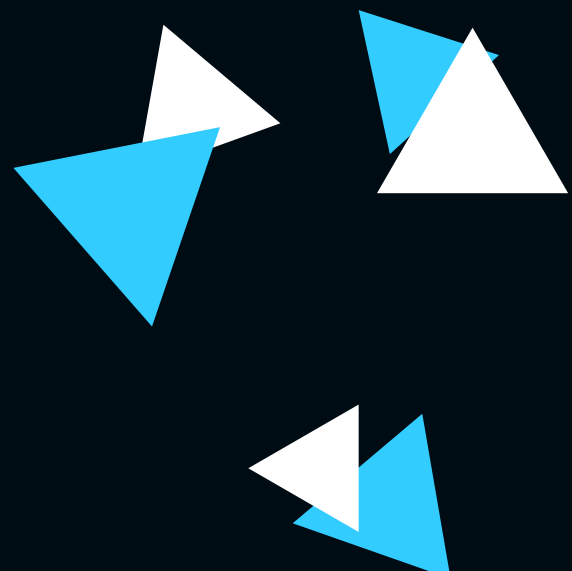




Local Management

Content Marketing 101

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO
CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY



Content Marketing: An Introduction

What is content marketing? It's a pretty broad term when you think about it. Marketing with content, right?

While that's not completely inaccurate, there is a lot more to content marketing than just saying simply "marketing with content." Content can, and does, mean everything so there is no end all, be all to content marketing. This eBook will hopefully set you out on the right track to become a successful content marketer and grow your business and its online components by leaps and bounds.

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Content marketing is undeniably one of, if not, the most effective and cost efficient ways to boost SEO ranking and build a great online presence for your company and brand.

**- Anurag Chadha
Owner and CIO of Local Management**





Components of Content Marketing

Content marketing is made up of many different components and what is the “right” content to have?

Well, like many an art form, there is no “right” content to have in content marketing. That’s not to say that all content is perfect, but it does say that some content is better than no content.

Below is a list of some of the different venues of content marketing that we will be looking at over the course of this eBook. Again, this is not a definitive list and there will always be exceptions and additions, but this will be a good start for those looking to jump into content marketing.

- Keyword research
- eBooks
- Blogs
- Articles
- Whitepapers
- Social Media

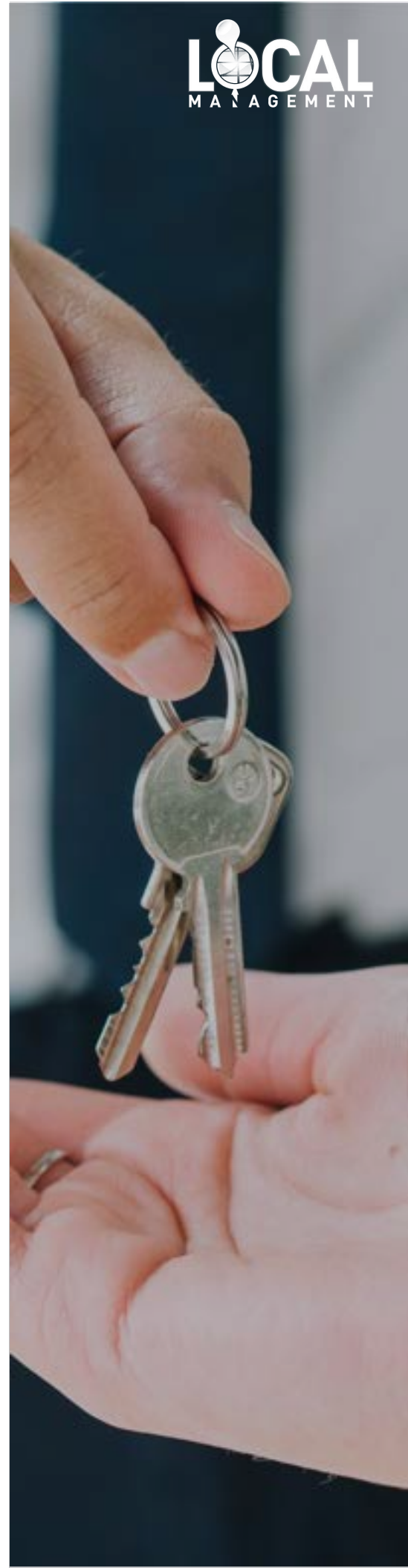
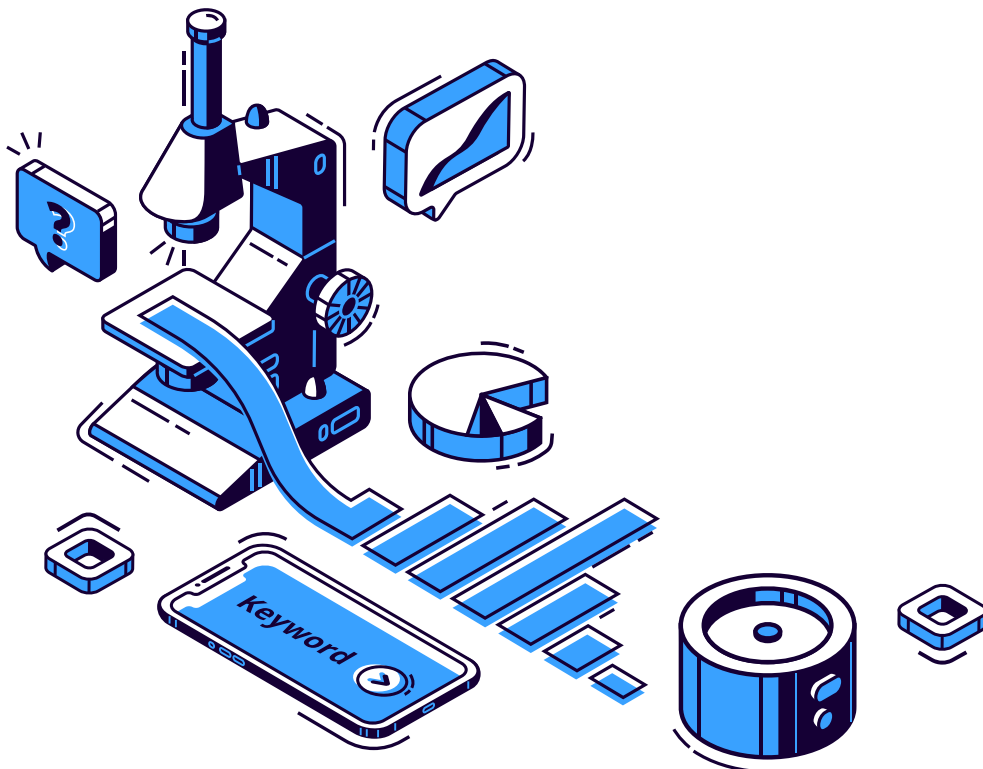
Keyword Research

Keyword research is one of the most important aspects of digital marketing in general.

Although it plays a major role in content marketing keyword research is in the upper echelons of tried and true methods of SEO in general. But, enough of all this high praise, what is keyword research? Well, just like content marketing, it has a very simple explanation that doesn't truly explain it at all. Keyword research involves doing just that, researching keywords to make sure that your website ranks highly for strong and relevant keywords. While on the surface, this seems like a perfect explanation, keyword research is so much more than that.

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Keyword research involves doing just that, re-searching keywords to make sure that your website ranks highly for strong and relevant keywords. While on the surface, this seems like a perfect explanation, keyword research is so much more than that. It's dissecting and analyzing exactly what consumers are searching for and finding what makes certain keywords more profitable than others. It's an art and a science.



Steps for Keyword Research

- 1** **First** things first, understand what you're talking about. Know your vertical or the vertical in which you are trying to find keywords for. Do some research, talk to clients in the vertical, do what you can to fully immerse yourself in understanding the keywords used to draw in the correct customers.
- 2** **Second**, Find your main keywords. These will be your pillars and the keywords to which you build around. Make sure that these keywords are used enough and common enough so that they will draw in the widest audience. Eventually you will narrow these words down to be even more specific and attract an even more concentrated customer base.
- 3** **Third**, start learning and getting familiar with keyword research tools. These tools will aid you in your search for the best keywords to use. There are multiple out there from Moz to SEMRush and of course Google Analytics. These tools are your best friends and will help you immensely in the work to come.
- 4** **Finally**, look at what your competitors are doing. What keywords are they using? How are they using the? In what context? These are all questions you need to be asking yourself regarding your own keyword research.

Benefits of Keyword Research

There are numerous benefits of keyword research and by no means could I list them all as that would take quite some time. But, I can give you a rundown of some of the benefits that are most prevalent once you begin using keyword research.

For starters, you'll have far more engagement with your audience. The more you utilize keywords, the more likely your audience will engage with the content (like, share, and comment) that uses those keywords which, in turn, causes your website to rank higher. Imagine you are a car enthusiast, and you begin reading a blog surrounding cars. If the author can speak using the correct terminology or just teaching you something new, would you not be more willing to perhaps share the blog with your car enthusiast Facebook group? Or perhaps join in on the conversation in the comments? It's all about engagement and the correct keywords make all the difference.

Briefly touched on, is the increased search ranking as a result of good keywords. Your search ranking can be increased by leaps and bounds with the correct keywords. Search engines will see this increased engagement mixed with expertly placed keywords is a guaranteed boost in page ranking. With your page ranking higher you will see increased traffic as 77% of users click on organic searches over paid ads.

EBooks

EBOOK

An eBook? Like an e-reader? While it is a digital book, it is less about where or with what you read it and more about the content held within.

Of course, you want your eBook digital as that's the thing making it an eBook, but what goes into an eBook is up to you and should reflect your marketing strategy. Take this eBook you're reading right now for instance. This eBook is meant to inform and educate you, the reader, on what forms of content marketing are available and how to use them. It has a clear goal with defined sections. Let's continue and see some of the aspects of an



Benefits of an eBook

The benefits of an eBook are wide and varied. Starting with the biggest, it saves paper, therefore saving money on printing. With no need to print out thousands of eBooks to hand out it saves a monumental amount in terms of physical goods. It also saves the environment! Less physical books mean less trees needing to be chopped down. Hooray for corporate social responsibility.

Another big benefit of writing a whole eBook on a particular subject is that it establishes authority within your field. Writing an eBook is no easy task, and it requires a fair amount of research and planning. So, once you finally finish it, those who download and read it will know that you are knowledgeable regarding the topic and you will start to build an authority around yourself.

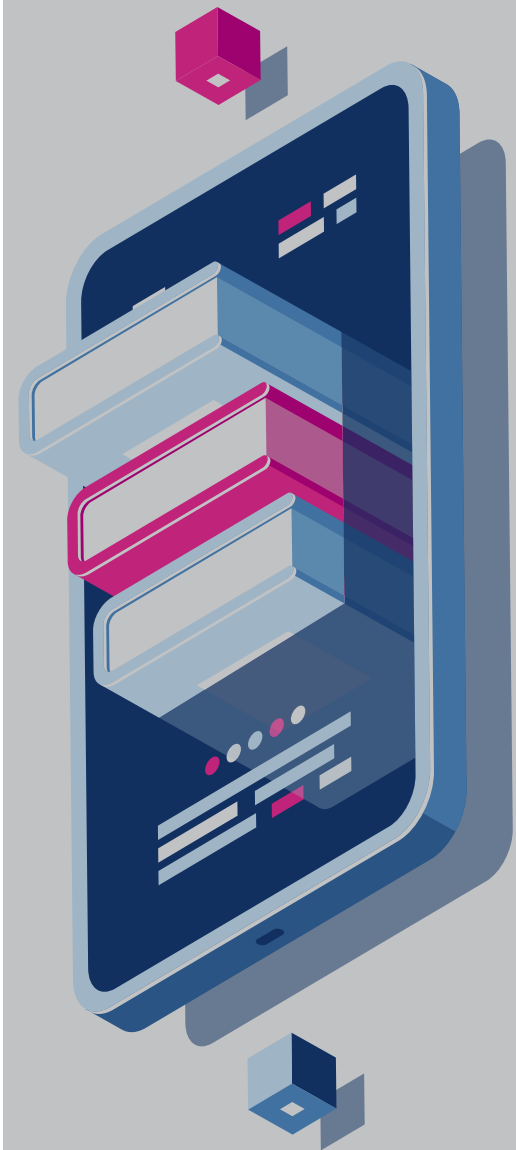
Not only are you building authority with your readers, but you are also building trust with them too. You want to make sure you establish this trust as a means to convey your message. Without the trust, the message in the eBook could become null and at that point, why write an eBook at all? Establishing trust also brings with it customers, people who read your eBook, understand your message, and want to buy from you because they know you know what you're talking about. To them, you're trustworthy.

What types of eBooks are out there? Well, in reality you can write an eBook in any style you want. Want to write a 5-page explanation on a niche aspect of your field? Go for it! Want to write a 50-page thesis? I'm sure someone will read it. Either way there is no wrong way to write an eBook. However, there are some ways that are more effective than others in terms of styles of eBooks.

An industry exploration is a deep dive into your specific industry. The ins and outs of what makes your industry tick or how to navigate it. A great choice for those that understand their industry so well that they can write a book about it... Literally.

Perhaps an industry exploration is a bit too much for you, so how about writing a beginner's guide. This could be a short eBook surrounding just enough to get someone with no knowledge of your company or business a little familiar with what you do. You know, get their feet wet a little. This still requires a decent amount of knowledge of your company; however, you don't need to be an expert to write this one.

Finally, there is the ultimate guide. This is the beginner guide's older, more thorough brother. This is going to take your reader on a journey and teach them everything they need to know about your product or company. This is the study guide to your final exam, the Rosetta Stone of your company. This eBook requires knowledge that may even rival the industry exploration. Definitely not for the faint of heart, but once it is completed, your business will be better for it.





Blogs and Articles

Blogs and articles, while being lumped together a lot, like this eBook for instance, are not the same thing. Even though they are in the same section of this book and share certain similarities, they will be covered as individual sub-sections. While both pieces of online writing blogs and articles have very different characteristics.

The first obvious difference is in tone and writing style. A blog is a very casual piece of writing with an informal manner of speaking. While not using slang, it still should convey someone having a conversation with you, rather than someone writing in a magazine or newspaper. An article, on the other hand, is a professional, journalistic piece of writing and usually is much longer than a blog.

While a blog can be any amount of words, they typically range from 300 – 1,000 words. Articles, as mentioned previously, are usually longer ranging from 1,500 – 5,000 words. Let's take a deeper look at blogs and articles.



How to Write a Blog

First things first when writing a blog, you want to have an idea of who you are writing for. Will you be writing for the person doing a quick read on the topic? Perhaps you will write for the person doing a more in-depth search. Whether you are writing for the novice or the expert, you need to identify that before you begin writing.

Once you have your audience you need to start thinking about what you want to say to that audience. Do you want it to be a visual piece with pictures and infographic? Or perhaps a list of things related to your industry (Top 5..., 3 Best Ways to...). If not that then perhaps a news related blog focusing on a specific piece of recent news. There are many ways you can go about writing to your audience, find what works best for you.

Now that you have your audience and your style, you need an outline and a title. Blogs, believe it or not, don't write themselves, and in order to make one effective you need a clear plan to get from title to final period. Gather sources and compile your resources that you will need in order to make a compelling and intriguing blog. Look at your sources and try to understand how to attract an audience. Think of what would attract you to a blog. Also, make sure the title is interesting as well. Nothing makes you navigate off of a page faster than a boring, generic title.

Now you can start writing the actual copy. Be fun, be descriptive. Write like this is a creative writing class. The more fun you have while writing a blog, the more people will want to read it. Again, blogs are supposed to be informal, while still retaining an air of professionalism. With your blog finished now all that is left is to proofread and edit your blog and then you will be ready to post!



Benefits of Blogging

If you have a blog, you must make it a regular blog.

If it isn't regular, then you might as well not have a blog at all. Users seek a constant stream of information and updates and if your blogs cannot keep up then your audience will not keep coming back. Having a constant and reliable stream of new content makes search engine place your content higher and higher. With correct link building your blogs can be the star of your website.

As mentioned previously, a well performing blog can skyrocket your websites SEO. It can also, like eBooks, boost credibility amongst your readers. When you have a consistent blog with helpful, useful information, people tend to take notice and continue to return for that information as a trusted source. Gaining that trust is a long road, but a worthwhile one.

Having a regular blog is a worthwhile investment for backlinking as well. If your blog is regular and up to date it will also have links to your previous blogs which will build links within your website. Link building is crucial to having a high performing website and ensuring that search engines are putting you on the first page.



How to Write an Article

Moving on to articles, these are very different from blogs, yet they share many similarities. As mentioned previously their differences are apparent from just reading them. While blogs are more conversational and not as professional, articles are more of an education source. So, the need for professionalism and proper writing skills is a must for your articles. But, how to start writing one?

First and foremost, you want to make sure you know the topic well. Again, articles are meant to be educational rather than creative. So, just because your writing is impressive and flowery if you do not know the subject than maybe pass this one off to someone more experienced. Just like with a blog, understand what your article will be about and how you are going to portray your information. Will it be in the form of a list? Perhaps visually in the form of infographics? You can represent your research and findings in any way you see fit but ensure that it will be clear and understandable to your reader and that it is written professionally.

Once you have your article outline set up, you can begin to write the copy that will ultimately fill it out. Make sure you have other credible sources in which you can reference and cite from. Even though you may be an expert about your topic, it is always good to have credible sources to back up your assertions.

Now that you have your outline, your sources, and your format, you can begin to actually write your article. At this stage it is mostly about getting your ideas onto the paper. Depending on your deadline and schedule, you will, hopefully, have time set aside specifically for editing your article. Speaking of which, editing is almost as important as the writing of the article itself. I say almost because if there was no writing then there would be no editing, but I digress. Ensure that you go over your article with a fine-tooth comb and ensure that everything is spelled correctly and in the right place. Write everything in a document application such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs to ensure there is no spelling errors.

And that's all she wrote... Literally. Hopefully after all of these steps you will have a brand-spanking-new article ready to send out to clients and prospects alike. This article will do similar things for you as all of the previous content marketing. Build your reputation online, gain customer trust, and ultimately drive more business to your business.



What are White Papers?

Whitepapers. What are they? Does it have anything to do with the White Pages phone directory? Well, no, but I'd say they are as useful as a White Pages directory in 1984. Which is to say they are very useful. A whitepaper is essentially an informative piece written to explain a problem and help you solve that problem. Seems simple enough. Right? In terms of comparing it to another form of content marketing, it is similar to an eBook in that it is typically on longer side, although it is much more technical than an eBook. Where an eBook looks to connect and inform, an article seeks to explain and teach.

Follow up question. Are there any requirements for a white paper? While technically there are no requirements for writing a white paper, there are some commonalities among most professional white papers. First, don't sell. The goal of a white paper is not to sell your product or convince customers to invest, it is to inform and explain, and maybe a little bit of persuasion but only using facts and evidence. Second, as mentioned before, white papers are pretty lengthy. They usually range from 6 to 60 pages, although you will rarely see anything close to 60. They also are chockfull of information. White papers, unlike the other forms of content marketing in this eBook, are not skim-able. You won't sit down with one and "get the gist of it" on a quick read through. They are dense and wordy and filled to the brim with useful information. Like articles, whitepapers professional. They seek to get the point across without using flowery language or metaphors. Information is information and at the end of the day you don't need an exaggeration to convey that.

Benefits of White Papers?

Like any other form of content marketing, there are benefits to using white papers at your business. Of course, there's the benefit of having useful documents that explain and break down problems within your area of business, but this also exemplifies you as a leader and establishes your brand. Writing a white paper is no easy feat. It requires dedication and thorough research. Meaning, that once you have one under your belt, customers will trust your message.

Not only will people be more inclined to listen to what you have to say, but they will also be more inclined to listen to more of it, as in they'll be more inclined to sign up for a newsletter or an emailing list. White papers can be a great source of retaining and adding new customers to a growing pool of potential clients.

White papers can increase engagement as well. The more you have people downloading and engaging with content on your website the higher your page ranking can become. White papers can increase your SEO rank and help your website's numbers grow.

Social Media & Content Marketing

Social media should need no introduction.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, all of these platforms are crucial for marketing to a wider audience and content marketing performance. With 2.5 billion people being active on social media, social media provides the world's largest stage for you to reach out to whether that's through white papers, eBooks, blog posts. Social media is a great way to get this content out to the right people.

Content marketing and social media are two peas in a pod. You can't have one without the other. You create the content (ie blogs, eBooks, articles, essentially anything mentioned in this eBook) and then you distribute that content to the wider world through wonderful social media platforms.

Not only will you be reaching the world's biggest audience, but the world's biggest audience will be marketing for you all by themselves. Customers liking and promoting your work is better than any paid advertisement. It has been shown that word of mouth is, by far, more effective than any sort of paid promotion you can do. Why? Because, like everything in business, it all comes back to trust. When someone recommends a business or product to a friend, they know that friend is recommending it because they used it and it genuinely impacted them. A word of mouth recommendation is like golden standard of marketing. Once you achieve that community of people all talking and recommending you the marketing does itself.

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Almost everyone is on some form of social media these days, which makes it's so important to establish a presence for your brand and come up with a strategy to produce content. That said, you shouldn't produce content for the sake of producing it, but instead create shareable and engaging content. Engagement is a key component of SEO.

**- Linaeya Horn-Muller
Director of Marketing at Local Management**



Social Media Audit

Social media audit? What does that even mean?

Well, future social media guru, in order for your social media to perform well and in turn your content marketing to perform well, you need to have a high functioning social media presence. “How do you do that?” you may ask. Well, if you haven’t already guessed it, you may want to reread the title of this section.

So, audit is one of those words no one wants to hear, but I assure you in this instance it only seeks to benefit you and your content marketing strategy. A social media audit is a way for you to look at your social media presence across multiple platforms, see how they are performing and, hopefully, devise a plan to either improve or maintain well performing avenues. Let’s take a look at how you can do a social media audit for yourself.

The first thing you want to do is take inventory of your current social media platforms. Which ones are already performing well? Which ones need a little help? Which ones haven't seen any activity since before COVID? There are a lot of different aspects of your social media sites that you may need to take into consideration, but this is the first step in identifying which ones to save and which ones may need a retirement. Something else to consider, take a look at new and upcoming social media platforms. Not only should you exist on the big, mainstream platforms, but also start and maintain a presence on upcoming platforms in order to keep up with the various outlets that you should be using.

Next up you want to make sure all of your social media profiles are synced up. That is to say that they all have the same message, same profile pictures, same bio. You want a "hive mind" of social media accounts. When you have multiple social media accounts that have varying profile pictures and bios then prospects and customers begin getting confused as to who the real business is. Having a single unified message and profile keeps everything nice and simple for your customers as well as yourself.

Now let's take a look at your already established profiles. Which posts are performing well? Are any posts performing well at all? Identify those well performing posts and see what makes them so well performing. Is it the engaging content? Is it the eye-catching image? Or is it the intriguing title? There is a varying list of reasons why it is performing. The best thing you can do is compile a list of all of the best performing posts and find a common denominator.

With this information in hand, begin tracking and documenting success and failure over multiple platforms. Are your quotes a hit on Twitter, but a bomb on Facebook? Are the staff introductions a success on LinkedIn, but snoozefest on Instagram? Look at how your various posts are performing on different platforms and start to understand the audience that utilizes each.

Now that you have all of the information in front of you, you can decide which platforms are right for you. Perhaps Facebook didn't get the engagement you had wanted, but Instagram posts received a great amount of engagement. Picking your preferred platform is just as important as what you're posting because if your posting the right content to the wrong people you might as well not be posting at all.

Finally, keep your social media organized. There is nothing worse than having 4 different emails and passwords belonging to 6 social media accounts and no one knows who knows what. Assign a standard email to your accounts so that there is no confusion as to who has the login to what and what passwords were used by previous employees.



Social Media Audit DIY

Below is a quick social media audit that you can do from the comfort of this eBook. Now, this is not to replace a true, in depth social media audit that you do yourself over the course of a few weeks, but if you want a quick way to see where you fall in terms of your social media accounts, check it out!

How many social media accounts does your business have?

How many of those accounts are performing well?

1 being poorly and 5 being great, how “in-sync” are your accounts?

1 being infrequently and 5 being frequently, how often are you posting on your accounts?

1 being poorly and 5 being great, how organized are your accounts?

1 being poorly and 5 being great, how well received are your current posts?

Results:

5 - 15 Unremarkable Social Media
 16 - 25 Passable Social Media
 26 - 30 Excellent Social Media





Conclusion

So, we've made it through this eBook. Lucky for you this wasn't a white paper and only an eBook. Hopefully this rundown of some key content marketing strategies will help your company or business grow in the right direction. Again, this eBook is not meant to go over every single content marketing strategy. That would require the previously mentioned white paper. However, this is a great starter and introduction into the wide world of content marketing strategies.

Take what is in this eBook, apply it, and see the benefits for yourself. If you don't believe me, here are some examples of real healthcare practices benefitting from digital marketing done by Local Management:



845% increase in site visits in second quarter compared to first.



DR. EDWIN DELZ, DDS PA

493.26% increase in 2020 site visits compared to same period in 2019.



Walking Urgent Care, Inc.

167.09% increase in 2020 site visits compared to same period in 2019.



128.75% increase in 2020 site visits compared to same period in 2019.



Free Website Review

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review



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(800) 530-2826

sales@localmanagement.us