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Master Content Marketing Without Marketing Automation Software

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What Is Content Marketing?

Content marketing is the process of attracting relevant people to your digital presences online and keeping them there by providing them useful information. The information can be in any format (blogs, infographics, videos, podcasts etc ;). The topics of the information would be anything, and everything, that the target audience would find useful. Even if it's not related to the product or service being offered by the business! Inbound Marketing is a synonym for content marketing.

The Biomechanics of Content Marketing and Marketing Automation Software

Content marketing campaigns are comprised of 8 primary things which we'll address in this whitepaper:

- 1) Target Demographics
- 2) Keywords
- 3) Blog
- 4) Landing Pages
- 5) Premium Content Offers
- 6) Email list/Contact Management
- 7) Automation
- 8) Tracking

Marketing Automation Software are all-in-one software programs that have modules encompassing the above 8 things.

The Key Components of Standard Content

As a company that serves as the back-end marketing team for many small marketing departments and boutique marketing agencies we use marketing automation software. A lot.

You may have heard of some of these tools – Vocus, Marketo, HubSpot (our personal favorite), Infusionsoft, Eloqua and Pardot are some of the main ones. Where do we start with all these funny-sounding names and tools!?

Look...we'll level with you. Each of these tools makes content marketing **much** easier. The problem is none of them are magically going to turn your digital platforms into some sales-generating machine on their own. And they are all somewhat pricey (4 or 5 figures per year). Will they help? Yes. Is it necessary? Absolutely not.

Below are the following elements of a good content marketing campaign.

Target Demographics – The first thing you need to know is who are you trying to attract? If you're a resort this may be meeting planners, wedding planners or couples looking for wedding venues. If you're a small business accountant in New York then you're trying to attract small business owners in New York. Most organizations have 3-4 major target groups (or less) they are trying to reach with their marketing tactics. Ideally, these are the types of people we want coming to our website and digital properties.

Once you have the list do the following:

- Give them a code name (eg; Car Buyer Carrie if you're looking for female car buyers)
- Identify what those people do everyday
- Identify their challenges
- Come up with any demographic information you may know – age, income, education, geographic location etc;
- Describe their problem in 4-6 sentences.

Do this for each target segment you're trying to reach.

You can do this without marketing automation software very easily.

White Paper

Keywords – Great! Now we know who we're trying to reach. Now, like anyone else in the world, these people go online to search for solutions to their problem. The next step is to figure out what these people will type in search engines when looking for answers to problems that our offering addresses. Or, solutions to their other common problems that we can help them get answers to and in turn get on their radar.

Keep in mind some keywords are more heavily searched than others. The more common the phrase the more heavily it is searched and the harder it will be for a new content piece to show for on page 1 of the search results.

Use the **Google Keyword Tool** to get an idea on how much relevant keywords are searched. Put in as many keywords as you can imagine! Let's say your target demographic is ecommerce entrepreneurs and ecommerce in general.

Ad group ideas		Keyword ideas	
Keyword (by relevance)		Avg. monthly searches ?	Competition ?
ecommerce		18,100	High
online business ideas		6,600	High
ebusiness		880	Low
online businesses		1,000	High
ecommerce marketing		590	High
best online businesses		320	High
sell products on Amazon		170	High
internet entrepreneurs		40	Low
online entrepreneurs		40	Low
ecommerce businesses		50	High
what are the best products to sell online		30	High

Based on the above list of keywords we brainstormed we should do our first content pieces related to ‘internet entrepreneurs’ and ‘online entrepreneurs’ – true, those keywords only get 40 searches per month each, but there is a high likelihood that maybe all we need is a blog post or two related to those two topics and we’ll be on page 1.

Most marketing automation software has a tool like the Google Keyword Planning tool built in that gives you a bit more information, but you can achieve 80% of the functions using the Google Keyword Planning Tool.

Google Keyword Planning Tool - <https://adwords.google.com/KeywordPlanner>



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Blog – Ok, now that we know who we're trying to attract, and what we are going to attract them with, we need to create our stories. A blog is the best way to publish content and stories regularly. Ideally this should be done as often as possible, but at the least try to aim for once a week. In a year that should give you around 50 content pieces that over time will pay dividends.

We all know what a blog is, but a blog that is optimized for content marketing has a few key elements:

The 3 Most Important Numbers For Your Marketing Budget Template

Your marketing team members get all the love. They have great budgets, get their name in lights and have tons of support from management. For all their virtues there is one thing most marketing departments don't do well. Budget.

Here are the 3 most important marketing budget numbers that all marketers need to pay attention to.

1 – Costs – Donald Trump is right. Wealth isn't accrued by how much you make, it's accrued by how much you can save. This is no different with your marketing budget. Marketers spend tons of money on things – media buys, advertising, staff, creative pieces, consulting, special events and more. No wonder them and accounting hate each other! Good marketers don't necessarily need to reduce their costs, but they need to make sure whatever they spend money on can be attributed to increased sales. Any marketing tasks that can't be attributed to sales should be looked at closer. Remember, marketing's job is to bring in opportunities for sales. Therefore, each expense needs to be scrutinized for how well it's bringing in sales opportunities.



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2 - Marketing Originated Customer % - Not all new business comes from marketing. Some are referrals, upsells to existing customers or other existing channels. If you want to see how well your marketing is doing at bringing new people in the door then you need to pay attention to the Marketing-Originated Customer percentage. Divide new customers from leads by total new customers and multiply by 100.

Note there are **2 Invitations to signup** – Website visitors are strangers to us....until they give us their name or email address. Make sure each of your blog entries has a 'subscribe' button to have your future posts delivered to their inbox. Also, include links to premium content offers (the 'Rebuild Your Marketing Department button') such as ebooks, webinars, templates etc; that are relevant to your blog post (more on that later).

Marketing automation software comes with their own blogging modules that make creating a blog post that is SEO friendly and optimized for getting leads easy. But chances are your website already has a blog module in it. If it doesn't there are lots of affordable, and often free, blogging systems you can add to your site. **Wordpress, Drupal, Joomla and Dotnetnuke** are just some common free modules you can add to your website and have a blog setup within a few hours. For example, Wordpress' module SEO By Yoast has all the SEO features of marketing automation software....for only \$89.



Not sure where to start?
Here is a complete guide
about great tools you can
use to master
Content Marketing

Download Now

Landing Pages - Great, now that we have the right people on our site it's time to get names for these strangers. But people don't want to give away their email address or contact details for nothing. You need to 'sell' them on a premium content offer.

Landing pages are a huge part of content marketing because they easily allow you to 'restrict' content without signing up. They consist of some text selling what the visitor will get if they give us their email address.



Rebuild Your Marketing Department

Grab the How To Hire A Marketing Technologist And Agency Toolkit!

Marketing Technologists are the new wave of marketing executive your business or marketing team needs. These experts in marketing and technology can screen, select and implement the right marketing products and services for your business to get your marketing strategy in gear.

Grab this toolkit and you'll get:

- **Job Description** - An actual job description used to hire the best marketing resource you'll need to take your marketing plan online.
- **Marketing Agency Contract** - The contract you can use to find your next marketing agency of record or marketing partner. This contract gives you and your new-hired Marketing Technologist the flexibility and resources they need to get the job done while controlling costs.

We'll also toss in some tips and reasons why this job description and contract are ideal for the marketing department of the future!



Help me rebuild my marketing department

First Name *

Last Name *

Email *

What would help you the most? *

- Please Select -

Get Me My Copy!

Most marketing automation and marketing automation software comes with an easy way to create landing pages without knowing any HTML (although it does help). If you are using one of the open-source tools above in the blog section then they will also have reasonably-priced modules for creating landing pages. Optimizely, one of the leading Wordpress modules for building landing pages, costs \$97. Notice we ask an industry-qualifying drop-down question here ('What would help you the most?') We classify these people based on what they answer in our target demographics listed above.

Premium Content Offers – Premium content offers are what visitors get when they give you their email address. It's some enhanced piece of content – could be a video, free trial, template, XLS file, PDF, recorded webinar etc. Anything that you feel is too valuable to give away without getting something in return. People signing up for this stuff are your **Leads**.

The great thing is marketing automation or marketing automation software doesn't do much in terms of premium content offers. You need to put in the time to create and produce these offers. Then, just upload them to your website and make sure people get redirected to them when they fill in the form. Sending the info to them via email is a good idea too obviously.

Email Lists/Contact Management – Now that we have names for our website visitors it's time to classify them appropriately. Marketing automation software typically allows you to generate segmented lists based on what offer the person downloaded, when they downloaded it, what blog post or link they clicked to get to the offer etc. Mainly, the software classifies leads based on the target demographics you outlined in step 1.

Chances are you already do some email marketing using Constant Contact, MailChimp or something similar. In that case you can easily upload your signup contacts into that email marketing software and tag them accordingly. You shouldn't view this feature as a value-add in your marketing automation software.

Automation – One of the nicest things about marketing automation software is the automation (of course!). Once a person downloads your offer this features allows you to have repetitive tasks scheduled. You can also tailor follow-up emails based on the target demographic data you got from them when they signed up. If a meeting planner downloaded your ebook what you follow-up with in your next communication to them would probably be a link to a blog post or testimonial from a meeting planner that used your facility in the past. In contrast, if a couple looking to book a wedding downloaded your ebook you may send a link to a testimonial from a couple that had their wedding at the facility.

It's tricky to do this without marketing automation software. The easiest thing to do at the onset of your content marketing efforts is to manually follow-up with any signups you receive. As you can imagine, more people open personal emails than automated ones. Investing in automation software is something you should consider if you have more signups than you can manage.

Tracking – Marketing automation software primarily manage 2 or 3 things:

- Website visits – Broken down by site, blog, landing page and premium content offer
- Leads/signups and their behaviors (if they visit your site after signing up for content offers)

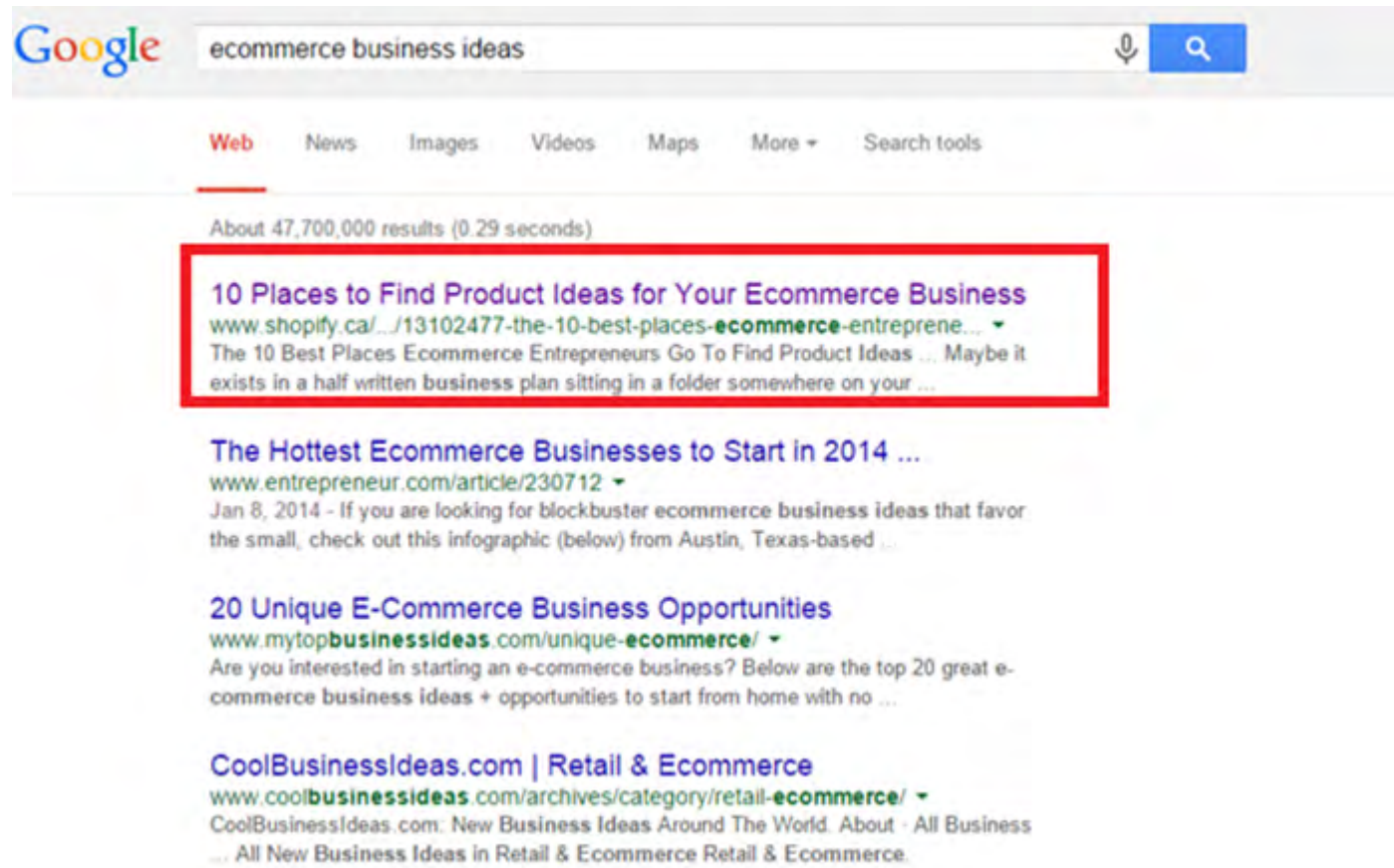
Traffic reporting is a weakness in most marketing automation software packages. The traffic and reporting data is really just to give you a 30,000 ft overview of how your site is doing in an easy-to-understand manner. Free tools like Google Analytics or low-cost analytics applications like CrazyEgg do the traffic reporting job in far better ways than marketing automation software does.

Automation software does help keep track of which contacts become customers. However, you have to do this manually and it isn't as detailed as Customer-relationship software (CRMs) are which you already may be using.

Examples of effective content marketing

Now that we know what makes good content marketing let's look at a live example of what good content marketing looks like. Chances are you've been attracted to products and services that use great content marketing tactics.

Let's say you're an entrepreneur looking for a new ecommerce business idea. Naturally, you'll go online to find ideas. After all, the search box is really like an 'answer box'



Search results are filled with information about business ideas. At the top is a blog post about the 10 best places ecommerce entrepreneurs go to find ideas (<http://www.shopify.ca/blog/13102477-the-10-best-places-ecommerce-entrepreneurs-go-to-find-product-ideas>).

You'll notice, that matches exactly what you typed in. Since it matches what you typed in you'll likely click on it.

The 10 Best Places Ecommerce Entrepreneurs Go To Find Product Ideas

by Richard Lazazzera

854 shares



This is the second post in a series of articles that will detail the process of getting started in ecommerce. In the coming weeks we will be posting further in-depth articles on other aspects of finding and evaluating products to sell online. For the first post in this series, [click here](#).



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As you look around you'll find all sorts of great information about ecommerce ideas throughout this new website you discovered. As you review this information your faith, trust and confidence in this blog/brand grows. It's got lots of answers to questions you, as an aspiring Internet entrepreneur, are probably having.

Coincidentally (or not :)), the website you landed on is a corporate blog for a company called Shopify. Shopify just 'happens' to sell ecommerce software for people that want to start an online business.

As a company that makes ecommerce software. Shopify's target customer is anyone that wants to sell products online. Their blog isn't full of Shopify press releases....or news about new office openings and stuff like that....who cares? Instead, it's full of content that people wanting to sell products online, their target customers, would be interested in.

This is content marketing. This type of marketing attracts people that are already looking for your product or service to you. It's a magnet.....not a microphone.

The BENEFITS of Content Marketing

Here are some benefits of implementing a content marketing campaign that you can explain to management:

1 – **Cheap** - Content marketing is always cheaper than traditional lead generation.

2 – **Permanent** – No one may visit the content piece you put together today, but you never know what the future holds. As long as that piece is on the web it can be accessed by anyone at any time. You never know who may stumble on it and become a lead or a customer.

3 – **Multi-purpose** – The content you create can be used in a variety of formats. Maybe as training materials for incoming employees, or as copy on future brochures you print. In many cases your stories can be used in proposals to potential customers or as helpful hints you may want to email to your existing customers.

4 – **Faster buying cycle** – Since these people come to you they already know they have a problem. Further, since they are on your website, they believe your offering may be a solution to that problem. Half the battle with winning new business is convincing people that they are missing something. Your content marketing tactics have negated that major top-of-the-funnel problem for you.

The MAIN Problems With Content Marketing

Let's be clear, content marketing takes effort. Lots of it! Like any marketing tactics there are drawbacks to content marketing. Here's some of them:

- 1- **Slow** – Content marketing takes time to show results. You need to build a habit of creating a few stories a week – be they blogs, videos, photo galleries or whatever you want. The main thing is to create that habit. In many ways content marketing is like exercise. If you write one blog post a year don't expect results; if you run on a treadmill once a year don't expect results either. Over time (6-12 months) of a steady diet of blogging and storytelling you should see things start to change.
- 2- **Hard to see return** – Because content marketing takes so long it's very easy to quit. There are tons of marketing gimmicks out there and most of the time marketing departments need to show progress to management. You can show management all the new blog posts and traffic increases you want, but unless it results in new business they may question your tactics.
- 3- **Need to be strategic** – The Internet is full of clutter. Chances are your industry already has leaders doing content marketing tactics and web traffic coming to their blog. For example, it would be hard to pass Shopify in the example above since they already have so much credibility for the 'ecommerce business ideas' search phrase we entered above. Therefore, you need to pick battles you can win. And then those search phrases may not get searched by web users a lot...making your campaigns show results even slower.

Conclusion

Marketing automation software does make your content marketing efforts a lot easier since all of these features can usually be had under one roof. However, not having the budget to buy the software shouldn't be a hindrance to building out a content marketing strategy. Now that you know the key pieces of all marketing automation software on the planet you know what you need to start turning your digital into an opportunity generating machine. Good luck!

Rebuild
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How to Hire A Marketing Technologist And A Marketing Agency

The graphic features a large, bold title 'Rebuild Your Marketing Department' with a horizontal line underneath. Below the title is a green button with the text 'Learn More'. Underneath the button is the subtitle 'How to Hire A Marketing Technologist And A Marketing Agency'. To the right of the text is a 3D rendering of a book with the same title and subtitle. The book cover is green and yellow, featuring silhouettes of a group of people. Logos for 'compuan', 'Microsoft Gold Partner', and 'Microsoft Partner' are visible on the book cover.

ABOUT US



Computan serves as the back-end digital marketing department for various businesses across the globe. Ranging from startups to multinationals. For a fixed monthly fee you can receive a world-class team of developers, designers, digital marketers, app builders and search-engine experts for less than the cost of a full-time employee. Computan's teams are affiliated with the biggest names in marketing and technology including Google, Microsoft and HubSpot.



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