

Video 1: Building a promotion plan

Hi, I'm Corey with HubSpot Academy. Let's talk about building a promotional plan for your content. In this video, you'll learn how to manage your content, match your content promotion to the best audience, and keep track of your promotion plan with helpful tools.

One of the biggest challenges marketers face when creating content is visibility. It can be difficult to get your content in front of enough people to make the time and effort you put in worth the investment. Creating great content isn't enough. A successful content strategy should include a promotional plan that doesn't just share your content, but strategically shares content with the people who will benefit most from it. To create a successful content strategy, don't simply promote content across your available channels. Strategically share content with the people who will benefit from it most.

When your content isn't promoted to the right people, on the right channel, at the right time, it likely sits there on your website, blog, or landing page with minimal traffic. There's nothing worse than putting a ton of time and effort into producing great content only for traffic to fall flat. More traffic turns into more conversions on your content, leads for your sales team, and money for your business.

Did you know almost half of your customers likely view three to five pieces of content before engaging in your sales process? This shows just how crucial it is to create and promote content to your audience. An effective promotion plan will turn visitors into leads and leads into customers.

When building a promotion plan for your content, remember – not all channels are created equal. The messaging you use to promote your content should keep the audience and platform in mind. Let's take a look at successful content promotion in action.

TED Conferences is a media organization that shares talks online for free under the slogan "ideas worth spreading." In this TED talk, zoologist Lucy Cooke takes us inside the strange life of the world's slowest mammal – the sloth. To share this content, TED leveraged their social channels to promote the talk. Even though they were sharing the same content, the copy was adjusted to fit within each of their social platforms.

For example, on Twitter, they write "Y'all, it's time to talk about sloths." Twitter's allowed character count limits how much you can say on this platform. So, TED's promotion is short, conversational, and intriguing – a perfect match for Twitter's audience.

On Instagram, however, TED takes a completely different approach. Since Instagram is an image-driven platform, they decided to use a picture of a sloth to get viewers' attention. Instagram supports long-form text, so they decided to share a sneak-peek of Lucy's talk in the image caption.

Then, on Facebook, TED altered their writing style again to resonate with a different audience. In this post, they say, "Get your sloth on this weekend." It's timely, relevant, and funny – the perfect way to recommend their content to watch over the weekend.

Even though TED is promoting the same piece of content on these three social channels, they updated the messaging to resonate with specific audiences.

Let's take a look at some challenges you might face when creating a promotional strategy. Here are a few questions to get you started.

First, ask yourself: “What content do I have available to promote?” What content do you have already, what content are you working on, and what content is coming up soon? It’s helpful to track all of your content in one place so that you know what’s available to promote to your audience.

Use a content audit and planning sheet to keep track of all your content creation efforts. Check out the resources section below for a Google Sheets template. Start off by conducting an audit of all the content you currently have. Ebooks, webinars, blog posts, everything – list them all out. Add the content format and topic into your sheet to make your content easily filterable.

To take this one step further, you could even track past performance of your promotion efforts in your content audit sheet, too. Use this sheet to identify what promotion tactics performed well for your existing content before. Use this past performance to guide you in the right direction when creating your promotion plan.

Next, ask yourself, “When should I promote this content?” By understanding what promotion strategies work best on which channels, you can determine when the optimal time is to share your content with your audience. If you don’t know this already, don’t worry. The optimal time to publish and share content will vary from business to business. This is why experimentation is so important.

Here’s a pro tip. When experimenting with the best times to share content with your audience, optimize for engagement. By tracking engagement, such as likes, comments, and shares, you’ll learn what time your audience is most active online and most willing to engage with interesting content.

Another thing to consider is how frequently you promote your content. Again, there’s no perfect answer to how often you should share your content. However, this is something that can be learned by testing different strategies and studying how your audience responds to the content you share. Remember, your audience across channels doesn’t want the same amount of content. It is likely that your email database only wants a maximum of one piece of content a week, while your followers on Twitter are interested in seeing content from you daily. Play around with your channels and experiment with the frequency of your posts to find the optimal plan for your business.

Next, ask yourself, “Which persona can benefit from this content?” A buyer persona is a semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer based on real data and some select educated speculation about customer demographics, behavior patterns, motivations, and goals. When building a promotional plan, it is crucial to share content that will resonate with your audience on the channels they’re already on. This will maximize the content performance by getting the right eyes on your content.

Once you understand the personas that you are trying to reach with your promotional efforts, you want to ask yourself, “How and where does this persona consume content?” Which channels are best for this type of content to reach this persona? Not all content is created equal, and not all content is effective on every channel. Take a step back to understand your persona’s motivations, goals, and challenges. Adapt the messaging on each channel to match it.

“Is this persona most active on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram?” Is this persona searching for information on your website? Listening to content on your podcast? Choosing the right channels to promote your content on will significantly improve the chances of your content being discovered by the intended persona.

Then, ask yourself “How can my messaging resonate with this persona?” Create custom messaging for each promotional effort that resonates with the intended audience. Promotional efforts on different channels shouldn’t sound or look the same. Be sure to customize your messages on each channel to resonate with the personas you’re trying to reach.

At this point, you might be wondering: “Why don’t I just share all of my content on all of my channels?” While this may seem like a good way to get the most eyes on your content, it might not offer the best experience to your audience. Your audiences across platforms are probably not the same. They’re looking for unique content and messaging that resonates with who they are. And if your audience follows you across multiple channels, you don’t want them to see the same message on your social channels and in their inbox. An effective promotional plan will deliver unique value to all of your audiences, even when promoting the same content.

For example, one easy way to improve your content promotion on Facebook is to refrain from sharing the same posts from Instagram. It’s so easy to do – with just a click of a button you can share your content on both networks at the same time. But just because it’s easy doesn’t mean you should do it. You’ll see better results by taking the time to craft a custom message and promote curated content on each of your promotional channels.

Keeping track of all of these promotional elements can be difficult to manage. Scaling these efforts can be even more challenging. Thankfully, there are many tools out there for managing your content promotion.

Trello, for example, is a great tool to use to build out your content calendar and track the progress of your content creation process and promotional plan. Trello is a free web application that manages projects in a visual and collaborative way. If you want to learn how to use Trello for your business, check out the guide to digital transformation in the resources section.

Google Calendar is another great way to manage content promotion internally. You can create events for each content piece that is being promoted, log which channels the content is being promoted on, and link to relevant assets. Plus you can share your calendar with your entire team too.

In the resources section, you'll find a number of downloadable resources for organizing your social media, editorial, and content calendars with Excel and Google Sheets.

By asking yourself these questions and tracking your efforts with the right tools, you'll maximize your content performance with a promotional strategy that works.

Video 2: Promoting content organically

When creating a content promotion strategy, organic promotion offers a number of ways to expand the reach of your content. Organic promotion is the kind of promotion that doesn't cost any money – other than the time you spend doing the work. In this video, let’s walk through ten ways you can promote your content organically.

First, search engine optimization. Optimizing your content makes it discoverable by top search engines like Google. The methods you use to optimize your content, however, will vary widely depending on the type of content you are promoting. By following SEO best practices, you'll increase your blog's Google rank, your YouTube videos' discoverability, and more. But at its core, your SEO efforts will likely revolve around a piece of content and a landing page that hosts the content. Here are a few strategies you can use to successfully promote your content in organic search.

At a high level, optimize your content for the specific topics and keywords you want to be known for. By building brand authority around these core topics, you'll surface your content to people searching for solutions your company can offer. Building a network of connected and related content builds a topic cluster. This is something that both search engines and people reading your content will appreciate. Connecting related content in topic clusters will raise the authority of not just one piece of content but also all other pieces of content in the cluster. If one piece of content ranks well, the ranking of other related and connected pieces of content will rise through the ranks as well.

Here's what this looks like. Groove Commerce is an ecommerce-focused inbound agency. To optimize their content for search, they used the topic cluster framework. This Inbound Marketing for eCommerce: The Complete Guide is their pillar page content. Essentially, this pillar page acts as one long and comprehensive educational resource on their website that serves as their north star resource on the specific topic, "Inbound marketing for ecommerce." Because they offer so much valuable content on this page, and they've linked a cluster of related blog content found on their website to this page, it ranks well on Google. In this case, Groove claims the featured snippet as well as the number one organic position on Google for their specific topic they intended to rank for. Implementing this strategy can have a huge impact on your content's performance in organic search.

By answering a question in the form of a detailed list, can go after the featured snippet. These results appear as the top result on Google's search engine results pages and are designed to give users quick access to information without having to click a link. In this example, HubSpot's blog post, "How to Develop a Content Strategy," receives a featured snippet in Google for the search phrase "how to do content marketing." Within the blog post, HubSpot directly answers this question with a numbered list. This best practice makes it more likely for you to receive a featured snippet with your blog content.

Acquiring backlinks, also known as inbound links, is another SEO practice that will expand the reach of your content. Inbound links are links that direct visitors from another website to yours. Develop an outreach strategy to pitch your content to relevant blogs and other websites. Acquiring inbound links from relevant high authoritative websites will increase your content's authority on search engines as well as drive referral traffic from a new audience. There are a ton of ways you can acquire backlinks to your content. Here are a few tips to get you started.

First, identify backlink opportunities. Backlink opportunities includes content from websites and blogs relevant to your industry. Look for content on these websites where linking to your content can add value. This could be unique data on a topic that your content provides, information about your business that you think could support their content, or even broken links that you'd like to replace with your own. My favorite tools to use to find backlink opportunities are Ahrefs and SimilarWeb. Both of these tools can be used to discover backlink opportunities by analyzing websites that are linking to your competitors' content or search for content that mentions your company but doesn't include a link. These are great places to start when building out a backlinking strategy.

Once you've identified a few opportunities, begin reaching out to the authors of the content you'd like links from. Structure your message by stating what content of theirs you were reading, tell them how much you liked it, state the opportunity you've identified for a potential backlink, and provide the resources you'd like them to link to if possible. You won't always receive a response, but when you do it can be the start of a beneficial relationship for both parties.

You don't necessarily have to do this with ALL your content – try it with your ten highest performing pieces of content and see what kind of a lift in referral traffic you see. Analyze what types of content are easier to get inbound links for and optimize your outreach for these types of content pieces. To scale your backlinking efforts, check out the guide by Backlinko in the resources below.

Also, in the resources section, you'll find HubSpot Academy's SEO training course if you want to learn more.

Second, bots and messaging apps are another great way to promote your content. On your website, you can convert website visitors with a bot that recommends your latest content offer. Consider programming your bot to deliver content that is relevant to the webpage that the visitor is on. For example, if the website visitor is on the pricing page, share a case study. If the visitor is interested in learning more about a specific product, deliver a piece of content that is relevant to that product, like in this example from PandaDoc. PandaDoc is a software you can use to create, send, e-Sign and store transactional documents all in one location. In this example, PandaDoc has programmed their bot to deliver

relevant content to all types of website visitors. With just a few questions, the bot is able to identify why a visitor is on the website and surface content that will be the most helpful to them.

Messaging apps provide another opportunity to promote your content. Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, for example, are two great platforms to share your content on. When someone connects with your brand on one of these messaging platforms, you have the opportunity to share relevant content with them. In this example, The Wall Street Journal, a major news publication, uses Facebook Messenger to share their latest articles.

Using bots and messaging apps for marketing activities, also known as conversational marketing, is a practice that is still gaining traction in many industries. To learn all about conversational marketing, HubSpot Academy offers a course on the Fundamentals of Conversational Growth Strategy. I've linked to it in the resources below.

Third, email marketing is a tried and tested way to promote content. There are many best practices that you should follow, such as segmenting your audience, including descriptive copy and images, and more. A lot of marketing teams depend on their email lists to promote content. But maintaining a healthy email list can be a challenge. You don't want to saturate your email database. If you do, your emails won't perform well, and it will be an ineffective channel for content promotion. Try segmenting your database into a number of lists based on the type of content that is relevant to them. For example, you can create lists of people interested in regular blog updates, customers who might be interested in new products, and leads who might be interested in a webinar. By segmenting your email blasts, you'll see better email performance and keep your database happy and healthy.

Outward promotion isn't the only way you can use email to drive traffic to your content. You can also promote your content over email by including a link to your latest content offer in your email signature, like in this example from Kloud. Kloud is a software you can use to automate your home's security. In this example, Kloud uses their team's email signature to promote an upcoming webinar. Consider scaling this across your organization to maximize its impact, especially with teams that use email to communicate externally with your target audience.

To create your own email signature like this one, check out HubSpot's Email Signature Generator in the resources section below. Also in the resources section, you'll find the HubSpot Academy certification course on Email Marketing.

Fourth, social media is another common element of a successful promotion plan. There's a lot you can do on social platforms. Using hashtags, sharing visual content, and writing engaging copy are just a few ways you can optimize your social posts.

Let's take a look at an example that does a lot of things right. Dyson, a household appliances company, created video content to promote their air purifying products. The content is unique, engaging, and tells a story. Plus, they use subtitles so that viewers can read the content, too. To promote their video, they turned to Instagram where video content typically performs well. They wrote unique copy that gave viewers information about Paula Radcliffe, the influencer featured in the video. They've included a branded hashtag #DysonHome which allows viewers to discover some of Dyson's other content featuring their home products. And lastly, they aligned their content promotion with National Clean Air Day to raise awareness and show their support of clean air. All of these elements work together to create an effective promotion strategy.

However, it can be difficult to break through the noise on crowded social platforms. One way to increase engagement on your content is to join groups that are interested in topics relevant to your content. Contribute to discussions, give help to those seeking help, and use your content as a resource to solve the problems of the engaged and niche audience.

You can even create a group of your own. Take MobileMonkey, for example. They're a company that offers a marketing automation solution to run chatbots with Facebook Messenger. They've created Facebook groups on topics relevant to their business, like chatbot and messenger marketing. You can see they moderate it, but for the most part, the

community is able to run on its own – meaning that the bulk of the work is done once they set it up and build an audience.

Going live on social media is another way to promote your content organically. In this example from Hootsuite, a social media management platform, three experts go live on Facebook to share their trend predictions. In the caption, they've linked to a related downloadable resource. This is a great way to offer unique live content and promote your existing lead generation offers at the same time.

A lot goes into building an effective social media plan. HubSpot Academy offers a free Social Media Certification course if you'd like to learn more.

Fifth, live events and webinars offer yet another way for you to promote your content. You can promote your content face-to-face at in-person events. Try bringing your online content offline to build brand awareness and be viewed as a thought leader. This just might encourage guests to think of your brand when they have questions on a particular topic in the future. Or, you can even discuss your content on webinars and link back to your content in promotional and follow-up material for the webinar. This is a great way to continue to provide value to your webinar viewers even after the webinar is over.

Sixth, discussing your content on a podcast is another great way to get more exposure. If you or your company currently have a podcast, you can work with the team to find opportunities to promote related content. Let's check out an example (17:14) from the Inside Intercom podcast that promotes Intercom's Product Tours demo page. Plugging your content into the podcast discussion and directing listeners to an easy-to-remember web address can be an effective method to drive additional traffic to your content.

If you don't have a podcast, consider reaching out to other podcasters in your industry and share your content with them. Connect with relevant podcasters on LinkedIn, send them an email, or submit a contact form on their website. However you reach out, don't just share a link to your content. Instead, pitch yourself and your expertise. Share your vision and use your content to give them the resources they need to produce a great podcast. They just might find your content interesting enough to discuss on their podcast or invite you in for a session.

Seventh, partnering with an influencer in your industry is another way to expand your content's reach and discover new audiences. By building relationships with influencers you'll be able to identify opportunities to collaborate on new content in the future. Consider partnering with relevant influencers during the content creation process. This will get influencers invested in your content which will make them more willing to share your content with their networks. This type of influencer promotion is something we do a lot here at HubSpot Academy. And getting the attention of the influencers you want to work with can be a real challenge. Here are some tips on how to stand out.

First, you'll need to identify potential influencers you'd like to work with. To do this, you can read content on relevant industry websites, conduct a Google search for key topics and see who claims the top results, and search hashtags related to topics you're interested in.

Once you find some influencers who might be a good match for your business, do your homework. Get to know the influencer you're interested in working with and understand what they do. You'll be able to decide if an influencer is a good fit. Plus, you'll show the influencer that you understand them and how they'd be an asset to your campaign.

You should also build up the relationship over time. Begin organically interacting with the influencer on the social platforms they use. Comment on their blog posts, retweet their photos, and share their latest YouTube video with your audience. By showing your support before ever asking them for anything, you'll already be on the influencer's radar. This will make future partnerships easier to establish.

Co-creating content is a great way to work with influencers organically. In this example, B2B influencers Tim Soulo and Brian Peters from Ahrefs, an SEO tool company, and Buffer, a social media management company, come together to create a video campaign on increasing web traffic. This type of campaign is an asset for both companies and therefore receives double the promotion.

Eighth, word-of-mouth continues to be one of the most effective forms of promotion. Encourage viewers to engage with your content by sharing it with their friends, networks, and colleagues. A great way to encourage viewers to share your content is by featuring quotes throughout the content that they can click on and easily share with their networks. This is a more effective method than the typical social share icons because the curated content is more impactful and the custom messaging is more shareable than just a link to the content.

Here's what this looks like in action. In this guest post on Content Marketing Institute's blog, there are multiple quotes throughout the article that are highlighted with a click-to-tweet button. When readers click on the quote, the tweet populates with this quote and the source. It also links back to the original content. Your audience will be more inclined to share content by using quotes like this. The tweets feel more personal and fit better on this social platform.

The ninth way to promote your content is through content syndication. Content syndication is when you republish your existing content on additional websites. This way, you get more value out of the amazing content you've created simply by getting the same content in front of new audiences. You should always link back to the original content. This allows Google to understand where the content came from and can also direct readers back to your website. Here are a few ways you can syndicate your content.

You can syndicate your content on other websites by writing a guest blog on an industry website with your ideal audience.

You can also submit your content to be shared on additional websites that publish syndicated content, like Inc.com for example.

Or you can syndicate your content on additional publishing websites like Medium where you can replicate your content efforts to an entirely new audience.

Here's an example of content syndication in action. This blog post on "How to Build a Chatbot for Facebook Messenger in 5 Minutes" was shared on MobileMonkey's blog. To get even more eyes on this content, Larry Kim, CEO of MobileMonkey, shares this same blog post to his audience on Medium. This is a great way to get even more value out of the content you create.

The tenth and final way to promote your content is by repurposing. Consider turning a blog post into an infographic, or a webinar into an ebook. Plus, you can also provide additional resources in new formats. This will shake up the user experience and provide more value to your audience. You may remember Groove's pillar page example on "inbound marketing for ecommerce." In an effort to better engage visitors coming to their pillar page, Groove repurposed their page's content into a 7-part video series. This way, visitors can choose to learn by watching Groove's video series as opposed to reading the text on the page. How did this experiment perform? The average time-on-page for this page is over four minutes what it was without the videos. You are only limited by your imagination here, so make maximum use out of your resources by delivering your content in a variety of ways.

There are a lot of options available for promoting your content organically. With some hard work, creativity, and a great piece of content to promote, you can expand your reach and attract more leads to your business without spending loads of money.

Video 3: Supplementing organic efforts with paid promotion

Promoting your content with paid advertising is a great way to supplement your organic promotion efforts. Paid promotion allows you to identify, target, and reach new audiences that are more difficult to reach with organic promotion. In this video, we'll cover 4 ways you can use paid advertising to support your content, including advertising on Google, social media advertising, paid influencer promotion, and native advertising.

First, Google offers ways to promote your content through Google Ads.

You can create search ads for specific key phrases to promote your content. These search results appear at the top of the Google Search Engine Results Pages. This can be a great investment as the first page of Google's search engine results receives over 70% of the page traffic clicks. In this example, SmartBug Media receives two out of the three top placements in Google search for the term "inbound marketing personas." There are two placements that are organic. One is a featured snippet, and the other is an organic result for their marketing personas guide. However, another company called Social Bakers is currently receiving the top spot in Google with their search ad. To maintain brand authority for this search term, SmartBug Media could run their own ad for "inbound marketing personas" and have all three of the top search results. This could significantly increase traffic to their website.

Display ads offer another way to advertise your content with Google. Display ads offer great brand visibility and can be used to reach new audiences on websites related to your industry. In this example, Search Engine Land, a popular online publication that specializes in SEO topics, uses a display ad to promote their webinar to readers on the Marketing Land website. Be sure to match the content you promote with display ads to the audience of the websites you advertise on. In this example, Marketing Land readers are on the website to consume content, so using a display ad to promote even more content is an effective strategy. Keep this in mind when using display ads as part of your promotional plan.

Remarketing allows you to use Google's advertising platform to target ads to a specific audience who have visited your website before. By using remarketing to promote your content, you can encourage those who are already familiar with your brand to consume content. You can use remarketing turn these visitors into leads.

Next, social media platforms offer a variety of ways to advertise your content with paid promotion. Each platform has its own take on paid advertising, so let's go over what you can do on each one.

Facebook offers a number of paid advertising solutions for all types of content. With video ads, you can feature a promotional video while image ads, carousel ads, and slideshow ads feature image-based content. You can even use lead generation ads to collect customer information directly on Facebook's platform. In this example from Dollar Shave Club, a grooming subscription box, they use a slideshow ad to showcase their range of products. Consider using this type of ad to promote your content when you have multiple elements that you want to feature together. Or, you can boost your existing top-performing posts to deliver more likes, comments, shares, and views.

Plus, with Facebook's advertising platform, you can also run advertisements on Instagram. In this example from Volvo, a popular car brand, they created an interactive video ad. Videos are known to perform well on this platform. By making their content interactive Volvo encourages viewers to not only watch the ad but engage with their content.

Remarketing on Facebook can also be very successful. You can target and serve ads only to people who've previously visited your website, used your mobile app, or in some cases, visited and bought something from a physical retail

location. This means you can be very strategic and efficient about who you're reaching and where you're spending your marketing budget. If you're new to advertising on Facebook, give remarketing a try first. Remarketing on Facebook is often the most effective form of paid advertising and has the highest return on investment.

Paid advertising on Twitter offers a number of ad formats depending on the type of content you'd like to promote, including video and mobile ads. This advertising platform can be used to expand the reach of your tweets, encourage software signups, get app downloads, and more. Here's an example from Rothy's, a clothing company. In this sponsored tweet, Rothy's checks off a lot of best practices on the platform – short and catchy text, a hashtag, a visual, and a link to their website content.

LinkedIn offers a professional environment where you can pay to share your content to new audiences. For example, you can deliver personalized ads with Sponsored Mail and generate leads with text ads. Here's an example of Sponsored Mail in action from my own inbox. In this example, LinkedIn is reaching out to encourage me to register for a live webinar discussion. This is a great use of paid advertising on LinkedIn to target specific personas to consume your content.

YouTube's advertising solutions are video-based. Ads on YouTube can reach potential customers who take action when viewing videos on the platform. If you don't have video content to promote, don't worry. YouTube has partnered with a number of creative platforms that you can work with to create your first ad. Here's an example of a video ad for reed.co.uk, a recruiting company. They've added a CTA to their ad that directs viewers to their website. This is a great strategy to use a YouTube ad to get more traffic to your website.

If you'd like to learn more about advertising on these social networks, check out the guides in the resource section.

Promoting your content with the help of influencers is yet another way you can pay to advertise your content. If you don't have an organic partnership with an influencer for the content you want to promote, or if this partnership doesn't include a promotion, you can pay relevant influencers to share your content with their audiences.

Here's an example of paid influencer promotion. In this Instagram post, influencer and outdoor enthusiast Callum Snape partners with Mazda, a car brand, to promote how Mazda vehicles can handle the snow. You can tell this is a paid promotion by the hashtag "sponsored" below the post's description. These types of influencer partnerships can have a huge reach – but always be sure that there is a strong match between the influencer's network and your target persona.

There are many tools out there that you can use to find relevant influencers in your industry. Some of my favorites are BuzzSumo and Socialbakers. You can use these tools to search by category and keywords, influence, location, and more. There are also countless influencer networks and agencies you can use to find the perfect match.

Regardless of how you find your influencers, paying them to promote your content offers a unique way to get your content in front of a new audience. Influencers will benefit from having original content to share, and you will benefit from the influencer's stamp of approval and highly-engaged network.

A final form of paid advertising for your content is native advertising. Native advertising includes content found in online publications that are created and paid for by advertisers. This allows you to sponsor content on websites relevant to your industry. For example, if your company is a marketing software company, websites like VentureBeat, a technology news company, would be a great place to run a native advertisement. Here's an example from Qualcomm. Notice how the content fits in with the rest of the articles on VentureBeat's website. The only difference is the "sponsored" tag above the title. When running native advertisements, it's important to promote content that fits in with the rest of the content on the website. Otherwise, there will be a disconnect with the website's readers.

Native advertising placements can range anywhere from a few thousand to tens of thousands of dollars for top publications like Business Insider or Forbes. Advertisement opportunities for smaller publications will cost less.

When purchasing native advertising placements, you are in a position to negotiate. If the publication isn't willing to work with you on price, consider asking for additional publications or a longer advertising window. This way, you can run advertisements for a greater number of content pieces or keep your content ads running for an extended period of time. The details of native advertising agreements will vary between publications. But when you're on a tight budget, it can never hurt to ask.

Remember, paid advertising alone is not a sustainable marketing solution. However, when you pair organic efforts with paid advertising, you can amplify your business impact and see even greater success for your most effective content.

Video 4: Content promotion in action

Effective content promotion requires a ton of moving pieces to all come together to create a remarkable campaign. Let's take a look at content promotion in action from startup founder, Larry Kim.

Larry Kim: My name is Larry Kim. I'm known as the founder of WordStream, which is the world's largest pay-per-click marketing advertising software company in the world. I grew that company starting from nothing to over 300 people, managing over a billion dollars of ad spend for tens of thousands of companies worldwide and sold the business last year to Connect for about \$150 million.

I'm currently working on my second business, which is called MobileMonkey, as the world's fastest growing Facebook messenger marketing platform.

Today I want to talk about a content marketing campaign that I initiated a few years back. It was around the time of the Facebook initial public offering, so they were becoming a publicly traded stock. And of course this was a really hot trending global topic of discussion across both the technology and business media, and everyone wanted to buy these shares even like Uber drivers, and parents were talking about buying Facebook shares and this was a pretty huge topic.

I was able to craft a relevant story comparing and contrasting the return on investment of Facebook ads versus Google Ads and then quantifying the typical average results in terms of click-through rates and conversion rates and costs and then giving a grade to both Google and Facebook ads according to their strengths and weaknesses.

And we thought that by producing this in a graphical format, that it was very likely to be embedded into all the media coverage around this topic. And we were successful in doing so.

And it actually generated tens of thousands of press pick-ups. So like every newspaper and web magazine in the entire world across over 87 different countries wrote about this particular story generating millions of links back to my website as well as international press opportunities on television like BBC, Fox Business, NPR etc.

So at the time I was working on trying to do link building to my website by coming up with stories that I was hoping would get picked up by the national or even international news media.

We had, had some good success with timing the stories with the timing of Google earnings releases, because we knew that whenever Google releases their earnings, both the technology and business media typically write thousands of stories about what's going on at Google.

And so, we had tried out a bunch of different stories like what industries does Google get all their revenues from or what's the most expensive keywords on Google. And we would do these kinds of spectacular kind of

broadly interesting stories like not too niche, they were appealing to a broader audience, and we would time this to the Google announcements.

And when you we got on CNN and thousands of other websites, and when the Facebook IPO was scheduled, it was like the biggest media within the online advertising world like it was the biggest story of the time.

And so we absolutely needed to come up with some way to insert ourselves into that conversation.

Typically, when it comes to pitching stories, what you do is you build up a Google Doc of all the influencers who cover a particular topic, and come up with both their Twitter handles, which is very easy to find. You just look them up on Twitter, but also using tools like hunter.io and other e-mail prospecting tools.

You need to also find their e-mail addresses, and what you need to do is come up with a list in our case, we had... Because this wasn't our first media kind of content marketing effort. We had built up a list of about 1000 reporters for all of the major technology and business publications that cover Google and Facebook from our business advertising perspective.

We had that information on hand and basically what I would do is I would e-mail those journalists, just here is some data that you could use for any subsequent coverage of the Facebook story.

Now typically when you do this kind of cold outreach, that the hit rate isn't great. It's like one in 20, one in 50, one in 100 is pretty typical in terms of the hit rate. But I knew I was onto something interesting when after pitching three or four journalists like they all responded and got back to me immediately and said that this is really interesting and that they would be they would be writing a story on this.

Sometimes you have stories that go nowhere and every once in a while you get lucky, and you really time things perfectly with a story that there's a lot of global interest in. And it's really hard to describe because it's an experience that I've only experience is like twice in my career, but it's like to be at the center epicenter of a big media circus.

Once I started to see success organically with the organic outreach, that I was doing for my content marketing project, I immediately thought of paid promotion. Now, you might be thinking to yourself like why the heck would you spend a dollar on paid promotion when you have a runaway story that's doing so great on its own and certainly doesn't even need another dime to get more coverage.

But it's actually the wrong way of thinking of it. The way I think of it is, when you have one of these rare situations where you have a really remarkable piece of content that is doing remarkably well. You really want to pour gas on that fire like you want to pour an accelerant to make that reaction even bigger.

And so we decided to throw money at this campaign because it was doing so well and our thinking was, we have a budget for constant promotion, it's so rare to have a campaign that is doing this well. We should just go all in on this campaign because no other content marketing campaign will generate this kind of ROI for us.

What we actually did was we spent the entire annual budget for content marketing on this one. I think the IPO was in May or something like this. So we spent the rest of the entire year's content marketing budget on promoting this piece because knowing that it's statistically improbable to trump this later within the year.

And in terms of like what kind of efforts we did, I had previously generated some custom audiences on Twitter and so basically using those Twitter handles of those influential journalists for like the New York Times, and Wall

Street Journal and then CNN et Cetera. Just creating a list of those Twitter handles and uploading them as a custom audience on Twitter. And then being able to target those people individually as reporters to show up on those feeds. We weren't spending a ton of money but it was like very targeted.

And beyond that there were other audiences that I was interested in targeting including like my remarketing audiences because it's not just about getting success from these random news outlets like you also want your core industry peeps to know that you have this interesting story.

But overall we spent tens of thousands of dollars on promoting the story even though it was doing fine organically but it was just to get more mileage out of a winning hit.

One thing that we did, as we were promoting this piece, it was clear to me that there were different personas that were interested in consuming this content. On one hand there was the business press which was interested in it from a financial perspective.

Another one was marketers of course, marketers are interested in knowing how different ad units perform on different platforms. And there was another persona of technology enthusiast, so these would be like the people on Wired magazine or Gizmodo or that kind of technology sites that don't exclusively write about Google or Facebook advertising, but will make an exception if the story is big enough.

And of course there was another kind of interest which was just the general interest of humans at large just users of Facebook basically. And so the idea that we did was I turned my Facebook infographic, my Facebook versus Google infographic, I turned it into four different infographics with slightly different headlines that I believed would resonate stronger with different people depending on who I was outreaching to, taking a more financial like business angle or a more marketing angle.

And so I had the graphic designers that like midnight repurpose the infographic into several different formats. And it's very difficult to know like what the impact was, but we did that effort just as a way to test and optimize the coverage that we were generating for this initiative.

What I found is that even in these little niches like online advertising, there's tons of opportunity for innovation and in your content marketing topic ideation.

When you have an incredibly successful piece of content, like Larry's report on Facebook and Google ads, the business impact can be huge. By being creative and staying on top of what's relevant in your industry, you too can create powerful content. And by supporting this content with an effective promotion strategy, you'll maximize the impact of your greatest campaigns.

Video 5: Improving your content promotion

One of the greatest challenges of creating an effective long-term content strategy is staying relevant. Don't worry, there are a few things you can do to continually improve your content promotion. Let's cover how you can make the most of your content by promoting content regularly, experimenting with your efforts, and keeping up to date on emerging channels.

When building out your content promotion plan, be sure to create a schedule that you can stick to. This best practice has a ton of benefits.

For one, regularly promoting content keeps you at the top of your audience's radar. As you and your brand establish a regular appearance across social channels, Google searches, and wherever else your audience is active, you will build trust with your audience by providing the content they need from a brand they can trust.

This trust comes with additional benefits, too. Quantitatively, you'll be able to increase traffic to your website and blog from these promotional efforts. And qualitatively, your audience will think of you as a thought leader in your industry thanks to your helpful content.

Staying relevant is key. Don't just promote content for the sake of promoting something to your audience. Learn what your audience likes, doesn't like, and wants to see more of. Take this information and promote content that works. It takes work to do this efficiently – but sticking with it over time will have a huge impact on your long-term success. By constantly experimenting with your content promotion efforts, you'll see improved performance over time. Be sure to benchmark your performance to improve your metrics and exceed your goals over time.

In the resources below, I've added a template of the experiment framework I use myself when running experiments here at HubSpot Academy. Use this template to track your observation, develop a hypothesis, state your prediction, develop an experiment design, and track your results. Use a template like this to think through all of the many elements required for successful testing. Create a master internal resource where you can share all of your experiments and results so that others can see and learn from your work. As you do more experiments, you can use these results to optimize your future content promotion.

A major part of experimenting with your content promotion is finding new channels to promote your content on. Here are a few ways you can identify new ways to promote your content.

First, you can learn from your customers. It's amazing what you can uncover about your customers' behavior with just a few customer interviews. By talking to your customers regularly, you'll start detecting patterns you can use for guiding your content experiments.

If you don't have the time to reach out to customers one-by-one to request an interview, don't worry. There are a few other ways you can collect feedback from your customers. Consider including a tool to calculate the net promoter score, or NPS, in your content. These tools might include a scale from one to ten, a set of smiley faces, or other ways to represent the NPS scale. Add this to your emails, ebooks, blogs, or other areas of your content where viewers can be encouraged to share their feedback.

You can survey your audience, too. SurveyMonkey, for example, is an easy-to-use tool for creating different types of surveys. Follow up on your latest content offer with an emailed survey or post it on your social media channels. You just might be surprised how many people are willing to offer up super helpful feedback which allows you to improve your content.

You can learn from your competitors, too. Keep track of the content your competitors produce and how they promote it. You can do this by following your competitors on your personal social media accounts and by signing up to their email newsletter or blog updates. Their content will be delivered directly to you so that you can easily keep tabs on the content they're promoting. This can teach you where your promotional efforts are falling short, or where you are performing better than the competition.

Finally, you can learn from the experts in your industry. Working with influencers can teach you new ideas that you haven't thought of yet. To learn how other experts are promoting their content, follow them on social media, check out their websites, and see how they are experimenting with new channels. You can even attend industry events to meet

some of these influencers in person and hear what's on their mind. Take these insights and test them out for your business. And who knows – you might even identify a potential partnership for a future campaign.

Promotional strategies should never be stagnant. For your promotional plan to be effective, it should evolve with each piece of content you promote. Learn from your past efforts, experiment with your tactics, and keep track of what is new and exciting in your industry.