

DEVELOPING YOUR CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

Planning is absolutely vital to the success of any online campaign. This guide gives you detailed, step-by-step help in creating your plan and executing it perfectly.



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Who Wrote this Paper?

Having delivered projects for over 400 schools, Ian has gained valuable insights in to what makes marketing really fizz for schools & colleges.

"Content Marketing is going to become more and more vital to every school and college in the country over the coming few years as demands increase and competition becomes more and more fierce.

The best bit is schools and colleges are already doing Content Marketing, most just don't realise they are or the potential it holds.

If you start getting to grips with this now you'll very much be ahead of the game because very few schools or colleges understand the power they have at their fingertips.

This guide will give you detailed, step-by-step help in the form of questions so that, by the end, you will have a clear picture of what you're trying to achieve and who you're trying to reach.

For top-end, targeted, distributed, expertly developed campaigns speak to our experienced team.

The key to strategy planning is to take your time, answer every question in detail and stick at it. It will be worth it! Enjoy!"



Ian Richardson
Co-Founder & Director

Answer The Big Picture Questions

Before you dig really deep into your plans you need to answer some broad questions that will directly influence everything you do.

- What issue or problem (highly specifically) are you trying to solve? *or* What are you trying to achieve?
- What is your dream outcome for the problem, issue or plan?
- If you fail, what is the risk?
- Who is involved? What permission do you need from your managers to participate?
- How much money will you spend?
- How much time will you spend?
- What if things go wrong? What is your plan if you don't achieve your goals quickly enough, if there is a complaint, or if any other problems arise?
- How long do you have to show the success of your plans?

These questions are broad and are so deliberately. They will help you get into the right mindset before even thinking about creating any content.

Be more specific ...

Now you have a broad handle on what you want to achieve, lets drill that down so we're getting more and more targeted. Let's really hone what you need to get done.

- What is the specific need to reach the objective? (e.g., generate revenue, have better relationships with parents, attract more students etc)
- How big of an opportunity for your school is it? i.e Is it big enough to justify spending your time and/or money?
- How will the plan align to your core objectives as a school? With your school masterplan, if you have one?
- How will the plan align with your existing marketing?
- What are the risks involved? What things / people / other organisations could prevent you from achieving the goals? How can you minimise the risks?

Detail your audience

Now that you have a feel for the problem you are trying to solve for and the reason to create content in the first place, you can begin to focus on the persona, on the people who are going to digest your content and hopefully respond.

- Who is the target audience? *(only one - really important to limit to one, if you have more than one, create more than one audience persona profile - this is because every audience type have specific needs. The best bit about this though, is if you're trying to reach prospective students or parents, there is a direct line between their needs and the needs of your current students or parents!)*
- What content or information do they need in regards to this plan?
- How will this help your audience in some way?
- Why would your audience care about this? (Do they??)
- What unique value proposition (UVP) do **you** offer this persona? Compare yourself to other providers and distinguish yourself clearly?

Develop your content

You want to be highly critical of your own content. If the information isn't truly differentiated, aimed specifically at your audience, with as little competition as possible, you will struggle to break through and gain their attention.

- What is the specific content niche you are going to cover?
- What other organisations provide the same kind of information? Do you have an opportunity to become a leading resource in this area? How do you find out?
- If you need any assets to help you create this content, can you purchase an existing external asset instead of developing a new one?
- You most likely will have stories in your school that will apply to this niche already. How are you going to obtain them consistently?
- Who in the school already has the expertise to help? (students or staff, be specific)
- What internal assets and other content do you already have?
- What resources (staffing and otherwise) will you need?

Develop your content ... (cont)

- How will the stories mainly be told (audio, video, textual)? Remember, you want to focus on one key content type and one key distribution platform (a blog, a news article series, an event series, a video series, etc. - all deliverable through Schudio CMS)
- What key design issues are important to the success of the plan?
- What platform makes the most sense to distribute the content? (website, social (be specific) or print?)
- How will the existing brand be taken into account in the content creation?

Distribute & Measure

Once you've created your plan for your content you need to decide how you're going to get that content in front of your audience. Spend just as much time on this section as the others.

- How will the information you create be found by your audience?
- What current assets do you have to distribute the content? (website, social etc?)
- What partnerships can be leveraged to help you distribute the content? (key social followers, press?)
- Is there financial budget available?
- How will you know the initiative is successful?
- What technology or tools will you use to capture audience information when they respond? (this is vital as if you don't collect any information as part of the plan you'll fail)
- What key assets need to be created to capture the necessary data?

Distribute & Measure ... (cont)

- What other departments within your school should you bring in to maximise impact?
- What technology are you missing for enabling collaboration and measurement? What are “must-haves” and what are “nice-to-haves”?
- What internal communication will you need to make sure the program gets and keeps the interest and buy-in of internal parties and collaborators?
- What internal issues need to be worked out so you can tie the audience to further engagement?



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