAIRE' in a sans-serif font and a stylized orange triangle above the 'A'.A woman with long brown hair, wearing a red turtleneck sweater, is looking down at a black tablet she is holding. The background is a dark, reflective surface. The image is partially obscured by a large orange and white diagonal graphic element.

Wasting ad spend? Leads dried up? Website not converting?

You're busy, and we know it. In just 20 minutes, we'll grade your website, identify lead generation opportunities, and discuss how to grow your revenue. Ready to learn more?

LET'S TALK

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