

## VIDEO 1: WHY IS MEASURING AND ANALYZING YOUR CONTENT IMPORTANT?

Hi! I'm Jorie with the HubSpot Academy team.

Welcome to the class on Analyzing and Measuring Your Content. In this class, we'll discuss how to analyze your content in order to identify top-performing content, assess key metrics, and create actionable, data-driven next steps.

So, why even bother?

There are three reasons why content and its performance should always be looked at with a keen eye: one, it can help you find out if your marketing efforts are driving the needle on sales, two, it can help you discover insights and determine where to go next, and three, it allows document and report on progress for future use cases.

Without a close look into the performance of your social media messaging, your content offers, or advertising, you have no evidence that the great content you've invested so much time producing is actually working.

Think about the potential money and time you and your team could be wasting on channels that don't drive you toward meeting your goals. Analyzing your content helps close the loop on your day-to-day marketing efforts.

It's all about analyzing how your short-term effort can eventually impact your end goals and long-term plan. But, only 8% of marketers consider themselves successful at tracking the performance of their content marketing efforts.

Analyzing and measuring your content also allows you to uncover insights you may otherwise have missed, like do content offers in a certain format work for your business? Look for trends by channel, content format, and topic. What works best for your audience? Has this changed over time?

Is there a new trend in your industry? Stay on top of it. Review not only your content but that of your competitors to be sure that you are addressing basic questions and new developments.

Lastly, analyzing and measuring your content marketing efforts allows you to document and report on your progress to your team, managers, and beyond. Are you progressing toward your goals in a timely fashion? Do you need to adjust your content plan either because you are behind on your goals, or way ahead? What insights did you gain from each of your marketing efforts? How can this be used to prove the value of the work you do, or adjust next year's goals?

Given the amount of time you invest in creating content, it's essential to analyze the performance of the content in order to adjust your future content creation efforts and measure the results driven by your content to quantify the return on investment to the business.

## VIDEO 2: HOW DO YOU COLLECT AND INTERPRET DATA?

Content marketing can be hard. Unlike other areas of marketing, it takes a lot of testing before you really discover something that resonates. Often, content changes build up over time, which means it's easy to lose sight of why you're creating the content in the first place when the results aren't immediate. We recommend sticking to your goals and continuing to track each campaign with the same zeal you had the first time around. Tracking data for the sake of tracking data isn't a valuable use of your time, but if you can derive actionable insights from data and adjust how you create content and what content that should be, you'll get that much closer to realizing a content formula that drives results and works best for your company and team.

There are six different areas to focus on when tracking and measuring your content marketing efforts: brand awareness, engagement, lead generation, customer conversion and sales, customer loyalty and retention, and website performance. Each area is based on different goals, and drives different metrics. Let's dig into each one individually.

The first area is brand awareness. Brand awareness can drive your company to the top of the search engine rankings and to the top of your potential customers' minds. But brand awareness means something different to everyone. Before digging in to measuring brand awareness, be sure you and your team agree on which metrics and channels are important.

In terms of metrics, where should you start? You could measure reach on various channels, including social media followers, external media coverage, or inbound

links. You could also measure conversations about your brand—such as mentions in the press, social media, or reviews online. How many people are searching for your brand name and other branded keywords in search engines? Referral and direct traffic to your site may also be indicative of your audience’s awareness of your brand as a trusted partner.

Choose a few key metrics and stick to them. While it can take a long time to drive the needle on brand awareness, if you stick to your **SMART** goals, you can measure incremental progress. As you may recall, **SMART** goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely.

Let’s take a look at an example.

Margot is an experienced marketer responsible for content creation at her company. As an overarching initiative for the year, Margot’s CEO asked her to quantify and measure her content marketing efforts. From her experience, Margot knows that there are six different key areas that she can focus on to showcase content performance and analyze results, so she came up with a plan to run six content marketing measurement campaigns during the year, each targeted at measuring and analyzing content effectiveness.

In the past, Margot’s CEO, board of directors, and VP of PR have all asked her to create initiatives that increase the company’s brand awareness. For her first content marketing measurement campaign, she’s going to focus on quantifying her content efforts’ impact on brand awareness. From her prior work, Margot knows that referrals from industry thought leaders play a big role in the way her sales team is able to close leads. So she chooses to focus her brand awareness efforts on increasing the number of thought leaders who are willing to recommend her company. Margot knows the importance of **SMART** goal setting, so she expands her goal:

Boost brand awareness in the first half of 2018 by increasing the number of recommending thought leaders from 3 to 10.

Margot should also be sure to nail down how and when she will measure the number of referring thought leaders’ inbound links, as well as the plan for how she’ll actually reach her goals. Will she be reaching out directly to thought leaders? Should she work through Twitter or other inbound efforts? Who are the people she and her boss would qualify as “thought leaders?” She should make a list and identify qualified “thought leaders” so she’s not leaving it open to interpretation.

The second area to focus on when tracking and measuring your content marketing efforts is engagement. Engagement measures not just who's seeing your content, but who is interacting with it. By measuring who is interacting with your content through engagement, you are interpreting feedback signals your readers are giving you without having to explicitly ask them how they like your content.

You can measure engagement on social media, including shares, likes, comments, and retweets. Are people sharing your posts to their own networks? You can also measure engagement on owned channels, like your blog. Who is commenting on your blog and how many comments does each post receive? Which blog posts and topics get the most comments? When you promote a content offer via email, do your recipients click and download the offer? Do they forward the email along to a colleague or friend? After they download a content offer on a landing page, do people then share the landing page with their own networks? These engagement "signals" offer you feedback that can help you to determine the most popular and effective content pieces, topics, channels, and formats.

Engagement data not only helps you, the content creator, gain actionable insights into what content is working best, but also allows you to tie engagement data back to overall business goals.

In our example, Margot chose to run a second content marketing measurement campaign with a goal of increasing the company's organic reach on Facebook by 150% by the end of 2018. To do so, she used content engagement metrics and data to showcase how content helped grow the overall reach.

The third area is lead generation. This is an extremely important area for most content marketers. Using lead generation metrics, you can prove your time and your company's money is well-spent.

Things you may consider measuring include: how many leads did you generate, and where are they in your funnel? Are they a blog subscriber, or did they download a content offer? If so, which content offer?

Have you been able to qualify them, either through lead scoring or using lifecycle stages? Take a look at your number of Marketing Qualified Leads, or MQLs, which represent leads that are making their way down your marketing funnel. Now look at your number of Sales Qualified Leads, or SQLs, which reflect leads that are further down the funnel and more "sales-ready." What is your ratio of MQLs to SQLs? If it's low, can you identify the gap?

What activities lead to someone becoming a lead? Can you attribute this conversion to a specific piece of content, campaign or source? How much does it cost to acquire a lead? An MQL? An SQL?

Let's look back to our example. As you'll recall, Margot's CEO set an overarching initiative for the year, asking her to quantify and measure her content marketing efforts. In this third area of lead generation, Margot has an opportunity to really measure the impact of her content efforts on the business.

Margot's third content marketing measurement campaign is focused on using content for lead generation and measuring the different impact of various content pieces on the quality and quantity of leads generated by the end of 2018.

Accrediting a lead's source is accomplished through tracking URLs, which use simple tags at the end of a URL, also called UTM parameters. Through customized landing pages and tracking URLs, Margot can set up attribution reporting to tie her different content pieces directly back to lead generation, and eventually, the company's revenue stream. With tracking URLs, she can figure out which piece of content is generating the most qualified leads. From this insight, she can then continue to use that format over others.

You can easily create a URL with UTM parameters using Google's URL builder. You'll notice that there are four areas to consider when building a URL with UTM parameters: your website URL, campaign source, campaign medium, and campaign name.

Your website URL is where your visitors will land. The campaign source helps you identify where your visitors are coming from, such as social media or a referral from a thought leader's website. Campaign medium reflects the type of content, like an email or banner ad. And lastly, the campaign name is the unique content or promotion you're using in conjunction with your content marketing efforts.

By providing all these components, Google will generate a URL for you to use in your promotional content. Create a URL for every inbound link you want to track. Doing so will give you visibility into which specific link, and what content, is generating traffic, leads, and sales.

If you are a HubSpot customer, you can also do this directly in HubSpot with the HubSpot Tracking URL Builder. And if your landing pages are created in HubSpot, your tracking URLs and attribution reporting is already taken care of.

Attribution Reporting is based on an attribution model, which is the rule, or set of rules, that determine how credit for sales and conversions is assigned to touch points in conversion paths. Attribution models vary greatly, so check in with your team to see if you are already using a model and then apply this to your marketing data.

Margot could use attribution reporting to give individual content pieces the 'credit' for a lead or sale.

The fourth area is customer conversion and sales. This is the real moneymaker. What is the ROI of your total content marketing efforts? Be sure to include creative and technical time, software costs, and overhead in your calculation of cost.

What is the cost of acquisition for a new customer? You can track the quality of sales touched by content marketing in comparison to cold sales to help prove the ROI of your inbound and content marketing efforts. Do MQLs have a faster time-to-close than cold leads? Do they purchase more, and more often?

What is the ratio of leads to customers? By looking at this ratio in several different areas in the funnel, you can easily identify where your strategy may be falling short. Coordinate with your sales team to align your content marketing efforts with their selling process, and provide a smooth path for new prospects.

Margot may notice one of several things as she reviews her funnel and decides she's going to run her fourth content marketing measurement campaign to increase customer conversions by 10% based on what she learns in her data analysis by the end of 2018. Margot's first observation from her data analysis of her funnel is that although she now has ten thought leaders driving traffic to the website, and visits from referrals are up, referral traffic does not convert into customers.

Looking at an attribution report, Margot notices that 95% of her customers viewed her white paper on questions to ask during the sales process to ensure you're getting the best deal possible. Referrals skip the download in her nurturing and go directly to the sales team. Margot decides that her campaign will include sending this white paper to referrals as well. She will then be able to measure if the added touchpoint helps close the customer conversion gap for referral traffic.

Margot's second observation comes when she digs into her sales data and sees that referral contacts schedule initial meetings but don't move any further and are sold very rarely. Margot decides to connect with her sales team to see if



there's a disconnect once she hands off a lead. Can she create content to help her team at this point in the funnel?

The fifth area to focus on when tracking and measuring your content marketing efforts is customer loyalty and retention. What is the lifetime value of a customer? Can you compare the lifetime value of a customer originally sourced by marketing to that of a sales-sourced customer?

How often do customers buy from you? Are they recommending your business to others? Do they come back for more?

Lifetime value and repeat business can be especially important for a company that has a relatively high cost of acquisition and lower long-term cost to service. If you can get customers to stick with you over time, the return on your investment in them during the marketing qualification and sales process grows exponentially.

In our example, Margot analyzes the current customer base to identify the segment of loyal customers with the best retention rates and the highest lifetime value. She designs her fifth content marketing measurement campaign to generate 15% more leads to pass over to sales each month who match the profile of the current high-value segment customers by the end of 2018. She'll do this by promoting the handful of content pieces that all current high-value segment customers viewed before they became a customer.

And last, but certainly not least, is website performance. What good is a content strategy if your website isn't optimized fully for inbound marketing and user experience? Keep track of these key metrics to be sure that your website isn't making it difficult for customers to find and enjoy your content.

You can take a look at traffic—including unique visitors and pageviews—and which sources of traffic are top-performers for your business. If one channel drastically outperforms another, you may consider spending more money on that channel for increased ROI. Be sure to look at both the numerical value of traffic and also its worth to you—is traffic from your most popular source converting?

When it comes to organic search, pay attention to metrics for visits arriving from organic search to individual pages and the site overall. Make sure that it's growing steadily over time. Search engines are becoming increasingly better at mimicking the human experience and our evaluation of what constitutes quality website content. In attempting to do so, they are looking at engagement with your website page content to act as a proxy for votes of confidence for the quality of the page content. High-quality website page content is thorough and

complete and covers a topic comprehensively. Have you ever noticed that Wikipedia frequently shows up at the top of search results when you perform a search query? There are a number of factors that go into making this happen. One of those factors is that Google views Wikipedia content as high-quality because when you click through on that result and start reading the page content, you'll notice that it covers the topic in-depth and discusses the who, what, why, where, and when of that topic.

For example, if you perform a search query on Abraham Lincoln, Wikipedia claims the number one spot on the search engine results page. When you click through to Wikipedia's page to learn more about Lincoln, there's a detailed biography available from early career and militia service to religious and philosophical beliefs.

You can look at time-on-page and bounce rate with free tools like Google Analytics. Google Search Console (previously known as Webmaster Tools) can help you optimize your site's content for the keywords your potential customers are using.

For her sixth content marketing measurement campaign, our marketer, Margot, is going to improve website conversion rate of inbound traffic from search engines by 15% by the end of 2018.

Her content campaign for the first website performance goal of increasing visits is a two-fold content strategy.

First, she will select ten website pages that are influential in driving sales and update the content on those pages to be high-quality, comprehensive, and thorough, all with the intention to drive more engagement. She will measure the increase in the number of visits, the search rank of the page, and the time-on-page over time to see if her content changes affected these metrics.

Second, Margot will write a series of blog posts around a certain topic to attempt to increase website traffic and generate more visits to the site from readers of those posts.

Margot's content campaign for measuring page content's influence on website conversion will focus on looking at the performance of the assets she's created. How does one landing page compare to another? Is one of her forms drastically out-converting the others? Through continuous monitoring and A/B testing, she intends to consistently improve her site's performance month over month with regards to conversion.



Now that we know what types of metrics you can record in accordance with your company's goals, it's time to look at how to report on and analyze that data.

## VIDEO 3: WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR DATA AFTER YOU'VE COLLECTED IT?

Once you've collected a set of data, it's important to review it with key stakeholders. These may include you, your team, and your management chain, all the way up to your C-level executives.

First, compare your results to the goals you set previously. Did you meet your goals? Why or why not? Use these updated metrics to update your goals for the next month, quarter, or year.

Be sure to look for trends in content theme, format, promotion channels, and persona. Group your content into categories based on key similarities and try to draw some conclusions.

Telling the story of your data is one of the most important skills for a marketer to develop. It's not good enough to simply show your data; you must be able to convince your audience of its importance and relevance to company-wide goals and initiatives.

The first step in telling a story with data is to identify your audience. Presenting to the C-suite or your management team is a much different scenario than speaking to the individual contributors on the marketing team. The stakes are different, and what they care about in terms of results is different as well. Think of the various internal stakeholders at your company. What would they appreciate hearing about when you speak to them regarding performance?

Have a conversation with stakeholders at your company to discuss what they are looking for in terms of reporting. Ideally, this conversation should take place before you run a campaign. Why? You need to be sure that you're set up to track the relevant metrics and that you're setting campaign SMART goals that align with the metrics key stakeholders value.

Don't just look at what they tell you to look at. There may be other metrics you can use to support your story. After determining what your audience cares about, choose any additional key metrics, often referred to as KPIs or "Key Performance Indicators," that represent progress toward your audience's goals.

Just like goals, your reporting should be **SMART**: Specific, Measureable, Action-oriented, Relevant, and Time-bound.

Once you have a set of metrics for each stakeholder or type of goal, set yourself up for success by building a template or dashboard that tracks each metric. By building a template, you can easily export data and fill in the blanks on the required cadence, without having to duplicate efforts each month. A dashboard makes it even easier by compiling data automatically. HubSpot allows you to create custom dashboards and to automatically share those dashboards at any frequency you choose with members of your team.

You should plan to have a weekly, recurring meeting with your marketing team of content creators to review the campaign performance and make any changes necessary. It's important to adjust each campaign and each content effort ongoingly, so that by the end of the campaign, you successfully hit your **SMART** goal.

You should set up less-frequent meetings with key stakeholders of each campaign as well. Having a kickoff, monthly progress updates, and a wrap-up to deliver progress toward KPIs should do the trick.

To see what this looks like in action, let's take a look back at our example.

If you recall, Margot is an experienced marketer responsible for content creation at her company. As an overarching initiative for the year, Margot's CEO asked her to quantify and measure her content marketing efforts.

From her experience, Margot knows that there are six different key areas that she can focus on to showcase content performance and analyze results. She developed a plan to run six content marketing measurement campaigns during the year, all with the intention to measure and analyze content effectiveness.

Margot first identifies the key stakeholders for each of the six content marketing measurement campaigns. Next, she plans to have a kickoff meeting before launching each campaign with only the key stakeholders related to that campaign. For instance, for Margot's first campaign focusing on quantifying her content efforts' impact on brand awareness, Margot sets up one meeting with her CEO and a second meeting with both the board of directors and VP of PR. Since brand awareness is important to both stakeholder groups, she brings them all into the conversation. However, she holds separate meetings because the CEO has different brand awareness priorities.

During each key stakeholder kickoff meeting, Margot starts by confirming that these key stakeholders are interested in receiving her campaign support, later confirming the campaign SMART goals together. She guides the discussion by offering some suggestions for the types of metrics available for that type of campaign, and together, they identify relevant metrics to track. She wraps up the meeting by discussing what types of reporting the key stakeholders would find valuable, making sure to specify frequency and format. She always recommends meeting in-person to deliver the agreed-upon reporting and typically suggests making it a brief, ten-minute add-on agenda item to their regular recurring meeting. Lastly, she makes sure to set up a dedicated midpoint review meeting and wrap-up discussion where the campaign is the sole agenda item with these key stakeholders. Margot always follows up these in-person reporting meetings with a report and/or presentation. She does this via email or on a shared workspace, such as an internal wiki, to memorialize the work she's done and the progress she's made toward their agreed-upon goals.

Using the process outlined above, you can determine what metrics are important to track based on your content marketing goals and set yourself up to track each one. By looking closely at the metrics you, your team, and other stakeholders care about, you can present a coherent case for the time and money you spend on content creation and promotion, while also making recommendations for where to expand.

Remember, your marketing is only as good as your results.