



Content Marketing

How AAI Defines Content Marketing

How we define content marketing: it is writing and disseminating information that is relevant and of interest to a vertical market segment.

What is content marketing from a practical standpoint? For B2B companies it includes product, technology, industry information and perhaps relevant historical technology information. The form this information takes includes text, images and videos. The information is educational in nature and that includes a range of topics from informing a market about a new product to describing new technology.

Where is it disseminated? A company's website, blogs, white papers, news releases, newsletters, video streaming sites, online and print publications, broadcast media, search engines and via physical media like DVDs.

Defining what content marketing is and ways it can reach your intended audience is one thing. Determining what your audience will be interested in reading and also generate meaningful marketing and sales responses is another. Responses that have merit run the gamut from awareness to interest to brand recall to sales.

Another question that needs asking is how is the content best disseminated for maximum results at the best ROI? Another question is how do we measure the results? Companies can choose to do all kinds of marketing activities to gain exposure for the content they create. An even better question is, 'why not focus on the activities that generate the most meaningful results to achieve a better ROI?'

AAI has the experience to help marketers choose the optimum activities for their particular situation that will achieve the best results. We gladly develop content for an individual project and address projects a little further into this paper after reflecting on the big picture.



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Goals

The primary goal of content marketing, as we see it is to conceive of and implement activities that inform and/or educate on the way to the 'end zone' of generating sales activity with a positive ROI. Other measurable actions to be considered include increasing awareness of a product and/or a brand, increasing response, developing and sustaining sense of value and trust in the minds of prospects and current customers as well as generating sales leads.

Implementation

While we expect most marketers know that starting with a plan is best, we've found that our experience in working with many dozens of companies has given us insight into best practices and how to create a sustainable and effective program.

Setting realistic and achievable plan elements is important. In order to do that, we ask questions like, 'How many new products does your company release each year?' And, 'what customers do you have a relationship with that you can leverage into content?' Perhaps the most important questions we ask are the one that help our clients create a Core Customer Profile and focus on the things that differentiate their products in meaningful ways.

As part of the process, topic review, research on specific topics writing the new content and making sure it fits in an overall strategy are key creation functions.

Once content is created strategic planning on where and when to place the content to get maximum results is the next step. Timing has several levels. One is media editorial, another is where the content should be placed first and decisions made like should it be held-off from placing elsewhere until a primary placement has run its course?

Putting content on your website and leaving it there won't get the results most businesses seek. So you need to determine if promotion needs to be done or placement with promotion included for each piece of content.



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We seek to maximize the use of each piece of content by using it in multiple applications. This is one of the many ways we work to maximize your marketing ROI. All of this effort is ideally coordinated with media-directed marketing efforts with regard to timing. More on this later in this paper.

The second to last step in the content marketing process is tracking response. Actions taken on websites from hot spots on pages indicating the most activity on a particular product on the page for example to downloading content and knowing who viewed the content or landed on your website are important in collecting the kind of data that can lead to more sales.

The last step is analyzing data collected. Following a response from eNewsletter recipient to your website to what activities they did there can aid in determining whether or not someone interacting with your content is ready to be handed off to sales as a lead. Data should also be reviewed in aggregate to determine what marketing efforts are producing and thinning the under-performers.

Technical and Specialized Subject Matter

While no one is going to be as well versed in a subject as someone who is actively working with it every day, someone with a technical background and experience in the same or a related field can - if they know the right questions to ask - gather the information in a short interview from the company's knowledge sources and take on the time consuming task of competently writing on technical subjects. So instead of a drip of content creation, over time it can become a torrent. This is another area where outsourcing makes a lot of sense, since people inside companies usually have the job of either creating the product or managing the marketing process not getting bogged down in individual discrete writing tasks.



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Specific Content Marketing Activities AAI Implements

- Content marketing plans
- Brand illumination
- Copy platform (incorporating brand and style guides)
- Copy writing
- Technical writing
- Brochures
- Feature and other articles
- Video scripts and production
- News releases
- SEO and communication balanced website copywriting
- Link building
- E-Newsletters
- Repurposing existing content
- Lead nurturing
- Content distribution
- Measurement of results
- Response scoring formulas
- Threshold alerts for sales actions

Individual Projects and Actions

Each organization or business has individual needs that call for a unique approach that address the audience we are reaching out to in a way that is consistent with a company's brand, product or service as well as identity standards. We are attuned to the tone, requirements and specialized language needed when developing content that addresses physicians, healthcare personnel and industry professionals.

AAI is glad to work with our clients on an individual project such as a brochure. We're experienced at quickly coming up to speed on the topic matter such as a specific product, the way you want information presented with respect to positioning the product in the market as well as making sure the overall presentation is projecting the company's image properly.



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Repurposing Content

While we advocate reusing content whenever possible it usually takes an effort to adapt or repurpose the content to a different use from the original usage. If an article, for example, is considered for use as a white paper thought should be given to making sure the article copy is edited to meet a proper white paper format. It should also include a benefit from your technology and supporting data - if possible - to make a strong case for adopting your technology (and therefore your products) that may have been minimized or avoided in the article for reasons of bias avoidance.

The same advice holds true for most repurposed content in marketing because each medium has a set of expectations that add more merit to the content if they are met and can diminish a brand if they are not met.

Graphics

Our view on graphics is that it is often an undervalued part of content. Graphics can capture attention in an instantaneous way that words cannot while also delivering a high impact and on target message visually. Getting the graphics right can provide many more opportunities to get prospect to read the technical information that makes a convincing case for taking a positive action from learning more, prescribing or buying your product. There is a lot of 'noise' (other messages) and time demands that can get in the way of your content being read. Graphics done right can provide the connection to draw more people in and make the decision it's worth their time to read on.

To sum up, this paper provides an overview of how AAI views content marketing and the related services we offer. Our definition and a few tips are covered, while details of what situations call for which action and best practices for each action are left out because, together with clients, it is what we do every day.