

# BUYER'S GUIDE TO CONTENT MARKETING

Questions you need to ask a content marketing agency before signing on the dotted line



Getting a content marketing agency is a big business decision. So, it is important for you and your team to answer several questions:

Why do we want to do content marketing?

What can we expect from content marketing?

Is this agency the best fit for our needs?

How do we prepare for content marketing?

A content marketing strategy has become essential for establishing thought leadership, getting in front of the ideal audience, educating prospects, strengthening a brand, and attracting new business. This is specially true for B2B marketing.

For these reasons, it's imperative that you choose the right partner for your content marketing strategy.

In this guide, you'll get the resources you need to determine who the right partner is for you and how you can prepare.

STARTING POINT:

## **WHY DO YOU WANT DO TO CONTENT MARKETING?**

There are many ways of defining content marketing but in essence, it is a strategy for creating blogs, eBooks, guides, infographics, videos, and campaigns that **attract, engage, and convert clients**.

It's important to clearly establish why your firm is looking to establish a content strategy. There may be a variety of reasons you are considering content marketing, but boiling it down to one or two reasons is a great starting point.

Determine whether your B2B firm is looking to launch a content marketing strategy to:

**Establish your brand as a thought leader.**

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**Build credibility with potential clients.**

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**Nurture prospects in the sales process.**

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**Give the sales team helpful tools.**

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**Educate clients on how to use products or services.**

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**Drive traffic to your firm's website.**

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**Convert website visitors into potential leads.**

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Pinpointing the reasons behind expanding into content marketing will help you to set expectations in terms of results, select the best marketing partner, and craft the right strategy.

**Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience – and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.**

- Content Marketing Institute

## EXPLORING: **HOW WILL YOU MEASURE SUCCESS?**

At this point, you should have determined the goal of your content marketing efforts. You now should set expectations, both for your team and for a potential partner. Setting expectations from the get go ensures that the partner you choose can provide the necessary information you need for internal reporting.

Set the main **Key Performance Indicators** (KPIs) for your content marketing. Answer the question: What does a successful content marketing plan deliver?

Do you expect the content marketing strategy to:

- Increase organic website traffic?**

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- Provide a certain number of leads a month?**

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- Gain visibility in the industry?**

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- Garner trust with prospects?**

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- Secure placements in trade publications?**

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- Attain speaking engagements?**

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**Knowing what you value most  
will help you measure whether  
your content marketing  
efforts are successful.**



## VETTING: **CRITICAL QUESTIONS TO ASK A CONTENT MARKETING AGENCY**

Got your expectations and goals in order? Now it is time to find, evaluate, and select the right content marketing agency for your firm.

Note that not every content marketing agency is alike. In fact, you should be concerned if a content marketing agency isn't evaluating whether you are the right client for them as well.

### BEFORE YOU REACH OUT:

Before you reach out to a content marketing agency, take a few minutes to do a quick credibility check.

#### **1. Are they actively using content marketing themselves?**

Look at the last time they posted a blog. When was it? See if they have any resources, like eBooks or guides, for download. Do a quick check of their social media to ensure they are actively promoting on their social channels and are engaging with their audience. You want to ensure that the agency is actively practicing what they preach.

#### **2. What is the quality of their content?**

When you looked through their blogs, resources, website, and social media, did you find the content to be helpful, educational, well-written, or thoughtful? If you thought their content didn't relate to you or was not interesting, take note – this could be an indication that they don't understand their target market (and therefore certainly won't understand yours).

### 3. What types of services do they offer?

This is one of the most critical points of evaluations. Not all content marketing agencies are the same and this is where you can separate the good from the bad. Many public relations agencies are looking to expand and content marketing seems like the ideal service to add to their offerings. However, be wary of PR firms-turned-content marketers. PR is very different from content marketing and requires a completely different approach. Check to see if they only offer content marketing. If they do, it means they likely outsource any website development and any design work. Since most of content marketing has a digital element, it's important to have a partner that can step in and assist with minor web development and provide nicely designed content pieces.

#### AFTER YOU REACH OUT:

If you determine that a content marketing agency meets the above criteria, there are simple questions you can ask during your discussions with them to dig deeper and see how they match up to your needs.

Here are the main questions you should ask all content marketing partners you interview:

What is your experience with content marketing?

What does the service team look like?

Do you have writers specific to my industry?

What does the content development process look like?

Tell us about the results you've garnered?

How do we prepare for content marketing?



## Content Marketing Experience

Content Marketing in theory sounds like a pretty straightforward concept and approach to marketing. In reality, however, it's much more complicated and challenging than it seems.

Content marketers

## People Involved

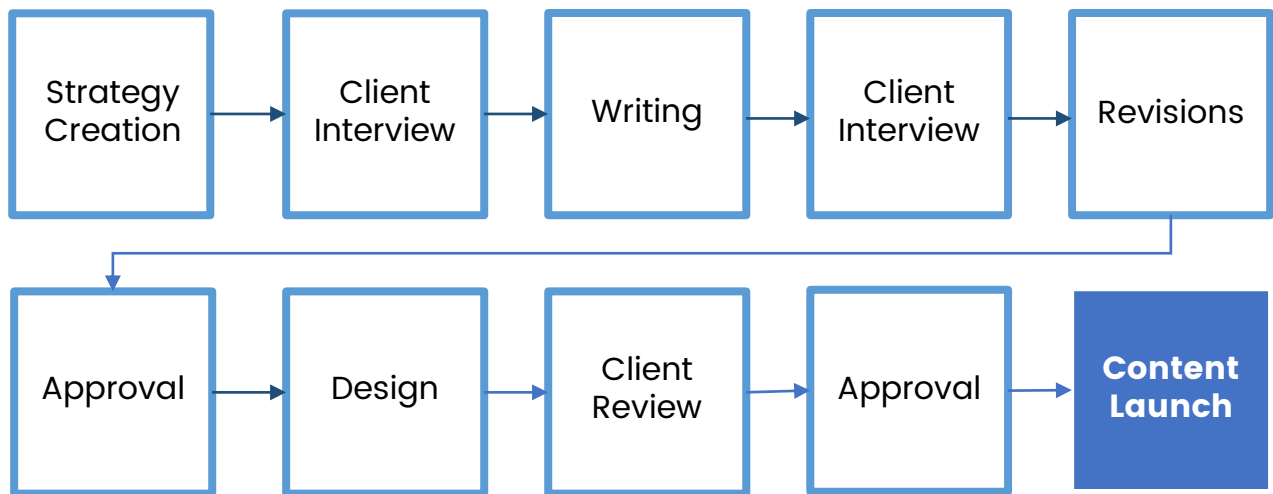
Content marketing requires a variety of different skills to be effective. A complete content marketing team should include a strategist who sees the whole picture, professional writers who can synthesize the information from your subject matter experts into interesting copy, an analyst to track metrics, a designer to create attractive content pieces that engage your audience, an SEO specialist to optimize content for search engines and people, a developer to ensure the content is easily accessible, and a pay-per-click specialist to run paid campaigns to support organic campaigns.

## Experienced Industry Writers

Professional writers can typically adapt to write for a variety of industries, however, many writers find a niche or niches and specialize. The industry jargon and acronyms vary widely across industries but a writer familiar with a certain industry won't be phased by this. Writing copy for the financial industry is different than writing about software, which is wildly different than writing for industrial or manufacturing. Find out if your potential content marketing agency has writers who specialize in your industry since this can create a smoother, more efficient content creation process.

## The Content Development Process

Get the scoop on how the content development process works and where you or your team fits in. At Content Hacker, our content development strategy looks like this:



## Agile Content Marketing Approaches

Content Marketing does not stop when you publish the content. In fact, the real game begins after you hit “Publish”.

Ask your content marketing agency how they actually market content. Where are the best touchpoints with your target audience and how best to reach out?

At Content Hacker, we have several content marketing methodologies. Some of these are what is known as the “Hub and Spoke Strategy” and the “4-1-1 Formula”.

We love these because they’re best for smaller teams and even individuals!

### 411 Formula

According to GOALS:

- Four (4) Educational Content
- One (1) soft seller
- One (1) hard seller

According to FORMAT

- Four (4) blog posts
- One (1) Infographic
- One (1) eBook

### Hub-and-Spoke Strategy

1. Produce one ‘hub’ content. Put it on your website.
2. Produce related ‘spokes’ content. Put them in other websites (don’t forget to request for a ‘follow link’).

You get more links with less content production effort. Efficient and effective.

We work with clients to set the strategy and get a client's input via an interview before drafting any copy. We also have built in several steps that allow our clients to review the content and provide feedback. Clients who have worked with us for a few months get into the groove of the process and find it easy to give feedback and provide approvals while allowing us to do the bulk of the work.

## **Check Their Results**

Just like marketing in general, **content marketing must be evaluated on results**. If you don't see ROI, then it's not worth investing in. Ask a potential content marketing agency about the results they have gotten for previous and existing clients. They should be able to provide case studies. Ask to speak with 2 to 3 of their content marketing clients to find out about their results and what it is like to work with that agency.

## **Experience Matters**

With the rise in adoption of content marketing, there has been a rise in agencies who "do content marketing." However, you don't want to work with a partner who is going to learn content marketing on your project. Find out what **type of experience the agency has** and how long they have been doing it.

PREPARING:

## **GETTING READY FOR CONTENT MARKETING**

Whether you have picked a partner or are still considering the best fit, there are several steps you can take to prepare for content marketing.

GET READY FOR CONTENT MARKETING BY:

- Assembling your subject matter experts (SMEs).**

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- Determining and allocating your budget.**

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- Ensuring you have access to all social media.**

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- Gathering all design assets, like logos or brand guides.**

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Typically, the content marketing agency you select will be upfront with the next steps and inform you what they need to get started. However, having all these things prepared will save turnaround time and get your projects started quicker.



**Turn your expertise into thought leadership. Consult a content marketing expert today.**

Contact Content Hacker for a personalized evaluation of your content marketing needs.

[www.contenthacker.co](http://www.contenthacker.co) | 632-232-5659 or 0915-989-4090