

## Create Like a Publisher

So what does it mean to think like a publisher? What does it mean to create like a publisher?

These are huge questions, but before I provide a simple and straightforward summary, I'd like to share our point of view. Our content requirements are in the process of exploding exponentially. The volume of the content is being driven by the needs for variation and tailoring, the different media formats, we have incredible pressure to produce content more quickly with low budgets and in support of a whole new set of requirements driven by digital media.

Thinking like a publisher involves a major mind shift from event thinking to a continuous process, from creating point productions to acquiring and building reusable elements, from random acts to content creation based upon a strategy and a plan.

Creating like a publisher means separating the process. The four processes that are separated in a publishing approach are often the responsibility of one individual or group in the traditional production process. They would be:

- Create and acquire
- Organize and manage
- Assemble and tailor
- Deliver and track

We've said that publishers follow a process that's different from the traditional production process.

So let's take these elements one at a time.

We are recommending that you consider separating the acquisition and creation process from the other three stages. Acquisition is focused on acquiring the knowledge and the insights of various subject experts, be they your internal technical people, business people, industry specialists, or your customers or third parties.

Essentially, publishers are constantly acquiring content, independent of how they are going to use it. They take as many pictures as they can, they interview as many people as they can, and they write up the content and they store it in databases.

The messaging foundation that we've talked about, with using tools like the buying process, the different personas, your storyline, your message maps—these will inform the kind of content that you want to be acquiring from your various sources.

The frameworks that we talk about help you to predefine what content needs to be created and what content needs to be built before you need it.

The other element of publishing is thinking about building content for multiple purposes. Just using an example of a product launch and building content in support of that, an example

would be to build out the training content, the downstream coaching and reinforcement messages, the marketing messages and again, the marketing messages for different marketing purposes, such as to capture attention, to educate, to influence buying criteria, to deliver proof points and so forth, and then down into the selling process and the kinds of content and tools that will help the sales person. This is an example of creating for multiple purposes, where on the margin, it's small time and effort and cost to go building out these additional elements.

A related requirement is building out for multiple media. Today there are many different ways that we can deliver our messages and our content and we need to be able to build those out in anticipation of using all of them so that the audiences, and the people who assemble content for audiences, can make that determination at the end of the process.

Publishers are renowned for using databases to store their source content and creating templates --that is essentially the magazine format—we see this in today's websites, where content management systems are used to populate a template on a website. I want extend that metaphor out into building the other kinds of content that we are creating. Here we recommend that the acquisition process starts with acquiring an audio—the knowledge and insights of subject experts, then secondly transcribing those into a document. With the kinds of guidelines, frameworks, and templates that we've talked about, and this source material from the subject experts, you can now hand it to third-party writers and producers who can turn it into articles, blogs, podcasts, webinars, training and other support materials.

We recommend that you seriously consider the use of audio for your deliverable, which when paired with PowerPoint can be converted into Flash for a very professional, very low-cost, very dynamic and engaging communication vehicle, and where appropriate, video can be interspersed. Talking head video has a very, very limited appeal measured in seconds rather than minutes.

The final point in this overview is that publishers have an incredible understanding of the importance of modularity as a core practice—whether it is to create versions that are tailored for relevance by specific interests, the amount of time available or the level of detail, for example, the concept of modularity allows the content to be used in different ways and for different purposes. Think of this as content Legos. This is why we like naturally modular components like audio and PowerPoint that can be mixed and matched to create a new show that is relevant to each situation.

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>