

## VIDEO 1: WHY IS CONTENT PROMOTION IMPORTANT?

Hi. I'm Kit from the HubSpot Services team. Welcome to the Content Promotion Class.

In this class, you're going to learn how to spread the word about your content and let the world and your audience know about what you've created.

Before we get started, take a moment to reflect on the last great piece of content you came across. Maybe it was a book, an infographic, an email, or even a video.

Now, how did you discover that piece of content? Did a friend send it to you or make a recommendation? Did it pop up in your social media newsfeed or timeline?

Wait, I know. You fell victim to Facebook's playlist of recommended videos after watching just one. It happens to the best of us.

No matter how you came across your latest discovery, each is an example of content promotion. So, what is content promotion? Well, it's the distribution of content through a variety of media channels. Some channels include social media networks, blogs, email, and live events, just to name a few.

As a content marketer, it's important to understand how to leverage promotion channels in order to connect with new audience members and prospects.

You spend A LOT of time creating remarkable content in the hopes of helping others find solutions to be successful. Maybe it's for a company, a client, or even for your own personal needs. Now, imagine that you were never able to share your solutions or knowledge with the people who need it most.

How devastating would that be? It'd be like if you were a scientist who made a ground-breaking discovery, but the results never made it out of the lab.

When it comes to content, create less, promote more. Think about it. You wouldn't spend your entire time planning an event, like a birthday party or a house sale, without promoting it. What would be the point if no one showed up?

With content promotion, you're able to get your message to the people who need it the most!

Once your remarkable content has converted viewers into leads, you'll be able to personally deliver content at the times and places they'll need it the most. Content promotion can also help communicate the value they'd receive as your customer, while also nurturing relationships that turn into delighted, lifelong promoters.

Let's not forget to mention the true value content promotion can have for your business.

In 2016, it was reported that 47% of B2B buyers consume 3-5 pieces of content prior to engaging with a salesperson. This could mean that nearly half of your customers were consuming your content before your sales team even knew who they were.

But seriously, content promotion will drive website traffic, improve engagement from audience members, prospects, and customers, and aid buyers in making purchase decisions with your business.

Now that we've discussed why content promotion is essential to your content strategy, let's dive deeper into content promotion techniques that will help you excel at content promotion.

## **VIDEO 2: HOW DO YOU EXCEL AT CONTENT PROMOTION?**

Developing a successful content promotion strategy may sound easy, but it does require some work. Let's be honest, if success was as easy as posting a few tweets or sending an email or two out to the masses, then more than 42% of B2B marketers would say they're effective at content marketing.

So, we're going to discuss how you can excel at content promotion and the best practices that will help you deliver your content across multiple channels and achieve the results you need.

Before diving into content promotion best practices, it's important to understand the relationship between organic content promotion and paid content promotion.

Organic content promotion is designed to increase the visibility of your content and the effectiveness of your marketing campaigns without spending money on ad space, boosted content, or promoted content.

Some of the most effective organic content promotion channels are: search engine optimization, email marketing, social media, live promotions, like events or webinars, influencer networks, and, let's not forget, the good ol' fashioned word of mouth.

A benefit of doing organic promotion is increased brand authority across various platforms. Because the amount of content you can promote is not limited by a budget, you are able to use multiple platforms to promote quality content and increase awareness about your business and brand. However, the challenge is that you'll need to ensure consistency around developing and publishing content regularly.

In contrast, paid content promotion allows you to show your content to a highly-specific audience. In most cases, you're able to customize the target audience pool as well as the message, but you will have to spend money in order for anyone to see your content.

The most common channels for paid promotion are search engine ads that are placed on platforms, such as Google, Yahoo!, or Bing, and paid social media campaigns on platforms, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram.

A benefit of paid promotion is the ability to develop and deliver highly-targeted content to consumers who will find the content most relevant. A challenge when doing paid promotion is securing enough budget in order to achieve your desired results. To overcome this challenge, it's best to experiment with a small budget to discover the best ways to achieve your desired outcome.

The most efficient way for organic and paid content promotion to work together is promote well-performing content. Content that performs well will have above-average engagement with it, such as likes, shares, retweets, and link clicks, which drive traffic to your website. Platforms like Facebook make this easy for you to understand, as they'll tell you when you have a high-performing post and recommend that you increase its reach with ad spend. As a result, you'll be more effective at increasing the reach of your content, attracting new audience members and prospects, and helping leads make better decisions about your business.

Be careful though, as not all top-performing posts are created equal. With social platforms often pushing advertisers towards impression-based ads, using high-

converting content becomes even more crucial. If you're going to boost a social media update with ad dollars, you better make sure it's worth it.

Let's take a look at this example Facebook post from a small, family-owned business that's grown an engaged online community, Mountain Mystic Company. In this post, Mountain Mystic is announcing their Magical Mystical Box, an item they created to capture the feeling of being in the shop for those who have never been in before. It's also important to mention that this item was a test that Mountain Mystic used to launch their ecommerce store on [mountainmystic.com](http://mountainmystic.com).

As you can see, this post has an image of the product, a clear call-to-action, and a link to get there. However, something interesting about this post is it's not focusing on the box as much as they are their audience and their experience of being in the shop. Notice the first paragraph: "We love our customers. Tell us your favorite memory of being at Mountain Mystic in the comments field below."

They're talking to their audience in a human way, letting them know how much they appreciate them. Yes, they explain what they're offering in the second paragraph, but they're focusing on their audience first, making it conversational.

The post started to catch traction, so Mountain Mystic promoted it to their audience of 1,700 fans for less than \$25. The result? 35 valuable comments from others explaining their experience of what it's like to visit Mountain Mystic. Most even went above and beyond to explain why they love the shop.

And as for their ecommerce test? Mountain Mystic sold out of all their Magical Mystical boxes during pre-order.

Now that you understand the powerful relationship between organic and paid content promotion, let's discuss the best practices that will help you excel at content promotion.

To start, you'll want to create a content promotion calendar to help keep things organized. Also, when promoting content, you'll need to customize your message for each channel. Segmentation is essential to content promotion, as is experimenting and optimizing for performance. Lastly, when it's all said and done, you'll want to take a look back and analyze results to find new opportunities.

Let's get started with the first best practice: use a content promotion calendar.

A content promotion calendar will help you keep track of various types of communications scheduled to go out and the dates and times for when they will be published. However, it is not a one-size-fits-all, which is why it's important to create a promotion plan that will include details about your target audiences, internal and external communication channels, and the content that will be distributed across these channels. The content promotion calendar ties all of these details together to create a game plan for how and when communications will be released.

Think of your promotion calendar like an itinerary for your content. Imagine you are planning a trip to a new country. How would you keep track of the places you'd like to visit, the transportation you'd use to get to those places, or even your times of departure and arrival? An itinerary helps keep you organized, and your content promotion calendar will do the same.

Once you have a calendar that details your promotional efforts, you can use segmentation to create a specific audience to receive your content.

Segmentation is a powerful best practice to use when promoting content across multiple channels. Segmentation is used to divide large audiences or target markets into smaller segments based on specific criteria. It's a helpful step that makes it easier for you to target the right people for your business and avoid showing ads or serving content to people who are ultimately not a good fit. When you use segmentation, you should always keep your buyer persona in mind and create segments that align with the interests, demographics, and geographical location of your ideal customer.

Your ability to segment your audience will vary by the promotion channel you use. Often, content marketers use segmentation for email marketing campaigns, social media campaigns, and paid campaigns.

Segmentation in email is typically done using lists with specific criteria of contacts in a company's database. Keep in mind, the criteria in your list is based off pre-existing information you've collected from your contacts; this could be through analytics or questions you've asked them, like on a form. Social media campaigns can target audience members based on information contained in a user's online profile, such as their interests, the city where they live, education, as well as lifestyle and interest traits, like cooking or hiking.

Paid media campaigns take segmentation even further, by allowing you to target audience members outside of your social network and who may have never heard of your business. Platforms like Google Display Network allow you to put your content in front of audiences on websites that are relevant to your

business. If you're a company like Airbnb, who offers worldwide accommodations, then showing your content on sites that talk about travel, adventure, and being outdoors may be a good place to promote your brand.

By using segmentation, you're not only creating a custom audience for your content, but it will make it easy for you to create a customized message for audience members across all channels. Which brings us to the next best practice: create a custom message for each channel.

When developing your message, there are a few things you'll need to keep in mind. The first is the tone of your message.

Tone is defined as the general attitude of your message. When deciding the tone, think about the feeling you want your message to carry. It should be closely aligned with the tone of your content, but they're not always the same thing. You may want your message to inspire your audience, encourage them, educate them, or maybe just make them laugh.

Another thing to consider when developing your message is, how will you clearly communicate the value of the content you're promoting? You want to be sure not to over-sell the value and promise more than what will be delivered. You also don't want to undersell the value of your content, which can result in missed opportunities for your business.

A way to check if you are communicating the true value of your offer is to define two to three benefits someone would gain from your piece of content and try using at least one of them in the message you'll use to promote it.

You'll also want to customize your message to match the distribution channel, as each channel has a unique audience that expects content to be delivered in a specific way.

For example, if you're delivering content on a social media platform, you can explore new and creative ways of delivering your messaging. From witty messages to fun GIFs and short videos, you can test ways to deliver the most powerful message that will resonate with your audience and get the most engagement.

Email, on the other hand, is a bit more personal, so your message should be highly customized to the individual who's receiving it. You can include information such as name, company, or job title, as elements that will help personalize your message.

The important thing to keep in mind is that each message you create to help promote your content is like an invitation for audience members to engage with your business. As a result, you want to do your best to personalize each message for every recipient.

Now you get to unlock the mad scientist in yourself with the next best practice: experiment and optimize.

Experimentation is a great way to learn how to best deliver your content to your audience and is something you should be doing on a consistent basis. There is no magic recipe for how to promote a piece of content. Instead, you'll need to try new ingredients by testing new content promotion tactics.

You may want to experiment with the message used to promote your content, the distribution channel, time of day, the day of the week, and paid versus organic promotion. Treat each of these areas like a variable in an A/B test. You only want to change one variable per experiment. This means that if you are running a campaign to promote your newest ebook, you may want to experiment with changing the messaging before you experiment with changing the promotion channels used to promote the ebook.

Optimization is a little different.

Optimization is used to achieve the best possible outcome for your promotion plan. When it comes to content promotion, there are three key areas you want to optimize: reach, engagement, and conversions.

Reach is used to measure the size of your potential audience. This includes people who are directly and indirectly in your social network. Optimizing for reach helps you get the most potential eyes on your content. Think of this as the top of your content promotion funnel. You want to grow your reach as far and wide as possible while still remaining relevant.

Ways to optimize for reach are to get your content in as many places as possible. Include a link in your email signature, share the content on social media, and encourage your network to share the content with their network. Reach out to influencers in your industry or community either through social media, email, or in person, and encourage them to tell people about your content. The key is to always tell new people about your content.

Engagement measures the number of interactions with your brand, such as likes and shares. When you optimize for engagement, you want to start by considering how a user is going to engage with that piece of content. Will they

be reading that content? Watching that content? Or simply downloading it for another time? Will they be scrolling through your content on their desktop or their phone? Do they engage by leaving a comment, sending it to a colleague, or clicking a link?

Once you know this information, you can modify your messaging to include relevant action words and visuals, perhaps even making adjustments based off the platform being used to view the content. Keep in mind that some of these changes may take time, so be patient.

Optimizing your content for conversions requires you to have a clear definition of what a conversion for your content type is and an understanding of how your promotion channels impact the conversion process. Conversions may be downloads, views, trials, demos, sign-ups, and the list goes on. To optimize for conversions in your promotion strategy, you'll need to use a link to a landing page in all of your promotional efforts. This allows you to capture the required information for new leads, as well as use strong calls-to-action in your messaging and promotional assets. Overall, this will help enhance conversions for your content.

After you've run a successful promotion campaign, it will be time for you to analyze the results of your efforts, which is the next best practice.

You'll need to analyze the results of each campaign in order to identify ways to enhance future campaign performance.

To start, you'll want to analyze the performance of your promotions' channels. Is there one or two that exceeded expectations? Or maybe there's one channel that significantly underperformed? Once you've identified these trends, you'll want to explore each channel individually and assess how each message impacted the overall performance of the channels. Was there a particular message that resonated well with your audience, or one that missed the mark completely? Next, you'll need to identify next steps that you can take based off the new insights you've gathered from your campaigns.

Is there a channel that you should lean into further or a tone that works best with your audience? If so, you'll want to incorporate these takeaways in future campaigns, or you can try further experimenting with these components to try boosting results.

Let's do a quick recap of all the best practices you just learned.

Remember to create a content promotion calendar to help you organize your promotion plan. Then, use segmentation to create a specific audience for your content. Next, customize your message for each channel. Always be sure to experiment with new ways and promote your content and optimize for the best results. Lastly, analyze your campaign results.

In the next video, we're going to take a look at examples from a successful content promotion plan.

## VIDEO 3: WHAT DOES CONTENT PROMOTION LOOK LIKE?

Now that you understand what goes into developing a content marketing approach, let's take a look at what one company has done with content marketing to help grow their business.

SmartBug Media is one of HubSpot's leading partners and top-tiered agencies. The company is well-known for helping their clients increase leads, customers, and revenue by using content marketing and inbound marketing strategies. How did they do it? Well, they create content on a consistent basis that brings value and educates their ideal readers. What better way of selling your services than putting it into action?

Let's take a look at a successful content marketing campaign that SmartBug created for their primary buyer persona, Marketing Mary.

Before we begin, here's an overview of SmartBug's buyer persona, Marketing Mary.

Mary's a traditional marketer at the management level, who wants to prove the importance of her job through ROI. Through this process, she also wants to create memorable campaigns, something that she's proud of putting her name on.

Mary's biggest challenge is that she's new to content and inbound marketing but is eager to learn more. Mary generally shuts off at the end of the day to spend more time with family but is very productive and efficient while at work.

Mary would seek help from SmartBug in order to get more of her time back, create more content, and prove marketing ROI so she looks like a marketing rockstar.

Keeping Mary's attributes in mind, SmartBug created an awareness offer titled, "The Ultimate Guide to Inbound Marketing Personas."

The guide is a comprehensive, 34-page resource that provides information on: why personas matter, how more details lead to bigger dividends, how to extract valuable details from marketing and sales teams (and your customers),—as well as 75 development questions covering demographics, career, daily life, habits, pain points, and more.

This is definitely a resource that would interest Mary and bring value to her knowledge search on why to develop buyer personas.

And while all this information would help Mary, she's only going to find it if SmartBug spreads the word, which they did.

First, SmartBug recycled content from the guide into a relevant blog post series.

Here's a blog post SmartBug used to attract Mary: "55 Questions to Ask When Developing Buyer Personas." The content in this blog post is similar to what's offered in the guide. This helps make the call-to-action at the end of the blog post that much more relevant. If someone found the blog post helpful, they're more likely to download the guide.

Next, SmartBug promoted the guide week-after-week on their social media channels by using snippets of content from the guide to keep each post fresh. Take this tweet, for example. It explains persona development tip #44, "What are the top questions asked by prospects?" Notice how SmartBug included an image, link to the guide, and a hashtag—#75daysofpersonas—to track campaign results. Very smart.

Next, SmartBug launched targeted social ads to promote the guide to a new and relevant audience. Check out this Facebook ad. Notice how it offers context about the guide, a link to access it, and an image of what it looks like.

Next, SmartBug syndicated their content by republishing it on a third-party site that's relevant to their audience. This way, SmartBug can leverage the power of an authoritative resource, like the Social Media Examiner, to speak on their behalf.

Next, SmartBug used email as a way to promote the guide to their email subscriber list. In this example, notice how SmartBug highlights the problem and solution in red and uses an image call-to-action to drive attention to the helpful next step.

That's great and all, but how did this guide perform?

Well, the landing page for the guide has been viewed over 8,000 times with a conversion rate of almost 44%, of which 30% are all new contacts. Yowza!

Seeing how well this content was received by their audience, SmartBug wanted to keep up the pace, so they started recycling the content from the guide into other long-form pieces of content, like a Slideshare deck. Not only did this help from a search engine optimization perspective by claiming more search engine real estate, but more importantly, it allowed them to reach a new audience.

And there you have it—a successful content marketing campaign in action.