



Whitepaper

# Developing an Effective Content Marketing Strategy

SilverTech



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*Content is one of the most effective tools...*

for attracting, nurturing, and converting new customers. But, with more than 70% of B2B marketers surveyed by the [Content Marketing Institute](#) saying that they are going to create more content this year than they did last year, how are you going to stand out from the crowd?

Instead of creating something just because you think you should, or you think it's the right thing for your marketing department to be doing, you need to make something that matters; something that connects, and tells a story. Great content does something that technology on its own can't do: project that most human of capacities, empathy.

Building upon the marketing foundation of persona development and customer journey mapping, a content marketing strategy will help you attract new customers, answer their questions, and align your efforts to the needs of your organization. In other words, create great content!



Jeff McPherson  
*Chief Digital Officer*





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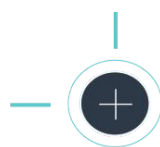




## Content Strategy vs. Content Marketing Strategy

Before we go too far, what is content? As modern marketers, we've accepted "content" as a catch-all for almost every aspect of our work; the emails we send, the blogs we write, and the social posts we craft, and, of course, the accompanying images, infographics, and videos. Let's open the dictionary and take a look at the various definitions of content. When used as a noun and pronounced 'kāntent/, its primary meaning is "the things that are held or included in something." That works. Content is the message in our email and not the email itself. And, what is the message? You might be inclined to think that it is the copy in the body of your email, but it is not. **For content marketers, the message is always the call-to-action.** To round out our definition, I like to include the definition of the noun, content, when pronounced kən'tent/: "a state of satisfaction." Our definition of content is then:

*A message that prompts action designed to deliver a state of satisfaction.*





# Content Strategy vs. Content Marketing Strategy

Let's turn to our partners at [HubSpot](#) for their definition of content marketing:

"Content marketing is a marketing program that centers on creating, publishing, and distributing content for your target audience -- usually online -- the goal of which is to attract new customers.

The most common components of a content marketing program are social media networks, blogs, visual content, and premium content assets -- like tools, ebooks, or webinars."

So, to be effective at content marketing, it should naturally follow that we need a content marketing strategy (more on that in a bit). First, what's the difference between content strategy and content marketing strategy?

A content strategy is more broad than a content marketing strategy and beyond our scope today. A content strategy refers to every piece of content owned by the organization: internal, external, marketing, sales, technical documentation, proposals, presentations, etc. A content marketing strategy helps us create effective content for **marketing** purposes.

You may also hear content plan in strategy discussions. A content plan is more granular than a content marketing strategy and refers to the specific tasks you will undertake to execute your strategy. This can take the form of a simple 1-2 page document that you update monthly to indicate who is creating the content, who is approving the content, and what the associated deadlines are.

A content marketing strategy establishes brand standards and editorial direction for all content including web, email, blog, and social channels while always addressing your customers' unique pain points, challenges, and motivations.

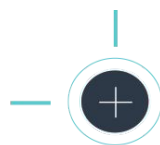


# Why Do I Need a Content Marketing Strategy?

If you are reading this, then it's likely that you already believe in content marketing and understand that it's important to have a content marketing strategy. Perhaps the better question is, why do I need to document my content marketing strategy?

Those with a documented content marketing strategy, according to the latest research from the [Content Marketing Institute](#), are:

- Far less challenged with every aspect of content marketing
- Generally more likely to consider themselves more effective with every tactic and social media channel
- Able to justify a higher percentage of the marketing budget to be spent on content marketing



# Why Do I Need a Content Marketing Strategy?

A documented content marketing strategy helps you drive strategic proactive, short-term, and long-term content plans. It creates ways for you to communicate with your customers through both digital and traditional channels, leveraging competitive standards, industry best practices, and your unique customer needs.

Jay Ber at Convince & Convert spends a great deal of time pushing marketers to ask themselves, “[What’s your one thing?](#)” In fact, he’s written an excellent book on the topic, [Youtility](#). To create demand for your product or service in our now customer-centered universe, he argues, you must help and not hype. To do so, you must be “disproportionately motivational and inspirational.” You must create content that sets you apart and to do so you need to build a content marketing program from a documented content marketing strategy.

To get back to the why do I need a content marketing strategy question, here are some stats:

- Content marketing [costs 62% less](#) than outbound marketing, it generates more than three times as many leads.
- When content marketing adopters and non-adopters are compared, the adopters have conversion rates that are nearly [six times higher](#) than their competitors.

“Content marketing is not a standalone marketing technique that can thrive in a vacuum. Rather, it’s something that needs to be integrated into your overarching marketing plan, as its principles will strengthen all your other marketing efforts.” - [Content Marketing Institute](#)





# The Essential Elements of an Effective Content Marketing Strategy

## 1. Discovery and Business Needs

Start by defining your unique business needs and identifying your ideal customers in order to deliver structured, measurable, personalized, and relevant content – appealing to leads, and returning customers.

## 2. Personas

Personas are the foundation of personalized, one-to-one communication. They are fictitious representations of your audiences - who they are, what they like, and most important, what they don't like. By identifying your persona's ideal online experience, your business can create targeted content, navigate an ever-shifting digital landscape and surpass marketing goals.

## 3. Customer Journey Map

A customer journey map - also known as the user or buyer's journey - helps solve problems for our customers at every point that they interact with your brand. It is an invaluable tool in improving the overall customer experience.

## 4. Content Audit

Part inventory, part research, part data, and part content creation; a content audit is a simple process that can yield invaluable ideas for new content. Do you have the right whitepapers, blog posts, or FAQs for each of your personas? You'll get the answers when you critically review your current content offerings.





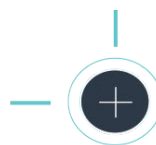
# The Essential Elements of an Effective Content Marketing Strategy

## 5. Identify Your Content Management System (CMS) Needs

As you document your content strategy, you may not be in the market for a new content management system. However, there is great value in taking this opportunity to identify your content management needs. Start assessing pricing, functionality, and even consider third parties to help you in your search.

## 6. Identify Content Types

What types of content can you create? There are a multitude of options, but ask yourself do you have the capacity to produce video, a design team to create infographics, the right audience for webinars? At a minimum, you should have a blogging platform that will facilitate several different types of posts: press releases, brand journalism, and thought leadership, to name a few.



# The Essential Elements of an Effective Content Marketing Strategy

## 7. Establish Workflow & Governance

Develop governance and workflow plans to fit with your organization's unique procedures and uncover inefficiencies in your editorial workflow and website management processes so that you can focus on content optimization rather than internal processes.

## 8. Content Plan and Calendar

Finally, it's time to brainstorm campaigns, schedule specific pieces of content, and assign tasks to content creators. A content plan can be a simple 1-2 page document that you update on a semi-regular basis. We recommend documenting content plans for at least 3 months at time. As long as your calendar is visible to your entire team and it remains the source of truth for your publishing schedule then it matters less what it looks like.





# How to Implement a Content Marketing Strategy

## Step 1 - Include Your Team

Your team will provide invaluable insight as you research and develop your personas and as you map the customer journey. We recommend conducting interview sessions with your sales teams and your customer service teams. It is likely that you will uncover pain points that data research alone may not have uncovered.

## Step 2 - Introduce Your Content Marketing Strategy to Your Organization

The more people within your organization that understand the “why” behind your content creation, the better. Just as we recommended rolling out your personas and your customer journey map to your organization, we recommend a grand rollout for your strategy. The most effective content marketing programs utilize content from many different voices within your organization’s walls. If you want blog contributions from your leadership team or your sales team, the best way to do that is to share with them the reasons why you need their creative input.

## Step 3 - Stick to Your Strategy

The two main pitfalls to avoid when developing a content marketing strategy are failing to document the strategy and failing to stick to the strategy. An effective content marketing strategy will serve as a reference for every piece of content you create. It will ensure that your content is on-brand, supportive of your business goals, and reflective of your customers’ needs. Abandoning your strategy mid-flight could veer your content creation off course. That doesn’t mean it is a static document. Your content marketing strategy should always evolve and should be revisited, at a minimum, on an annual basis.







# How to Implement a Content Marketing Strategy

## Step 4 - Measure and Share Your Results

How do you know if your strategy is working? The only way to know for certain is to measure the results. But, it is critical to avoid vanity metrics. A page view on a blog is not enough. If you recall, we've defined content as a message that inspires action. You need to be measuring conversions. Of course, you can look at pageviews in relation to conversions as it will give you insight into the conversion rate of a piece of content.

It has often been said that content marketers are publishers, but that's not exactly the case. As [Jay Baer at Convince and Convert](#) points out, "content helps achieve business objectives, not content objectives." ***A publisher wants pageviews, a content marketer should want conversions.***



# Priorities & Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

This rise in content marketing, and the rise in content that stresses the need for content marketing has made it very hard to get noticed online. Research from the Content Marketing Institute suggests that our heart is in the right place: 73% of us want to create more engaging content, 58% want a better understanding of what content is effective - and what isn't, and 55% of us want to create visual content. The surest way to achieving these noble content marketing goals is to have a documented content marketing strategy that serves as your organization's source of truth as you seek to create more engaging content.

What then are the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to understand the effectiveness of your content at achieving these priorities? If as, the [Content Marketing Institute](#) asserts, "the ultimate goal of content marketing is to increase your brand's reach and bottom line" then the following are good indicators of reach:

## **Publishing KPIs**

Unique Visits  
Page Views  
Geography  
Device

These KPIs will give you an understanding of how many people are viewing your content, how much of it they are viewing, where they are viewing it from and on what device. Obviously, important metrics to know, but not true indicators of the effectiveness of your content. If we agree that the goal of content is to inspire an action that leads the reader/viewer further than the path to purchase, then the following "action" metrics are good indicators of how content will contribute to the bottom line and what we really want to be focusing on:



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### Content Marketing KPIs

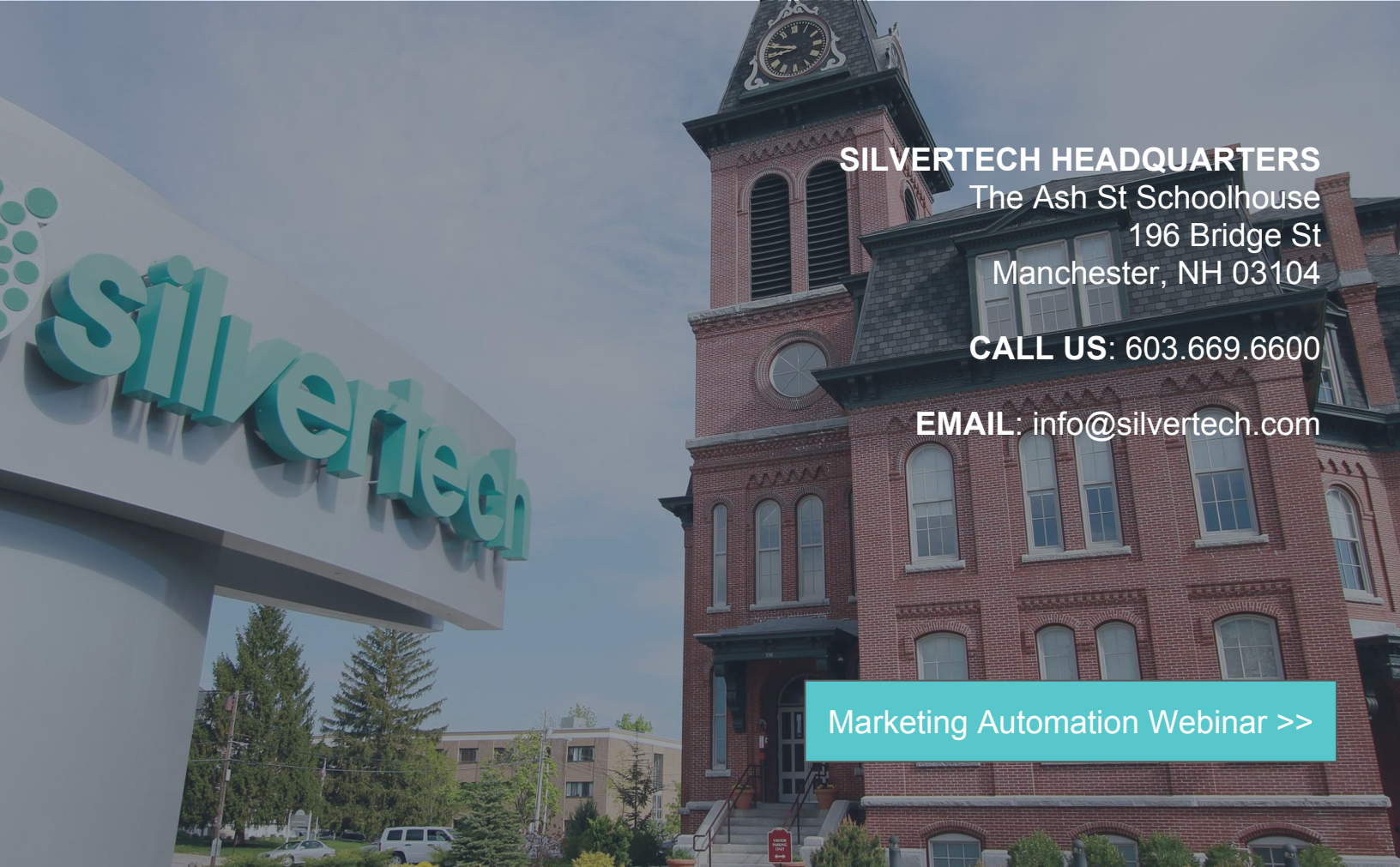
- Click-Through-Rate
- Conversion Rate
- Social Sharing
- Bounce Rate

Each of these indicate an action. Click-through-rate is a measure of how many viewers take the next step after opening an email or viewing a social post. Conversion rate is a measure of how many viewers engage with the call-to-action in your content. Social sharing is a measure of how inspired your viewers are to incite others to take action. Finally, bounce rate, though it measures a negative action - the rate at which people are leaving your content - is an equally important factor to measure.

All of the above metrics are available through a combination of Google Analytics and whatever publishing platform you may be using. To truly demonstrate how your content contributes to your bottom line, the additional step of instituting a lead scoring program is necessary. We will cover lead scoring and other content marketing best practices in the next webinar and whitepaper of our Lead to Loyal™ series, [How to Make the Most of Marketing Automation](#).







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[Marketing Automation Webinar >>](#)

“...Through their approach, SilverTech has proven they understand that the best marketing strategies are those that enhance experiences throughout the entire customer journey.”

**Brian Halligan, CEO HubSpot**



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