

“Content Preparation Process” vignette transcript

Let’s step through the content preparation process, starting with the first “value mapping” stage and here we would refer you to the “Cause Level Marketing (Model)” vignette in which Bob Schmonsees makes an important case for distinguishing between product marketing and solution marketing, and the need to take problems and break them down into their underlying causes and issues so you can get to the root causes of the customers’ key problems. To each of those causes or issues you can align your capabilities and this helps you set up the generic value which you provide similar to your competitors and your differentiated value that you do better or uniquely. The result of this step is the documentation of the ideal customer profile—critical first step.

The next step is to map the customers’ buying process. This is to lay out the different stages that the customer goes through in making a purchase decision and we find it useful to do an exercise to identify all the questions that the buyer must answer in order to buy your product, or service, or solution. It’s useful to use this buying process to identify the communications that are taking place at each stage—look at the purpose for the communications, look at the methods, look where you are effective and efficient in executing those communications and where you’re not—where you are experiencing a bottleneck or where you have time-delay issues that are slowing down the buying process.

The next step is to develop buyer synopsis where you build out the personas for the different buyers and get clear about their particular issues down at the individual level. Here you can begin to develop the problem-to-solution journey that your customers are going to take at the role level and begin to build out a storyline. We find this to be a good place to take time to establish the definition of “leads” and make a distinction between initial inquiries, Marketing-qualified leads, Sales-ready leads. The result of this effort should be a clear people map of the people you are going to be selling to.

The next step is to conduct a content audit. Here you would create an inventory list of all the content that’s available and then start to assign that content by the underlying causes and issues, by the different roles that you sell to, and by the different stages of the buying process. This allows you to begin developing your content priorities.

Now you are ready to build out message maps and storylines that will direct the creation of the content. Here we recommend lists of your core themes, clarity around the key issues, building out the messages as they want to be delivered by stage and by role. By what your customers would consider solution alternatives, for you these are your competitive options. So what’s the messaging that will be directed toward various competitive options. How will the messaging be tailored by industry and what are the key customer questions that require proof points.

With the buying process laid out, with the different personas laid out, and with the message maps created, you are now in position to start to get into the real work of identifying the core nurturing scenarios for each of your key message tracks. Here you want to map the flow of

what will be the first, second, third or fourth communication down a nurturing path that will be clear about the messages required for each touch so you can then find or create the content required for that and within your marketing automation system, begin developing the rules, the list segmentation and the scoring.

With these requirements clearly identified, and with your content inventory, you're at a point that you can identify your content gaps. Here we recommend that you make the distinction between information and communication and we refer you to that vignette because one of your decisions is how to build this content—are you going to build it as a document, are you going to build it as a set of slides, are you going to build it as a media element—so defining the media and methods for the content. Maybe it is multiples of those. We recommend that you create an editorial calendar so that you can attack these requirements over time, prioritizing and scheduling as it makes sense. Here it makes sense to assess your marketing calendar for the year to find acquisition opportunities—events, shows, conferences, customer meetings where access to key resources or subject input would be available.

The last step would be the creation of style guides. This starts to define not only what you are going to build—but now how you will build it--what are the guidelines, what are the frameworks, what are the standards and templates that you are going to use. Get clarity around the key language that you will use and avoid using, the various standards for page layouts and media. Look at the process and get clear about how you're going to build out this content. This is a great place to start building out your SEO keywords.

Click on the right-most tab in your player to access and download two key supporting documents--the full content preparation process diagram and a content marketing readiness checklist—to see how ready you are for content marketing.

We invite you to forward this vignette to colleagues that might be interested in these topics. To access the microsite, simply click on the screen and with a simple log-in, get access to all of this content.

<http://content.avitage.com/Enter-Content-Strategy-and-Execution-Microsite.html>