

HubSpot



litmus

Content Marketing

PLANNING TEMPLATES



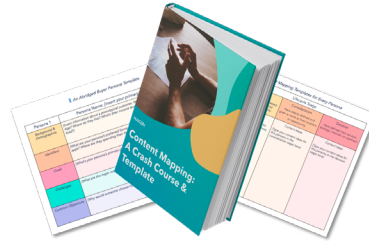
Jump to a Content Template

Content Planning Template

[Insert Campaign Name] [Insert Time Frame] [Insert Goal]						
Asset #1: [Insert Asset #1]	Action Name	Action Description	Content Type	Team	Step 1	Step 2
Example: Plan Ebook Outline		Example: Campaign team to propose an outline for the ebook to support the campaign.	Example: Copy draft	Example: Campaign's Team	Example: Draft of outline due	Example: Edit submitted by content team
Example: Write Ebook		Example: Content team to write the final draft.	Example: Copy draft	Example: Content team	Example: Research for ebook	Example: First draft written
Example: Design Ebook		Example: Creative team to design the final ebook.	Example: InDesign draft	Example: Creative Team	Example: Design mockups prepared & approved	Example: First draft created
Example: Publish Ebook		Example: Publish ebook and promote on site.	Example: PDF document and promo assets	Example: Campaign team	Example: Publish ebook live on our site	Example: Email draft created
						Example: Promote ebook as CTA on relevant blogs

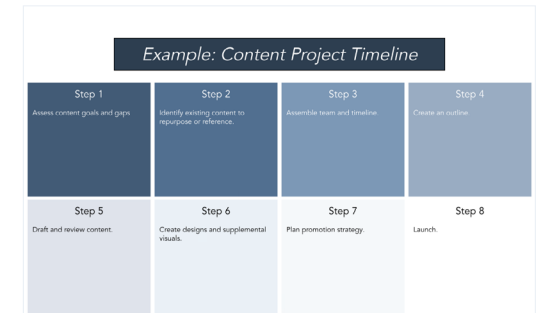
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Content Mapping Template



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Content Timeline Template



Download Now

SWOT Analysis Template

SWOT Analysis			
Strengths		Weaknesses	
Explain the key strengths of the organization. These strengths are internal attributes where the organization stands above competitors, such as intellectual property, its workforce, etc.		Outline where the company might fail or struggle internally. Examples might include a poor pricing model or unclear leadership.	
Opportunities		Threats	
List the external opportunities the company could benefit from, such as a growing demand for its products/services.		Provide an overview of the threats this organization faces. One example might be a new tax on the products/services the business provides.	

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Buyer Persona Template

General Buyer Persona

Sarah Link

Real Quotes
About goals, challenges, etc.

- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here

Goals / Challenges
What does this person struggle with in relation to meeting goals? What serves as a roadblock for this person's success?

- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here

Identifiers
Communication preferences?
Social media platforms?

- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here

What can we do?
Do help our personas achieve their goals? Do help our personas overcome their challenges?

- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here

Background / Demographics
What's their main driving force?
Lifestyle? Age? Income?

- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here

Marketing Message
How can you describe your solution to have the biggest impact on your persona?

- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here

Download Now

Why You Need a Content Marketing Plan

You wouldn't be here if you didn't believe in the power of content marketing. But do you realize just how far its impact reaches? Blog posts you create feed into email newsletters and nurture streams, which drive engagement and retention. You design graphics and guides that make their way across social media and put your brand in front of new audiences. Your content affects the entire company. If you play your cards right, insights you garner from continually refining content can help steer your brand to success.

That's right—every customer touchpoint, including content, is an opportunity to learn.

Taking calculated steps and measuring their success help you detect patterns in customer preferences that you can pass on to other teams. You're kind of a marketing hero, no big deal.

You might be rolling your eyes right now, however. Sure, it's nice to think about what your content program could be, but you're working with real-life constraints. And you aren't alone.

The truth is that most content teams are small but mighty, and having a game plan helps you make the most of your time.

A [2020 Content Marketing Institute study](#) found that:

1/3

of B2B teams don't have a dedicated content team at all.

52%

B2C companies have a content department party-of-one.

69%

of top-performing B2B content teams have a documented strategy.

It's hard to justify hitting pause on projects when you're already behind on writing or struggling to keep up with your team's ideas. Creating a content marketing plan doesn't have to be cumbersome, however, and we're going to help you step-by-step.

How to Use the Templates

By the end of this guide, you're going to have a blueprint for creating an entire content marketing plan. Whether you're building from scratch or just making a few repairs, these templates will help you with every step.

In the coming pages, you will:

- 1 Analyze your current content marketing efforts with a SWOT analysis.
- 2 Define your buyer personas for your content plans.
- 3 Map your content marketing objectives and KPIs.
- 4 Plan your work with a content timeline.



Each template has a standard workflow

Since we wouldn't dream of throwing templates at you with no context, each step will cover the same basic info to help you. First, we'll start by explaining what you're about to work on and why it matters. Then, there will be instructions for each template. We'll also fill out a mock template to help you envision the outcome. Finally, you'll find a blank copy of each of the templates to use yourself.

Who has created these templates?

HubSpot and [Litmus](#) have teamed up to create an actionable guide for content marketers that want to leverage their work fully and uncover audience insights that the entire company can use. Through leveraging channels such as email marketing, marketers can understand what content is most engaging to their audiences and drive their content strategy.

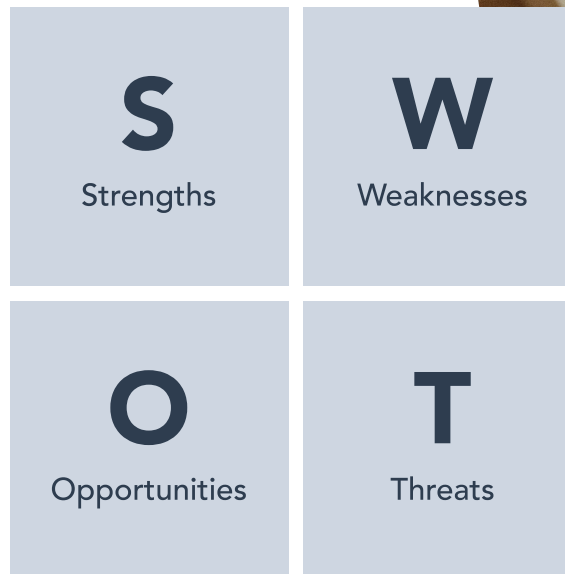
STEP 1

Review your current work with a SWOT analysis

Before you move forward, you need to look around. Running a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis helps you assess your work up to this point. The template allows you to analyze the good and bad, both internally and externally. When you run your SWOT analysis, be sure to consider content's impact on multiple channels. For example, how do you use content insights to inform email marketing strategy and vice versa?

How to fill out a SWOT analysis

The top half of the SWOT analysis focuses on your company, while the bottom half looks outward to the market. On the next page there's some guidance on filling out each quadrant.



Strengths

What does your content team do well? Is there a type of content that your audience loves to engage with? Any tactic, skill, or campaign that has paid off in the past should earn a spot in your “strengths” quadrant. Using insights from your various marketing channels can drive this conversation.

For example, one of the key ways the content team over at Litmus determines the success of their content is by measuring how many views/downloads are driven by email. Being able to see what messaging resonates with your subscribers provides tremendous value as you plan your content strategy.

Opportunities

What market trends could you capitalize on? Look for regulations or industry trends where your unique perspective or expertise can be leveraged. Running a competitive analysis to find untapped topics is helpful for this quadrant. Think about unexplored ideas or strategies you think could work.

Weaknesses

What would you like to change in your content program? Your “weaknesses” quadrant is the place to put tasks you have a hard time with. Write down anything that makes you think, “I wish we could do X” or “Y hasn’t turned out as I hoped.”

Leveraging your marketing channels to understand what did/didn’t work is critical in this quadrant. Be sure to look at a wide variety of channels, including email, social, paid and your website, to get a holistic view of where you can make improvements.

Threats

What does your competition do well? Any outside factor that could inhibit your growth or success should go in the “threats” quadrant. Think about what the competition is doing, plus market, social, or economic trends that may work against you.

One of the biggest threats marketers have seen recently is the increased privacy protection laws going into place. Loss of third-party cookies, [Apple Mail Privacy Protection](#) – how is your company adapting to these changes?



Example SWOT Analysis



Strengths

- We have the budget to invest in expanding our email channel
- There's cross-channel collaboration in the company, and we regularly share wins and insights with other marketing channel teams
- Our customer base allows us to run an annual survey and write a matching report

Weaknesses

- We have a lot of data in many areas, so understanding return on investment and engagement is difficult
- Most of our current content is top of funnel
- We haven't met traffic goals this quarter

Opportunities

- There are a few important keywords competitors aren't ranking for
- Competitor content is typically the same format
- Our product/solution can help addresses a new law

Threats

- A key competitor has higher domain authority than us
- We expect customer budgets to constrict this year
- Privacy laws are making it more challenging than ever to understand subscriber behavior

Turn your analysis into action

When you're ready to turn your ideas into the next steps, use an action plan. It's as simple as reviewing your SWOT analysis to identify ways to act on strengths and opportunities or mitigate weaknesses and threats. Here's what an action plan for the above SWOT analysis could look like:

Example Action Plan

- 1 Set up a recurring monthly or quarterly meeting to discuss trends and lessons with other internal marketing and product teams
- 2 Identify 3-5 bottom of funnel pieces to fill out the customer journey
- 3 Set up KPIs to measure performance
- 4 Repurpose existing content into a video or other unique formats to meet a market need with minimal time investment



STEP 2

Define your buyer personas

Buyer personas are segments within your audience. Your company likely serves groups with varying goals, challenges, and preferences. There are tons of fancy new tools and strategies to figure out your buyer persona – and [one of the best ways to get to know your audience is by knowing your email subscribers.](#)

Defining your buyer personas is a way to categorize your audience so you can cater your strategy to meet unique goals and deliver content on preferred channels.

How to use this template

You have two options for building your buyer personas. The first option is using the [Make My Persona tool](#), which walks you through the process step by step to generate a buyer persona guide. If you want a more hands on approach, you can fill out a [buyer persona template](#).

Talking to customers is the best way to learn about segments in your audience, but you can supplement it with engagement data from your content.

For example, take a look at how long someone spends reading your email, which can be a good indicator of ideal content length preferred by your audience. According to Litmus' annual [State of Email Engagement Report](#), the average time spent reading email is 10 seconds, down by around 15% from last year. Break these details down by persona to garner even more persona-specific insights for your content and where you can make improvements to boost read time and engagement.

The template has sections for the buyer's demographics, communication preferences, challenges, and ways your company can help them. Feel free to create a new persona table for each segment in your audience.



Sarah Link



Background / Demographics

*Job? Career Path? Family?
Lifestyle? Age? Income?*

- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here

General Buyer Persona

Real Quotes

About goals, challenges, etc.

- Your text here
- Your text here
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- Your text here
- Your text here

Goals / Challenges

What does this person struggle with in relation to meeting goals? What serves as a roadblock for this person's success?

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- Your text here
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- Your text here
- Your text here

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*Communication preferences?
Social media platforms?*

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- Your text here

What can we do?

*...to help our persona achieve their goals?
...to help our persona overcome their challenges?*

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Marketing Message

How can you describe your solution to have the biggest impact on your persona?

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- Your text here
- Your text here

- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here

Download template

Buyer Persona Guide

STEP 3

Map your content marketing objectives and KPIs

Every content team has a goal, but they don't necessarily have the same goal. Establishing what success means to you and your company gives you something to compare all decisions against.

Some of the most common ways to measure content success include:



Email engagement: opens, clicks, list growth, and downloads

Website performance: page views, bounce rate, and time on page

Social media engagement: shares, likes, and follows

Search rankings where content ranks organically on search engines

Conversions: traffic from subscribers, sales, marketing qualified leads

The key performance indicators (KPIs) you set depend on what channels you leverage and what data you can access. The top three technologies that B2C content teams use to assist with content marketing are web analytics, social media analytics, and email marketing. These tools correlate to the top distribution channels, too.

You'll also have varying goals for different buyer personas and points in the customer lifecycle, which you'll plot on a content map. The content map breaks down the customer lifecycle for each of your buyer personas (the same ones we created in the previous step).

The customer lifecycle is a person's journey from learning about your company through making a purchase. Three key steps in the lifecycle are the awareness, consideration, and decision stages.

How to create a content map

A content map organizes your marketing strategy across the customer lifecycle. Each map focuses on one buyer persona, so you'll need separate maps if you have multiple personas.

Each objective needs to be a "SMART" goal. These are specific (S), measurable (M), attainable (A), relevant (R), and time-based (T).

Persona 1	Lifecycle Stage		
Persona #1 Name: Big Business Betty	Awareness Have realized and expressed symptoms of a potential problem or opportunity	Consideration Have clearly defined and given a name to their problem or opportunity	Decision Have defined their solution strategy, method, or approach
Problem/opportunity that the above persona needs help with	Wants to boost overall performance	Thinks that cross-team collaboration and data sharing could help	Needs a tool to help teams measure and share campaign results
SMART Objective	Increase new monthly visits to the website by +25% in 12 months	Generate 10% more leads from each whitepaper created in 12 months	Increase our lead to customer conversion rate from 2.3% to 4% in 12 months
Campaign	Create top of funnel content based on expert quotes and interviews	Cross-promote whitepapers through email	Create a bottom of the funnel pillar page with explainer videos
Channel	Social media	Email	Blog
KPI	Monthly unique site visits	Number of leads per whitepaper	Lead to customer conversion rate

STEP 4

Get to work with a content planning timeline

You're almost to the finish line, we promise! Every minute you've invested in planning so far will pay off in the long run. Future you will be grateful you completed this last step, too. Mapping your initiatives and newfound ideas on a timeline makes tackling them all a little less intimidating.

How to use this template

To start creating your content timeline, you first need to choose how far in advance you want to plan. For example, monthly content timelines offer a balance between high-level objectives and tasks to be done. An [editorial calendar broken down by days and weeks](#) is useful for assigning tasks. Of course, you can also plan a few months at a time if you want.

The template to the right shows what types of considerations to take when planning your content calendar to align with overarching goals. No matter which time frame you choose, your next steps are defining and plotting a few variables:

Your **Goal** is a simplified version of a SMART objective that helps you categorize content. For example, "generate 10% more leads from each whitepaper created in 12 months" turns into "100 Leads" for simplicity's sake.

Action Name and **Action Description** are where the purpose of the content asset are placed for quick reference.

Content Type is the format of each piece you'll create including blog posts, emails, webinars, and more. Rather than slapping down a standardized plan to share your post on social media and call it a day, align your format and channel with your goals. Litmus' [2021 State of Email report](#) revealed that email has an average ROI of 36:1, and it's a great place to share content to increase engagement.

Team is the team or person responsible for driving each step.

Steps refer to the work that must be done to complete each action. If needed, you can insert another column to the right to explain any extra steps needed in each stage.

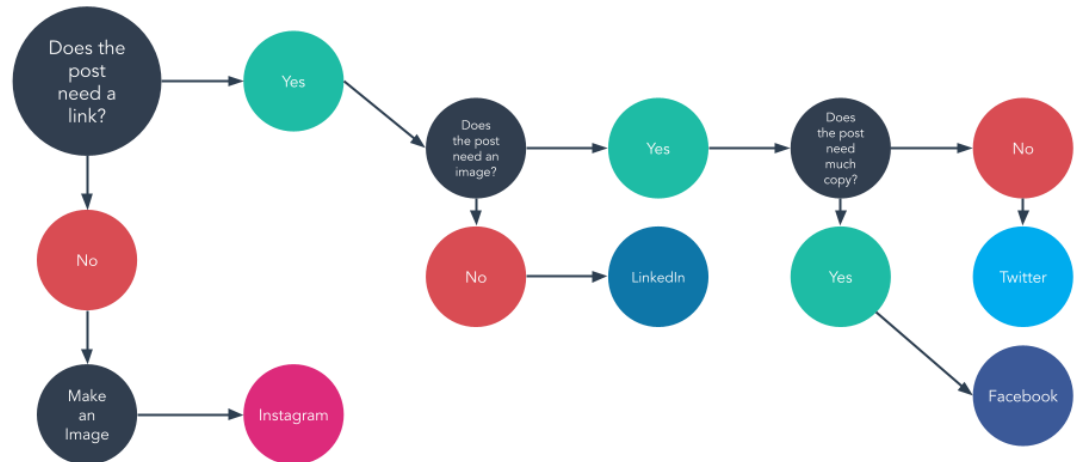
Don't forget to input your campaign name, time frame, goals, and asset names for each prompt in this template.

[Insert Campaign Name] [Insert Time Frame] [Insert Goal]							
Asset #1: [Insert Asset #1]							
Action Name	Action Description	Content Type	Team	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Example: Plan Ebook Outline	Example: Campaign team to propose an outline for the ebook to support the campaign.	Example: Copy draft	Example: Campaigns Team	Example: Draft of outline due	Example: Edits submitted by content team	Example: Edits made by campaigns team	Example: Outline approved
Example: Write Ebook	Example: Content team to write the final draft.	Example: Copy draft	Example: Content Team	Example: Research for ebook	Example: First draft written	Example: Edits suggested by team director	Example: Edits complete, final draft approved
Example: Design Ebook	Example: Creative team to design the finished ebook.	Example: InDesign draft	Example: Creative Team	Example: Design mockups prepared & approved	Example: First draft created	Example: Edits suggested by team director	Example: Edits complete, final draft approved
Example: Publish Ebook	Example: Publish ebook and promote on-site	Example: PDF document and promo assets	Example: Campaigns Team	Example: Publish ebook live on our site	Example: Email ebook to our contact list	Example: Promote ebook as CTA on relevant blogs	Example: Analyze lead numbers, compare to goals

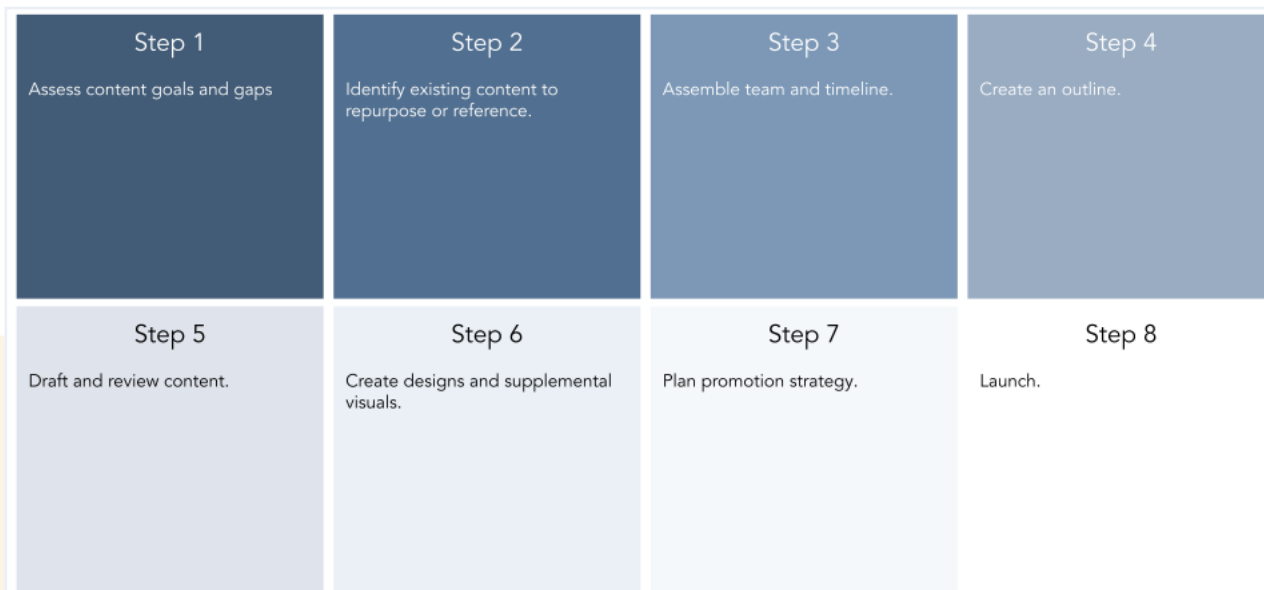
There are plenty of [content timeline options](#) if you want to include more or less detail in your plan. For example, you might have a decision flowchart like below to help you plan how to repurpose content.

Another way that may also help is to break down large projects into steps. Underneath each project step you can outline tasks, deliverables, who will own it, and when it will happen.

Example: Social Media Flowchart



Example: Content Project Timeline



Download templates

Content planner

Editorial content calendar

Timeline and flowchart



The best content plans work across all teams

Content marketing is at its best when it's organized and works across channels. Assessing your current efforts and goals, and taking calculated steps to reach them, helps teams make the most of every minute. It's also best to share what you know.

Litmus is a proponent of using every campaign as a learning opportunity to do better on every send and break down channel boundaries. Over 700K marketers leverage Litmus with their existing email service provider to send better emails, faster.

Why does this matter as you plan for your content marketing? The data obtained through email gives you [unparalleled insights](#) into what your subscribers want to see more of. Everyone at your company is working for the same goal and audience, and communicating beyond silos leads to better results for everyone.

Interested in seeing more?

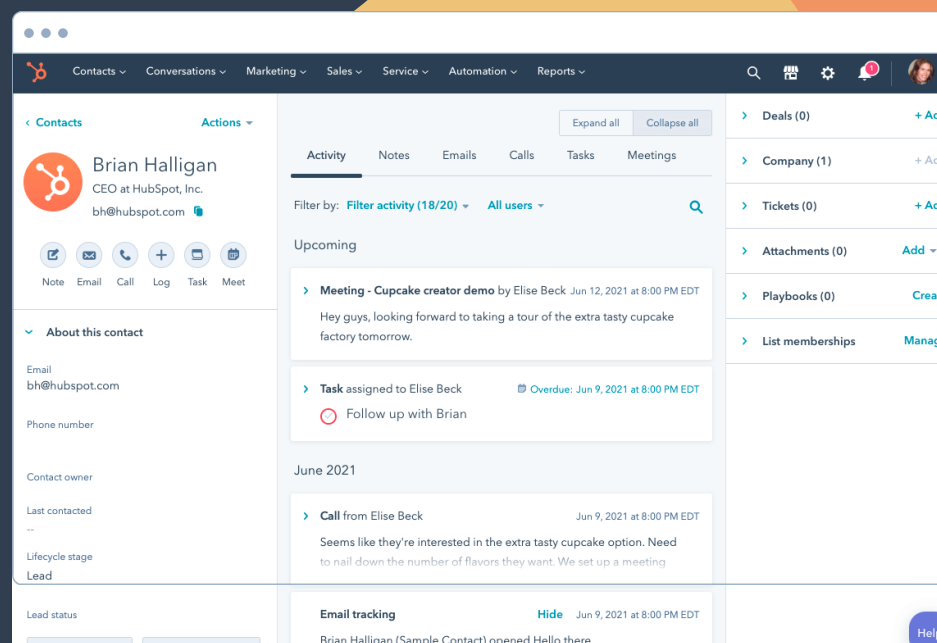
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