

How To Do Outstanding Marketing *On A Limited Budget*

"It's dangerous to go alone."

If you've ever played the classic *The Legend Of Zelda* on the classic 8-bit Nintendo, then you're probably familiar with this phrase (and if not, please bear with us, because we promise we're going somewhere with this). For the uninitiated, these are the words, Link (the main protagonist) hears from a shopkeeper who grants him his first sword before embarking on a treacherous quest to rescue Princess Zelda. Shortly thereafter, the player is faced with overwhelming challenges, scarce resources, and no single path to victory.

Sounds like many of our first journeys into content marketing. Right?

In fact, if you're just getting into the content marketing game as a solo blogger or lone in-house practitioner, you can probably relate to Link more than you might realize. That's because squaring off against better-financed competitors across a complex content marketing landscape can often feel like warding off monsters while wandering the desert with little more than your wits. Executing a comprehensive content strategy while under pressure to deliver results without an ideal toolset or a roadmap to victory can be stressful (and a lot less fun than any video game).

Fortunately, it is possible to succeed at content marketing on a limited budget.

The key is to think like Link by making the most creative and efficient use of what you do have until you've got the strength to go toe-to-toe with bigger adversaries. The only difference between you and Link is that you'll be solving business problems instead of puzzles and slaying your competition instead of vicious monsters along the way.

This Guide Will Help You Slay The Monsters Of Competition

Find Your Bearings With A Simple Content Audit

If you're working with an existing website or blog, especially one that has been around for a long while, then your first step is to figure out exactly what content you already have (and how much of it is still useful). Think of it like giving your wardrobe a solid spring cleaning, with boxes for things to keep, things to patch up or update, and things to get rid of.

Keep track of your progress with a simple spreadsheet. List all your URLs, page titles, and the following columns:

Keep	Consolidate	Update	Remove
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- Balance speed with relevancy.
- Focus on posts or URLs that have the highest relevance for your readers to keep, and those that are objectively outdated or no longer relevant to get rid of.
- Don't burn yourself out by sorting through every URL on your domain.

Play To Your Strengths & Focus On The Right Channels

Once you've got a clear idea of what is already on your blog or website, your next step is:

1. Determine which channels you want to create fresh content for.
2. Consider which social media platforms are best for your needs.
3. Consider other content channels that you might want to share your content on.

With so many different platforms available, it's easy to start feeling some option paralysis.

- Focus on the channels that will deliver the most impact for your business and that you have time to invest in.
- Concentrating your efforts in a few areas may yield stronger returns than splitting your attention between more platforms than you can manage.

Social Media Tips

Choose the right social platforms.

- Some people are successful on certain social platforms. Play around with the social platforms to see which you like best.
- Which social platforms are your competitors on?

- Try not to overwhelm yourself with every new social media platform that becomes available. It can be exhausting.
- Post regularly on the different social media channels. Becoming stagnate can hurt your brand.

Email Marketing Tips

1. **Don't be boring!** What bothers you most about emails you've receive?

Are some hard to look at because there is nothing interesting being shared?

Are there no pictures?

Write down what boring email marketing things bother you:

Now, don't do those things..

2. Look at the emails you always have to open.

Why are they so good that you have to open them? Write down all the things that you like about the emails!

Now, how can you implement those things? Make a list:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Establish A Posting Schedule

While there aren't many hard and fast rules for how often you should post on any particular channel, it's important that you keep them all updated on a regular, predictable basis.

Tips For Setting Up Your Posting Schedule.

- Be consistent (make sure users can reliably expect new content)
- Be social (follow up on user comments and replies)
- Be persistent (don't allow social accounts to stagnate)

What are ways you can be more consistent?

What are ways you can be more social?

How about ways for you to be more persistent?

Work Smarter, Not Harder To Generate Content Ideas Faster!

Generating ideas for unique and interesting things to write about isn't easy. However, there are ways to speed up the process while avoiding the time and soul-sucking dread of writer's block.

1. Monitor Social Media Within Your Topic/Industry

What topics are buzzing on Twitter within your industry or niche?

What are your Facebook fans discussing on your page?

Listening in to social media chatter can give you a good idea of what your audience might be interested in reading about, as well as what questions or concerns they may have that you can create content to address.

2. Google AdWords Keyword Planner

You know your website and blog content needs to rank in search engines to bring in traffic.

- Check out the Google Adwords Keyword Planner to get an idea of what keywords you want to use.
- Keep in mind this tool reports how many times a keyword has triggered a pay-per-click ad on Google, rather than the total number of searches it has received in general.

(It's useful for getting a ballpark idea for which keywords you should target for organic traffic as well.)

3. Google Trends

Creating content that provides an original take on a trending topic is an excellent way to drive traffic to your blog. If you think you've got a good idea for a post, or need some assistance coming up with timely posts, try Google Trends. It's a useful tool for monitoring how many news headlines have appeared around your chosen keyword, as well as seeing which searches are most popular on Google at the moment.

4. Do Some Competitive Analysis

If you notice a high number of blogs or websites writing about a particular topic, it's probably because there's a lot of reader interest in that subject.

- Check out what other sources are writing about.
- Identify what's popular.
- See how you can make your own post unique or more useful.

You can do this by digging deeper into the research, including something that's missing from other posts, or simply adding your own voice to the conversation. This will help you tap into what your audience wants to read, and drive more traffic by providing a more authoritative resource than your competition.

5. How To Scale Content Creation On A Budget

What ways can you reuse your content across different channels?

Who could you enlist (or hire) to generate more content?

6. Content Curation

If you don't have much time to create content of your own (and even if you do), then leverage someone else's. Now, this doesn't mean you should go out and steal other people's work. Rather, content curation simply describes the process of gathering and sharing content around a topic from other sources, and adding your own commentary or insight.

- Share content from authoritative sources.
- Include your own thoughts and insights.
- Stick to sharing what's relevant to your audience.
- On a weekly or monthly basis, round up the most interesting posts on your subject or industry. Put them into a blog post or email newsletter.
- You can also re-share content on social media. (Make sure you always give credit to the original source.)

Over time, this approach can position you as a valuable resource to your readers by helping them find the best content on your subject.

Find Guest Bloggers To Write For You

You might not always have time to write on your own blog as often as you'd like. Fortunately, someone out there probably does, and there's a chance they might even want to work with you.

- Cultivate relationships with industry influencers
- Solicit guest writers (you can leverage other's expertise, build connections in your industry, and generate authoritative content while easing your own workload.)

How To Find Guest Bloggers

- Is there a blogger you've built a strong rapport with over social media?
- Is there a particular writer or subject matter expert out there you particularly respect?
- Try sending them a message to see if they're interested in writing on your blog.

Be mindful about not overstepping your boundaries here, though. For example, if your site doesn't generate much traffic yet, then it's unlikely that a high-powered influencer will want to work with you (or at least not yet).

- Add a "write for us" section to your blog or website. There are a lot of writers out there looking for places to get published. Let them know you're interested in seeing their pitches for post ideas.

Repurpose Your Content Across Channels

- Have a great idea for a Facebook post?
Try adapting it for Twitter (and maybe Google+).

- Just posted something awesome on your blog?
Put that in your email newsletter.

- Find opportunities to stretch your content across platforms.
You'll be able to keep your various channels updated efficiently while giving your content maximum exposure.

Don't Skip Visual Content

Creating strong graphics for blog [link] and social media posts quickly can be tough if design isn't your forte. If that sounds like you (and you don't have access to a skilled designer), consider these options:

Check out Canva!

This free web-based service allows you to create images using a wide variety of fonts, backgrounds, and templates. It has its limitations, but its capable of producing some surprisingly strong results in relatively little time.

Info.gram

People love data. People love pictures. Bring the two together with Info.gram. This free infographic tool makes it easy to plug in stats and numbers to create quick infographics and data visualizations easily.

Shoot Better Mobile Video

Video content dominates the Web.

In the recent Facebook algorithm updates, Facebook has given more weight to video on that platform. However, pro video equipment is expensive, and not much use without the expertise of a skilled shooter and videographer. There is a solution to this problem, however, and it's probably in your pocket right now.

Your phone.

While shooting video on your smartphone won't match the quality of what's possible with a real camera, it is possible to shoot compelling footage with one in a pinch. Depending on your business, the more raw, unpolished look might even be perceived as more authentic too.

If you don't consider yourself much of a camera person, try following these tips:

1. Fill the whole frame with each shot.
2. Position your subjects slightly to the left or right (rather than right in the middle) of each frame.
3. Consider using a tripod for balance.

*****EXTRA TIP:** If you can afford one, try attaching an external microphone for better audio quality. Measure Your Success (& Act On Your Data)

Once You've Got Your Content Machine Rolling...

If you're getting a ton of traffic from search engines, then continuing to work on content strategy and search engine optimization is probably smart.

Or, if you notice that certain social media channels are driving tons of traffic while others are stagnating, that might be a sign that you should either focus on the ones that are succeeding, or alter your strategy on the ones that aren't.

Google Analytics

The best content marketing plan in the world doesn't mean much if you can't measure the results. One of the best digital marketing analytics platforms happens to be free and fairly easy to set up (at least at a very basic level).

Google Analytics is a powerful tool with a lot of advanced functionality. Avoid wasting time drowning in data by focusing on the following three top KPIs (Key Performance Indicators):

1. Natural/Organic Traffic
2. Bounce Rate
3. Conversion Rate

Check out SumAll! When time is of the essence, these are the most essential metrics to monitor. SumAll offers free tools (with a paid premium version available as well) to track your social media stats. Between these two tools, you should be more than capable of getting a clear view of how your efforts are performing.

Pay Attention To SEO

Let's get one thing out of the way here: SEO (Search Engine Optimization) isn't dead. You will, however, ignore SEO for your blog at your own risk.

There's a lot of competition out there for premium SEO software platforms. If you have enough budget, plans generally start around \$99 a month and go up from there for more keywords. These options provide powerful capabilities and will make it easier to get more done faster.

If You're Looking To Save Money With SEO

However, we're talking about doing content marketing on a budget here, you're not totally out of luck if that cost is too high. Premium SEO toolset provider SERPS.com has put together a handy resource of free SEO tools, including a handy rank checking tool and more. Consider this option if budget simply isn't available.

Now You're Ready To Do More With Less And Win

This might seem like a lot of work. Frankly, that's because it is a lot of work (at least until you get your plans and processes in place). Once you get your content marketing flywheel moving you should find that you're able to get more done in less time on a limited budget. All you needed was some simple planning, prioritizing, and persistence. Best of all, it won't cost you much (or possibly anything at all), and you won't have to cut (too many) corners to get it all done.

HEAR THE RAVES



"I use CoSchedule to promote every new blog post and to re-promote my most popular posts on a regular basis. It is a one-stop solution, since I can post to every social media channel from within WordPress. It is simple, elegant, and an indispensable part of my toolbox.

— **Michael Hyatt**, *New York Times* Bestselling Author of *Platform: Get Noticed in a Noisy World*



"I need to keep our editorial calendar sharp, coordinate our guest contributors, and make sure we are amplifying our blog posts with social media. For me, CoSchedule does all that perfectly. It's like magic for my blog!"

— **Jay Baer**, *Convince & Convert* Bestselling Author of *YouTility: Why Smart Marketing Is About Help Not Hype*

CoSchedule

The social media editorial calendar for WordPress

The screenshot displays the CoSchedule WordPress plugin interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'WordPress Blog', 'Schedule', and 'Settings'. The 'Schedule' tab is active, showing a calendar grid with days of the week (SUN, MON, TUES, WED, THURS, FRI, SAT) as columns. The grid contains several scheduled posts with their respective dates, times, titles, and social media icons. A large CoSchedule logo is overlaid on the calendar grid.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	<p>8a 5 Tips For Writing Better Blog Headlines Marketing</p> <p>8a 5 Tips For Writi</p> <p>9p Don't Miss: 5 T</p>	<p>8a 5 Tips For Writi</p>	<p>4p Schedule Your Blog Like a Content Pro Content Planning</p>	<p>8a Schedule Your</p>		
	<p>8a Planning Your New Editorial Calendar</p>	<p>10a Grow Your Audience & Traffic Now</p>	<p>9p Schedule Your</p>	<p>8a Grow Your Aud</p>		<p>9p Grow Your Aud</p>