

Video 1: Identifying and setting goals

To determine the success of your content, you have to set goals and track the right metrics for your business.

Chances are, this isn't your first time setting goals for a marketing effort. Even if you're a seasoned marketing professional, a quick refresh on goal setting can have a huge impact on the success of your content efforts.

There are a lot of metrics to report on with each piece of content you create, which can feel overwhelming. So let's take a step back and set the foundation for successful content analysis. In this video, we'll cover how to set SMART goals based off of historical data and industry benchmarks.

Did you know that companies who don't know their key performance indicators, or KPIs, are less likely to meet their revenue goals? In fact, almost 75% of companies that miss their revenue goals don't know their visitor, lead, qualified leads, or sales opportunities data. This can easily be avoided by building out a strategy for measuring and analyzing your content's performance.

There are a ton of metrics out there that you can report on to understand your content's performance. For a blog post, you might be interested in web page visitors, time on page, and referral traffic. For a video, maybe you're more interested in watch time, social media shares, and impressions. And if you're offering a webinar, landing page conversions for registration might be your top metric. Regardless of what type of content you're measuring, there are numerous metrics that impact its success. But, before we dig into all the metrics you can track, let's get familiar with setting and evaluating goals.

Setting metric-oriented goals is essential for determining the impact of your content. Setting SMART goals is a great way to identify the metrics that are important to your business and achievable with your content. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely. For example, a SMART goal could be to increase monthly website leads from 1,000 to 1,500 by the end of the year.

To start setting smart goals, use historical data. This data can be used to benchmark your past content performance. You can use your previous performance and key metrics to identify what goals will make sense for your future content efforts.

But if you don't have historical data, don't worry. There are other ways you can get started setting SMART goals. Looking at industry benchmarks is a great way to get a feel for what metrics are important and how other companies are performing. To check out some industry benchmarks, take a look at the guide in the resources section. However, use this as a starting point only. Your content's performance will likely fluctuate from the industry standard.

If you're an online fashion startup, for example, one of your goals might be to increase brand awareness. One of the metrics that you use to measure how well you are progressing towards your goal might be social shares. You want your audience to share the content you publish on social media to expand the reach of your posts and ultimately increase brand awareness.

Going off of the industry benchmarks, you'd likely set a goal to achieve over 1,300 shares on social media. But with a brand new company, it's pretty unlikely that you'd achieve this goal when the company is still in startup mode.

In short, don't feel bad if you're below the industry standard. Do some experimentation to gauge how you're currently performing, and set new benchmarks based on data that's specific to your company.

Lastly, analyzing how your content impacts revenue for your business is another performance indicator to measure. The amount of revenue generated will not always be indicative of a successful piece of content – it all depends on your goals. If you're running an awareness campaign, for example, revenue might not be the best metric to track. However, for your content geared towards lead generation, for example, tracking the revenue generated after a lead converted on your content indicates which pieces of content are most successful at driving sales. Use this data to prioritize future pieces of content.

By identifying and setting SMART goals for your content, you'll reveal which metrics are important to track and set the foundation for analyzing your content performance.

Video 2: Organic metrics to track

There are a lot of possible goals for your content marketing efforts. For example, you may want to build brand awareness, develop search engine authority, increase lead generation, or influence customer loyalty.

Regardless of what goal you have attached to your content, organic metrics will play a large role in your content's success. With organic metrics, you can track the performance of your non-paid content marketing efforts. These metrics fall under web page traffic, social media, email, and conversion. In this video, I'll break down each of these and discuss which metrics are most important.

Organic metrics provide insight into two key areas: First, they show content performance across your non-paid channels. And second, they reveal the greatest opportunities for paid promotion. Adding paid promotion to a piece of content that is already proven effective will maximize your return on investment and optimize your content's performance. But you have to understand how your content is performing organically first.

Here's an example. Let's say you're an ecommerce fashion company who wants to increase traffic to their blog to support their summer sale. A SMART goal for this business might be to increase monthly blog visitors from 500 per month to 800 per month before the summer sale starts. One way to support this SMART goal is to write a blog post on "ten fashion trends to look out for this summer".

To analyze how this blog post, or any other piece of content, is performing, here are the four key types of metrics you should consider tracking.

Web page traffic metrics show you how your content is performing on your website. The key web page traffic metrics to track are page views, traffic sources, bounce rate, referrals, and keyword ranking. All of these metrics work together to tell you the story of how website visitors are responding to your content.

Page views and unique page views measure how effective your content is at bringing in new visitors and returning visitors. Unique page views tracks how many visitors come to your web page, while page views counts all visits. By tracking how much traffic this blog post generates, you'll understand how this blog post compares to others and supports your overall goal of increasing blog traffic.

Traffic sources break down page views by the sources your content is being discovered from. By analyzing traffic sources, you'll understand how each element of your content promotion strategy is working together to drive traffic. There are many sources where visitors could come from, like paid search, organic traffic, email marketing, and more. This analysis shows how visitors are discovering your content. In this case, if you promoted the "ten fashion trends to look out for this summer" blog on social media, paid search, and email, you would see all of these sources and the amount of traffic from each.

Bounce rate is an important metric to track because it is representative of how well your content is living up to your visitors' expectations. Is your content relevant, helpful, and engaging? Does your content offer a good user experience? If so, you will see a low bounce rate – and a low bounce rate is a good thing. The longer someone stays on your site, the more your search engine rankings will improve. If visitors are spending a long time on your blog post on fashion trends, you'd know that this is a valuable and effective piece of content for your audience. This might indicate that creating more content around this topic will be an effective future content strategy.

Hotjar is a great tool to see how viewers are interacting with your web pages. With this heat mapping software, you can identify what parts of your web pages are causing viewers to drop off resulting in a high bounce rate.

Referral traffic is another great metric to track. Referral traffic will tell you how well your backlinking and content syndication strategies are working. Plus, receiving referral traffic from more sources than you've proactively sought out will indicate a very effective piece of content. To be able to see this you need to create a tracking link for each referral source – or use a marketing software, like HubSpot, that can track links for you. In your tracking link, you need to include a website URL, campaign source, campaign medium, and campaign name. You can add additional fields like campaign term or campaign content as needed. I've included a great free tool in the resources that you can use to create your own tracking links.

The last web page traffic metric you should track is keyword ranking. Keywords and phrases play a large part in the content creation process. By tracking the performance of your keyword strategy, you'll understand how your content is ranking for your chosen keywords. Use this metric to determine what keywords are working well for your business and spot opportunities for additional content. SEMrush and Ahrefs are two great tools you can use to track your keyword performance. For our example blog post, you'd likely be going after the "fashion trends" or "summer fashion trends" key phrases.

There are a few tools you can use to track these web page metrics. Google Analytics is a great place to start. Or, marketing automation software like HubSpot can be used to easily analyze all of your content.

Next, social media metrics are used to understand how the content you promote on social media is performing. Are you expanding your reach on social media? Are viewers engaging with your posts? There are a ton of metrics you can track across social platforms to answer questions like these, and more. Let's go over a few general metrics to keep track of on social.

Reach and impressions measure how well your content is spreading throughout the social platform. Reach is the number of unique people who view your content, while impressions measure the total number of times your content has been viewed. A great piece of content can spread like wildfire on social media, and the reach of a successful piece of content will be significantly higher than average. And when sharing video content, tracking views is an important metric to track that's related to reach. For example, on Facebook a view occurs when your video runs on autoplay for at least 3 seconds. By tracking these social media metrics you'll be able to identify those posts that are viewed more people than usual. You'll find your content's reach in the analytics dashboard of the social platform you're using. Use this data to optimize your social posts by publishing content types with a large reach. If your social posts for the fashion trends blog post has a large reach, you'll know that the blog post is effective and relevant to your audience.

Engagement on social media involves a handful of metrics that are important to track depending on the platform. These metrics include likes, shares, comments, retweets, video views, and so on. A goal of sharing your content on social media should be to influence these metrics and see them grow. Track these metrics to understand how your social media audience responds to the content you share with them. Analyze what works and what doesn't to improve your long-term social media strategy. Great content on social media gets a lot of buzz in the form of engagement. If your "ten fashion trends to look out for this summer" post sparks conversation, receives a lot of likes, and shares, then you'll know

that your social media audiences like this type of content. Promoting more content like it in the future will optimize your social media performance.

You'll also want to track the clickthrough rate of your content on social media. Clickthrough rate is the percentage of people who clicked on a link in your post after viewing it. For example, if 1,000 people viewed your social media post for the "ten fashion trends to look out for this summer" article, and 100 people clicked on the link, then you'd have a 10% click-through rate. By tracking this metric, you'll be able to optimize your posts on social media with content that drives traffic to your website.

If you want to learn more about tracking your content's performance on social media, check out HubSpot's Social Media Certification course in the resources section.

Email metrics also play a role in the performance of your content. By analyzing email metrics you improve the performance of the content you share with your email database.

Open rate shows you how many people open your email. Clickthrough rate shows how many people are clicking through in the email to view your content. These metrics work together to show you how your email database responds to the content you share with them. To get you started, here are a few benchmarks. An open rate of between 15% to 20% is strong across industries. And a click through rate around the 2% mark is a good goal to shoot for. But again, these numbers will vary. It is best to test your own email performance and optimize. You can also analyze this data to figure out what type of content this audience likes. Do you see higher email engagement with blog content? Webinars? Sales or product announcements? Tracking your open rate and clickthrough rate can tell you what content to send to which audiences. For your fashion trends blog post, you'd likely only send this post to those who have subscribed to your blog. If your email database contains engaged contacts, comparing your open rate and clickthrough rate for this promotion compared to the promotion of other blog posts will tell you if this audience likes blog posts on the fashion trends topic.

Growing your subscribers, or the number of people in your blog or email database, is another email metric to track. By producing great content and improving your content promotion, you can increase the number of emailable contacts for your business. But remember, while you want to see this number grow, you also want to keep your database clean. If it has been a while since you've tidied up your emailable contacts list, consider removing contacts who don't engage with your content anymore. Having a smaller database of engaged contacts will result in better performance across your metrics. In this example, equipping your blog post with a "subscribe to our blog" form will grow your subscribers to include people who've found your fashion trends blog post that are not previously familiar with your brand.

Finally, conversion metrics show how your content is impacting your business. The key conversion metrics to track include leads generated, conversion rate, and close rate. By tracking these metrics, you can understand how many leads your content is generating, how well your content converts visitors into leads, and at what rate the leads you generate become customers. Combined, these metrics tell the story of the customer lifecycle. With this information, you'll understand which content to prioritize to generate more sales for your business. For your "ten fashion trends to look out for this summer" blog post, you might be interested in how many leads converted after engaging with this blog post, and how many of those leads eventually made a purchase. You can use this information to create effective blog posts that drive revenue in the future.

By following this type of reporting process for your content, you'll discover how your content is actually performing. I recommend doing this for each campaign that you launch. Over time, you'll begin to see trends and will be able to benchmark your performance if you haven't already.

There are many more metrics that you could track to gauge the performance of your content. By setting SMART goals and selecting the metrics that support your goals, you'll be able to determine the success of your content and promotional efforts.

Video 3: Paid metrics to track

When you have a high-performing piece of content from your organic promotion, supporting it with paid promotion can be a great way to supplement the success of your content. The metrics that are important to track in your paid promotion will vary depending on the type of advertisement you are running.

If you're an ecommerce fashion company that has seen above average success on a blog post titled "ten fashion trends to look out for this summer," paid promotion can maximize the success of this article.

Here are a few key metrics to consider when reporting on your content's paid promotion.

Quality score is the way Google measures the effectiveness of your ad in Google Ads. Achieving a higher quality score will lead to lower prices when bidding on ad placements and a better ad position. The more descriptive your content offer is, the better your ad quality score will be. Plus, optimizing your ads for different devices and adding ad extensions, which are additional links to other areas of your website, will improve your quality score, too. Tracking this metric will show you the most effective ads that use your paid resources efficiently. For example, you might want to run an A/B test with different copy for your fashion trends blog post. After running them for a few weeks, selecting the ad with the highest quality score will improve other areas of the ad's performance.

Cost-per-click, often referred to as CPC, and cost-per-thousand impressions, or CPM, are two metrics that are important to track depending on the type of paid promotion you are using to support your content. The difference between CPC and CPM is simply how you bid and pay for your ad spots. In CPC, you pay every time someone clicks your ad. For CPM, you pay one price per thousand impressions. For CPM, it doesn't matter if a viewer clicks or not. CPM is generally used with awareness campaigns, but if you're looking for conversions or acquisitions, a CPC pricing model is probably your best bet. Tracking these metrics to identify which ads yield the largest return for the lowest cost. For a blog post on fashion trends, for example, you might be only interested in driving traffic to your website. Therefore, tracking your cost-per-click will be an important metric to track. Achieving a low CPC will maximize the use of your budget and drive more traffic than an ad with a high cost.

Cost-per-acquisition is another paid metric that you can use to identify how much you are paying to acquire a new lead. This type of promotion aligns with content that is goaled with lead generation. Understanding how much you are paying to acquire a lead will allow you to optimize your lead generation ads and acquire more leads with less money spent. Determining cost-per-acquisition can take some time to set up correctly. Check out the cost-per-acquisition calculator in the resources that walks you through how to use the formula. For your fashion trends blog post, analyzing how much you are spending to acquire a new subscriber can show you how well this blog post converts subscribers. If you're paying more money to acquire a blog subscriber than a content lead from a downloadable ebook, for example, it might make more sense to use paid on a different piece of content.

Lastly, close rate is another metric that is important to track for your paid promotion. Paying to acquire leads that don't close because they're not a good fit for your business isn't an effective strategy. By tracking the rate at which your paid leads become customers, you'll have a better sense for what types of content attract high-quality leads that ultimately pay for the product or service that your business sells.

As you run your own paid ads, continual evaluation of your performance will optimize your ads to yield the highest return on investment. For example, you can explore promoting new content, experimenting with different ad styles, or

running A/B tests with different copy. Regardless of how you optimize your paid performance, achieving the highest return on investment should be your top priority.

There are many methods you can use to determine the success of your content on paid advertising. Let's go over a few popular ways to determine the return of investment for any type of paid promotion.

Return on ad spend, also known as ROAS, is a simple way to gauge the success of your paid promotion. This calculation is the difference in money generated by conversions from the advertisement minus the total spent on the advertisement. If your promotion is geared on something like lead generation where there is no direct income generated by achieving the goal, you can use an estimated value. Calculate this by multiplying your lead to customer conversion rate and the average value of the initial purchase.

Or, you can take this one step further and also take into consideration the total content investment into your calculation. How much time did it take to produce this content? How much money was spent? By considering these questions in your return on investment calculations, you'll have a more holistic view of the types of content that yield the highest return. Regardless of the method you choose, be sure to pick one and stick to it across teams. This way, you'll have one unified way to measure your content's success.

Lastly, it's important to consider how your paid advertising efforts impact organic performance. There's some psychology that goes into this one, but running paid ads can actually boost the performance of your organic efforts, particularly in search. Here's how. Shopify is a company that offers tools for ecommerce businesses. It's not surprising that Shopify has content that ranks on the first page of Google search results for the search term "how to start an ecommerce business." But what might surprise you, is that they're also running paid search ads for this same keyword.

You might be wondering, "Why would they pay for a place on the first page of the Google search results when they're already ranking on the first page organically?" Well, there are a few reasons for this. First, Shopify is paying to increase their real estate on Google's search results page. Instead of having just one slot, they now have two: one from organic and one from paid. Second, since ads have priority over organic results, they have also claimed the top results of the search engine page. And third, even if people don't click that first result, they might be more inclined to click the second result from Shopify that appears in the organic results. Having that brand recognition in the first ad can influence people to click your organic link because they see the brand twice in the first few search engine results.

As you analyze your paid metrics, don't forget to connect this performance to your organic results. You might be surprised by how paid performance can impact your content's organic metrics.

Video 4: Tracking conversions with attribution models

As you build up the number of resources you offer, attributing the conversion to a specific touchpoint or multiple touchpoints can be challenging. Attribution models are a great solution.

Attribution models are a set of rules that measure the impact of multiple marketing touchpoints to make sense of the entire journey from stranger to customer.

Setting up an attribution model can be done with your marketing software. Google and HubSpot, for example, both offer reporting options with attribution models that can be customized to fit the way your business works.

Attribution models can answer a lot of questions you might have about your content marketing efforts. For example, attribution models can tell you how many leads first enter your website by your blog content, which marketing channels generate the most leads, or which promotional channels are most influential when turning a lead into a customer.

Attribution models are directly connected to your goals and metrics for your content. And there are many attribution models out there that you can use to track conversions. Here are a few of the most popular.

First-touch attribution is where 100% of the credit is assigned to the page that originally drove a visitor to your site. This model does overemphasize high-level, awareness stage marketing efforts, but it's an easy way to know what exactly is attracting people to your brand.

Last-touch attribution singles out the first touchpoint of the most recent visit. So if a visitor views a blog post, clicks a call-to-action, also known as a CTA, and converts on a landing page, the blog post will receive the credit.

The last interaction model, however, gives credit to the touchpoint where a conversion directly occurred. This is a useful model to determine the effectiveness of your landing pages.

A simple decay attribution model assigns a weighted percentage of the credit to the most recent touchpoints. I recommend using this model if your buying cycle is short because it assumes the touchpoints closer to the purchase decision greatly influence the decision to purchase.

In the linear attribution model, all touchpoints are given the same credit.

There is no right or wrong answer to what type of report to run — it just depends on what you hope to distill from the data. If you want to understand how all the pages or channels viewed before a conversion affect conversion rates, you'll run one report. If you want to understand what happened at the exact point of conversion, you'll run a different report. You could even run a combination of reports to understand what happens in certain parts of your flywheel.

Let's say you're interested in optimizing your content strategy for lead generation. You can use an attribution model to understand which types of content are best at converting visitors into leads. To do this, you'd want to use the last-touch attribution model. Here's how you could use this report.

Here's how you can compare different methods for converting traffic. To do this, you optimize your blog post with two different methods for converting traffic. One way is by adding calls-to-action to download a related content offer that is gated by a form on a landing page. The other way is by adding a pop-up form directly onto the blog post so that traffic can convert on that content offer without ever leaving the blog post. After running a last-touch attribution model, you learn that blog posts optimized with the pop-up form convert twice as many leads as the CTA and landing page approach. From this, you can infer that optimizing all of your blog posts with the pop-up form will be more successful at generating leads than adding calls-to-action that direct to a landing page.

If you want to learn how to get started tracking marketing success with attribution reports in HubSpot, check out the resources below.

Choosing the right attribution model for your business is entirely up to you and depends on the goals that you have and the questions you want answered. So start exploring, test out a few models, and optimize your content strategy with what you learn.

Video 5: Analyzing and measuring content in action

Tracking your content's performance is an essential part of every content marketing effort — and there's a lot to keep track of. Let's take a look at how Larry Kim, founder of WordStream and CEO of MobileMonkey, thinks about analyzing and measuring content.

Larry Kim: One of the things I'm most excited about content marketing today is just the magnitude of the return on investment that's possible. You see, on one hand, content marketing has never been harder, it's noisier and more competitive.

To get attention, across any marketing channel like e-mail, or blogging or Instagram or whatever channel that you're thinking of, it's noisier than ever and harder to stick up.

But on the other hand if you stick to the formulaic approaches to content marketing and promotion that we'll be talking about today, I think what you'll find is that it's ridiculously easy to get pretty remarkable results more predictably than ever before.

Today we're talking about the most spectacular content marketing campaign of my life. Now I don't take this lightly, I do 200 blog posts in a given year over the last decade.

But this campaign generated over 10,000 press pickups and significant radio and television pickup as well. And it was an article describing the performance of Google Ads versus Facebook ads, which I had released three days prior to the Facebook initial public offering.

So on the eve of Facebook becoming a publicly traded stock, and this is a rare moment where an online advertising software company like a services company like myself WordStream, was able to insert itself just through luck and timing insert ourselves into a global conversation that was happening at the time which was a force more powerful than anything I've ever witnessed before.

When I created this content initially I knew we were onto something interesting. I mean this was clever, I was giddy. I was looking around other publications and everybody was writing about the Facebook IPO, but nobody was writing about the quality of the Facebook ads product which was actually how they make all of their money which I thought would be very relevant thing to enter into the conversation.

I think that this was, early on, we knew we were onto something interesting and in my head I had kind of set a goal of like, "God it would be so great if I could get 100 press pickups." Because that would be kind of equal to the greatest content marketing story that I'd ever created previously.

We did substantially better. We generated over 10,000 press pickups and almost a million links to the site. And the primary objective at the time was just link building, we need to rank on content and the algorithm was all about just links to your site from authoritative websites and so like we needed a big number.

We were measuring the return on investment of this campaign primarily based on traffic to our website as well as links to the websites from authoritative publications. However, afterwards we noticed several additional very important benefits.

Number one, I built a lot of relationships during that short period of time when the story was hot for like 48 hours. Basically I ended up meeting dozens of journalists at the world's leading publications like Business Insider and I have built relationships that still today, that I am able to leverage.

For example an occasional columnist to publications like VentureBeat or Business Insider or CNBC, and all of these opportunities were the initial contact with these contacts was just as a result of cold outreach for the story.

And they of course remember me because that story did so well. So they probably write about six stories a day. So it's not likely that they'll remember everyone they spoke to, but this particular story would generate hundreds of thousands of views for these publications and that was kind of interesting to think about the return on investment from a relationship's perspective.

Beyond that it did a humongous, it put WordStream on the map from a branding perspective. So everyone in the industry and people outside of the industry heard of this study and what we found was that our site traffic, we had a huge spike of traffic during that short period of time while the campaign was active.

And then, after that the campaign was over, we didn't recede back to where we were. We actually kind of found a new equilibrium which was substantially higher than where we were prior to this big PR bonanza.

And so branding, it's kind of interesting it just raises the steady state awareness and demand for the products and services that you're selling. And the other thing that we noticed was that there was a profound impact on conversion and click-through rates of our future campaigns, meaning we know that people don't randomly decide to click and read on things, it's actually more subtle than that.

People are impacted by their subtle biases and they tend to favor consuming content from the sources that they have heard of before. And so, we noticed upticks in not just the volume of traffic to our site, but also the quality of the engagement of future visitors was substantially improved from before and we believe that it's just because we just created this positive affinity between into the topic and in our brand such that people who are more apt to engage with us moving forward.

These are incredibly valuable benefits beyond just links which links are of course extremely important but are more difficult to quantify but that we were able to realize.

The tools and resources that I use to track success or failure of my content marketing campaigns are mostly just free Google tools, Google Analytics will give me traffic and engagement numbers.

Facebook Analytics will give me insights into the types of people like their interests, their demographics, and their behaviors like who is consuming the content, search console will give me insight into the links that were generated by the effort and of course there's plenty of other third party tools like SEMrush, like Ubersuggest that provide this type of data as well.

Typically, when we run a content marketing campaign with the purposes of doing link outreach, the follow-up is actually very easy. You just go to Google News and you just search for your brand name and you copy the links of the stories that you were able to generate and typically it's maybe five or ten or maybe if you're lucky like 50 websites that pick up your story.

This was pretty crazy. I would go to Google News, I would search for WordStream, it would say 30,000 articles in the last 24 hours. So of course it was impossible to kind of do press clippings or something like that, that would just take a whole week which is just not really a productive use of time. I think normally there is a way of doing this type of reporting that it was just not scalable for this particular campaign.

That said, what we did do was, we tried to understand how the heck the story really broke. And you know what? It's so random, guys. There was a... I had put up my story and it got a little bit of press pick up quickly but when it really picked up steam, it was because there were several other brands like the General Motors had announced abruptly that they were cutting all their Facebook ads spent at the same time.

So like, it was really interesting to do analysis on sort of the chain of events that led to this crazy PR bonanza. Another one was appearing on cable news because I think what happens is the producers of cable news shows, tend to watch each other's shows if you will, and they'll kind of use that as inspiration for what to run on their networks.

And so it was just like a big domino effect that lasted 48 hours and impossible to fully quantify but nevertheless remarkable.

One of the key takeaways of this most spectacular content marketing campaign of my life is just gaining an appreciation for the scale and power of the kind of the eye of the media – like the eye of that storm.

I thought I had done well before, with getting placements on like CNN or other individual news networks, but for the first time I saw a situation where the success was like orders of magnitude greater.

And so I just got a better appreciation for how powerful content marketing can be. When you have the right topic, with the right data and at the right time, and a little bit of luck beyond that appreciation for the power of this channel.

I think I've gained a greater understanding of how content marketing works in general and that is every time you create a new campaign, like a new blog post, or a new email, or a new whitepaper, or a new infographics, a new video, you're basically you're auditioning a new piece of content that you hope will resonate with your audience.

And most of the time the content that you produce goes nowhere but every once in a while – 1% or 2% or 3% of the time – you get these very rare pieces that just catch fire. And there's so many reasons why they catch fire.

But for me personally, it led me to build to a better understanding of content marketing being effectively a numbers game; that it's really impossible to really with any degree of certainty predicts how these articles will do.

Repurposing the content, doing media interviews, doing radio interviews, and all sorts of things to just really be as well as paid promotions to extract the most leverage as you can from the few times that you do kind of hit the jackpot. You want to leave nothing on the table you'd like this, it's you need to extract every little bit of value when you are successful.

This is like a real niche topic of Facebook ads. Yet it has global interests. And so what I found is that, if you're creative enough, there's definitely ways to cast a wider net for the content that you're producing, that's beyond the scope of just the niche that you're targeting.

Larry's goal of driving press pickups was the perfect match for such a remarkable piece of content. The topic was timely, the content format was effective, and the outreach strategy built lasting relationships with contacts across major publications. It might take hundreds of pieces of content before you find the one campaign that takes off. But by setting SMART goals and tracking the metrics that are most important to your content, you'll be able to identify which pieces of content are the most effective.

Video 6: Communicating content performance

Communicating your content's performance compared to your goals is a great way to align teams while being transparent about your work. In this video, let's talk about content performance in a way that benefits your team, department, and company.

The greatest challenge when communicating your content performance is knowing how to organize your results so that other teams can understand the work that you've been doing.

Let's start off with communicating your goals. There are many ways to effectively communicate your goals with your team and organization.

First, make your goals clear and easy to understand. You want people from all backgrounds within your company to be able to understand the work that you've done. Make it easy for them by using simple language. Also, be sure to make it clear which metrics are attached to each goal to make your results easy to understand. It's also a great idea to connect with your manager to make sure you're all aligned on your goals and priorities.

Next, make your goals transparent. By sharing your goals across your company, you and your team will be held accountable for the work done towards achieving these goals. You can do this by publishing them internally so that your team and other teams know your goals and metrics and can follow along with your team's performance. Plus, when establishing or updating your goals, work with key stakeholders to determine and approve the goals you've set. This way, everyone will be on the same page when it comes to reporting and will make transparency even easier.

You can also rally your team around their respective goals. Work with the members of your team to establish which goals fall under whose responsibility. This will give the ownership of the goal to its respective person on the team. Empower your team to share regular status updates on goal attainment. You'll want to bake this into your team's weekly or monthly meetings.

Lastly, use all this information that you've created to communicate goal attainment to leadership within your company. Use your goal attainment documentation to point to all the hard work you and your team do to push your business forward.

Communicating performance can be a little bit trickier than communicating goals. Here, you need to compare and contrast what you wanted to achieve to what you actually achieved. Let's look at an example.

This graph shows goal attainment for a marketing team goaled on generating leads from the company's blog. The orange line represents the target number of leads generated for one month. This number is calculated based on last year's performance and this year's trajectory. The gray line represents the actual number of leads generated for that same period. As you can see in this example, this team is above target. They generated ten leads more than their goal. This proves that the team's efforts are effective. They should continue on this same path and keep executing their current blogging strategy.

At this point, you might be asking yourself, "What do I do if I fall short of my goals?" While this might seem like a bad thing, missing a goal can sometimes teach you more about your business than achieving goals do, particularly when you're early on in the goal-setting process. Here are some ways to communicate your goal attainment.

First, own your performance. Whether your goal attainment is positive, negative, or on the line, the results are an outcome of your work. Use this information to inform others on what will happen next. Will you revisit your goals? Is there a user experience issue that needs to be resolved first? Sharing your action plan will prove that you've learned from previous results and are taking steps to improve performance. Keep in mind, if you're working hard and not hitting your goals, then it's possible that you aren't focused on the right opportunities, or your goals aren't achievable in the first place. Be realistic and set you and your team up for success.

Consider tracking your goals on a weekly or monthly basis and evaluating them together as a team regularly. Reviewing your performance as a team is a great way to improve alignment and help each other by having many people thinking about the performance of the entire team, not just their own performance.

If, from your reporting, it looks like your goals are far too ambitious, that's okay. Use your new insights to set more realistic goals for the following quarter. However, don't shy away from your ambitious goals right away if you don't see the results you want. Stick with it for the month or quarter and learn from your performance before altering your goals.

On the other hand, if your goals aren't ambitious enough and you exceed them by a large number, consider challenging yourself with more aggressive goals the following quarter. Improving your goals over time will show your understanding of the business and desire to continually grow.

To find a balance between being ambitious and realistic when discussing your goals, set expectations by communicating a "realistic" goal and a "stretch" goal. The realistic goal is what you plan to achieve based on past performance, and the stretch goal is what may be possible with some innovative content that really takes off. This will show your leadership you're not afraid to take risks, but you also have a solid understanding of what is achievable.

Communicating your content performance is an important step in a content strategy. By improving transparency across teams, your company will have a better understanding of the role content plays within your organization.