

VIDEO 1: WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?

Hi, I'm Justin with HubSpot Academy. Welcome to the class on Understanding Content Marketing. This class will introduce you to the world of content marketing and provide a big picture landscape of everything you need to create a successful content marketing plan.

Ready? Let's get after this!

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 to attract and retain a clearly defined audience, and ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.

Even though content marketing has grown in popularity in the past ten years with the rise of web 2.0, content marketing is not a new concept. In fact, one of the first signs of content marketing can be dated back to 4200 B.C. with cave wall publishings on how to stay protected from wild boars. Pretty helpful content if you're living in the wild and need to stay protected.

And while we're not communication and writing via cave walls today, the foundation for content marketing is pretty much the same. It's all about your audience, what they value, and how you can help educate them. When done correctly, this helps create a relationship with your audience, which leads to trust. And if your audience trusts you, then they're more willing to do business with you when they're ready to make a purchasing decision.

In order to communicate with your audience, you need to produce content. Content is the message your content marketing strategy delivers. It's what you're trying to deliver to your visitors, leads, customers, and promoters. There are a lot of different ways you can deliver a message: blogs, emails, website pages, social media, print collateral, and beyond. But without content, you'd have nothing to deliver.

Content has the very important job of pulling people from one stage of the inbound methodology to another. It plays an integral part in the Attract, Close, Convert, and Delight stage.

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

In a nutshell, content marketing is really just the art of communicating with your prospects and customers without having to sell to them. As opposed to marketing or advertising your products and services, you're creating helpful, entertaining content that your prospects and customers can enjoy and learn from.

If it sounds like inbound marketing and content marketing are similar, that's because they are. They both focus on empowering potential customers, building a lasting relationship with your audience, and creating valuable content that both entertains and educates them.

But what's the difference between them, and do you need both?

You should think in terms of “and” not “or” when it comes to the content marketing, inbound marketing relationship. Success relies on both. Content may help fuel your inbound engine, but there are similarly valuable inbound projects—like technical SEO, product or services trials, marketing automation, and interactive tools that may exist outside of the scope of a content marketer. This is where inbound marketing comes in as a valuable counterpart.

If you aren't opening yourself up to the wide range of inbound practices, then you are limiting the potential of growth and impact you can have as a marketer or marketing leader. In other words, your inbound plan should be a superset—inclusive of your content assets but not limited to them. There are implications for organizational structure, roles and responsibilities, as well as skills procurement.

In the next video, we'll review the classes that will provide you a well-rounded foundation to creating a successful content marketing plan.

VIDEO 2: HOW DO YOU CREATE AN EFFECTIVE CONTENT MARKETING PROCESS FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

So now that you know how content marketing can help build a better relationship with your prospects and customers, what steps do you take to create a successful content marketing plan?

This certification is made up of classes that will help make you an organized, efficient, and strategic content marketing machine.

You'll start off by learning about the power of storytelling. We just talked about how content marketing is about a relationship. Every successful company has a story. It's needed to survive. What do you stand for? What message do you support? These are all concepts that we'll discuss in this class.

Then, once you understand how important storytelling is to content marketing, you'll learn how to generate content ideas to help support your content creation efforts. One of the differences between good and great content marketers is that the latter have a process which they rely on to consistently produce high-quality content ideas.

In this class, you'll learn techniques on how to research and uncover an idea and expand on it whether you're doing it yourself or with a team. Sometimes, ideas aren't easily apparent.

Once you're confident with generating content ideas, you'll learn how to plan your long-term content strategy.

I can't stress this enough. If you want to be successful and sustainable with your content marketing efforts, you need to have a plan that organizes next steps. The majority of marketers don't have a content marketing strategy. In fact, Only 35% of B2B marketers have a documented content strategy and only 37% of B2C marketers have a documented content strategy.

A long-term plan identifies and organizes all the initiatives and campaigns over the course of a year where content will need to be created. Simply identifying your plan will help you create content more easily and on a consistent basis.

In this class, you'll learn how to create realistic goals for your audience, also known as buyer personas, perform an audit that will help identify content needs and gaps to build a helpful, relevant journey for your personas, as well as how to create your content compass by mapping out your content creation roadmap.

This way you're not wasting gas and can focus on getting to your destination as quickly as possible.

Once you've learned how to plan your long-term content strategy, you'll learn how to build a content creation framework.

Again, a defined process will help keep your content creation efforts running like a well-oiled machine.

This class will teach you how to build a framework for creating content within your company. If you really want to create great content, then you need to have a process in place that's more advanced than just writing and publishing content. You need to be able to identify campaigns, set timelines, and review and edit before it goes live, all of which will be discussed further in this class.

You'll also learn about tools and responsibilities of team members needed to create a successful framework for creating content.

Once you've learned how to create a framework to create content on a consistent basis, you'll learn how to become an effective writer.

Remember, in the digital world of inbound, the first impression of your business comes through your writing. You can have the best company, the best products, or the best services, but if you're not able to communicate that to your audience, then you risk losing them.

In this class, you'll learn how we get ideas out of our head and format them into an effective piece of content. Additionally, you'll learn some grammatical pitfalls to avoid. Sometimes a simple wrong use of it's vs. its can deter your audience.

Once you've learned how to become an effective writer and are ready to get started with creating content, you'll learn how to extend the value of your content through repurposing.

A wise marketer looks for efficiencies when it comes to content output. Repurposing content is a strong content creation method of recycling content into different formats, giving yourself the ability to produce more content at a quicker pace.

In this class, you'll learn how to proactively identify repurposing opportunities before a piece of content is created, as well as how to repurpose a successful piece of content after it's been created.

You'll also learn how to republish the same content across multiple platforms—a great way to extend the value of your top-performing content.

Once you've learned how to repurpose a piece of content, you'll learn how to effectively promote your content.

Most marketers spend more time creating content than actually getting the word out by promoting it. When it comes to promoting content, you should spend about 40% of your time creating it and 60% of your time promoting it.

In this class, you'll learn how to promote content through your distribution channels, like email and social media. We'll also show you specific tactics on how to promote your content to make sure you're effective in approach.

Once you've learned how to promote a piece of content, you'll learn how to analyze and measure it.

What's the point of creating content if you don't know whether it's working or not. This class will help you understand various metrics and data points to track and measure to see whether or not your initiatives are successful. This way your business is constantly growing and learning as opposed to doing the same ole' thing because it's what you've always done.

You'll also learn how to communicate the results of your content efforts with the rest of your team.

Once you've learned how to analyze and measure the impact of your content marketing efforts, then you'll finish up the certification with a class that will help you develop a growth marketing mentality. Understanding how to be creative and have an eye for seeking out new opportunities is what will set you apart from your competitors and others creating great content. What works today might not necessarily work tomorrow. Always challenge the status quo. Always look for new opportunities.

Through this class, you'll learn how to instill a growth marketing mindset within your organization and how to manage your growth funnel. This is especially important with the ever-changing landscape of digital media.

And there you have it—all of the classes that will help you become a stronger, leaner, more strategic content marketer.