

How To Create Your Successful Content Marketing Team





How to Create a Successful Content Marketing Team Who Thinks Like Your Customers

Getting started with content marketing can seem like a simple matter of creating some great content, pushing it out to your target audience and waiting for the clicks / taps / applause / connections. All too often this approach is how content marketing begins. Expectations are high. The content is good. Why are the results so disappointing?

It's at this point of disappointment where organizations frequently abandon their content marketing efforts. Clearly, content marketing doesn't work, right? What if there was a better way to approach to building a successful, sustainable content marketing initiative in your organization?

Content marketing with all of its promise is a relatively new addition to an organization's customer growth toolkit. As this movement continues to evolve, creating the internal content marketing team to support and nurture the changing landscape is essential. Many organizations have shoehorned content marketing activities into existing teams and silos. The result is a series of disjointed activities without the guidance of strategic vision and continuity.

Collaboration Drives Creativity

Many years ago when Quest Technology Group was launched, we started with a small team of developers. We had all worked together at a previous company, and it was easy for us to continue the cadence from that experience. As we grew we found ourselves adding more familiar team cohorts. There was a collaborative rhythm that set our pace for innovation. Each new team member brought with him or her a unique set of experiences and perspectives that contributed to our cohesive spirit.

There was that single think-like-your-customer mindset that drove everything we did. As a result we were rewarded by our customers with [opportunities to explore and innovate](#) on their behalf. None of the solutions we ultimately delivered would have come to life had it not been for a deep sense of respectful collaboration. These successful solutions were the result of joint internal team and customer creativity. Those early lessons in creative collaboration continue to drive our think-like-your-customer methods today.



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Content Marketing Starts with a Content Team

To create a culture that embraces relationship-building through valuable content, the first step in launching content marketing isn't content at all but the creation of a solid team. The size of the organization might influence the number of team members, but **every organization needs a cohesive content marketing team.**

Start small. We've all experienced painful examples of death by committee. The purpose of the content marketing team is to ensure that the strategic vision of the organization is consistently and clearly communicated every time.

The roles outlined here all represent functions that are essential to the success of every content marketing initiative. The focus should be less on formal job titles and more on the functional contributions of each role. It's likely that one person will assume multiple roles at least at first. That's completely appropriate and fits into the "keep it small and focused" model. The main goal is to build a highly cohesive team who will collaborate, communicate and execute in harmony every time.

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Content Marketing Team Roles



Strategic Visionary

Let's start at the top.

We're all familiar with Simon Sinek's [Start With Why](#). All of the best content, tools, ideas and intentions are meaningless without a purposeful "why". The organization's CEO is the strategic visionary who creates the genuine think-like-your-customer culture throughout the

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organization. The organization's customer-centric purpose is continuously communicated to ensure that the content produced across all channels serves its valued customers.

Team Contributions

- Clearly defines company vision, purpose and goals throughout the organization
- Builds and supports the content marketing team
- Establishes actionable, measurable goals for all content marketing projects
- Gives the team permission to collaborate creatively
- Acknowledges that every initiative might not be a success

Content Strategist

This role title is often used interchangeably with **Content Marketing Strategist**. While these both are focused on content strategy, the **Content Strategist** operates from a broader organizational perspective. This key team member ensures consistency in all content created, produced and delivered throughout the entire organization.

In many SMB companies, the role will likely be filled by the same person. It's important to understand the differences as you set expectations for team success.

Team Contributions

- Published content inventory
- Published content audits for project planning
- Published content models
- Published style guidelines
- Voice and brand guidelines shared throughout the organization

Types of Content

- External communications with customers
- Product and service focused
- Community communications

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Content Marketing Strategist

The Content Marketing Strategist is different in her content focus. She is primarily dedicated to planning and delivering meaningful content to target audiences in each buyer journey stage. She adopts the content strategist's brand and messaging framework for the organization's content initiatives.

A steady flow of valuable content is a key element to a successful content marketing strategy. As we said at the beginning of this post, it's tempting to rush to content delivery. The pipeline needs to be continuously filled with quality content and strategically planned. The content marketing strategist works closely with all team members to maintain a productive delivery plan.

Regardless of team size, there needs to be a content marketing strategist. With a team of 2 or 3, this is even more important. With a small team juggling so many roles, having a carefully designed plan can make the difference between quality content delivery and reactive noise.

Team Contributions

- Active learner and reader
- Creates and maintains the editorial calendar
- Provides a steady flow of useful content across all channels, [buyer personas](#) and buyer stages consistent with the strategic goals
- Keeps designers, writers, editors and web content creators on schedule
- Works with the technical leader on web content timelines and deliverables
- Continually looks for opportunities for process, quality and delivery improvements
- Forgoes traditional thinking to bring innovative delivery ideas to the organization
- Continually gathers ideas and organizes them into a central content library for future project deliverables
- Fosters a collaborative atmosphere to deliver unique content rather than copying the competition
- Knowledge of audience segmentation
- Knowledge of buyer journey stages and related content types
- Applies a creative customer-first mindset when planning useful content

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- Communicates from an educational and informative perspective rather than company sales

Types of Content

- Blog posts
- eBooks
- Whitepapers
- Podcasts
- Webinars
- Social media posts
- Videos
- Case studies
- Research
- How-to guides
- Educational

Creative Leader

This essential role is usually the CEO or CMO. He ensures the consistent quality, visual, messaging and relevance defined in the strategic vision. Every team member regardless of team size brings his and her creative talents to each project. It is important to foster individual creativity within the organization's single vision.

Team Contributions

- Collaborative leadership that encourages individual contributions to achieve strategic goals
- Understands how people respond to visual, written and spoken messaging
- Active learner and reader
- Creative thinker who connects ideas in unique ways
- Continuously observes trends and opportunities for leading rather than following the market
- Understands [buyer personas](#)

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- Understands audience segmentation
- Identifies creative methods to gain buyer attention
- Applies a creative customer-first mindset when designing relevant content

Tactical Leader

The hands-on project leader is responsible for getting things done on time, on budget and in line with the overall strategic performance goals.

Team Contributions

- Project management leader
- Effective team communicator to build ongoing consensus
- Continuously keeps stakeholders informed
- Informs team about goals and KPIs
- Works closely with all team players to ensure ongoing compliance with requirements
- Continually researches, learns and identifies opportunities for process improvements
- Identifies tools and technologies to support content delivery improvements

Technical Leader

Regular web content updates are an integral part of the content marketing strategy. The organization's website is a living, breathing engagement tool. Quite often we see editorial calendars with the usual social media content channels planned, but the website is nowhere to be found. IT frequently exists in its own silo creating a divide between marketing and technologies that can afford real added value.

Team Contributions

- Champions the [lean methodology](#) for web development
- Communicates the strategic goals and success metrics to web developers
- Continually helps developers think like customers

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- Works with developers to identify best approaches to meet customer and internal requirements for web content.
- Keeps development on time and on budget
- Communicates content strategy to web developers to ensure consistency in messaging and presentation
- Works closely with the creative leader to determine the most effective and efficient approach to delivering requirements
- Identifies and communicates opportunities for improvements in technologies, tools, processes and methods
- Works closely with the editorial leader to ensure web development is in line with the content calendar

Customer Experience

Customer experience (CX) is the customer's feeling about his collective interactions and relationship with a company. Customer service is often considered customer experience when in fact customer service is just one aspect of the overall experience. As customers' interactions with a company have become more complex and less predictable, the need for a customer experience program has become more critical.

While the design of an effective customer experience program is the topic for another post, customer experience leadership is an essential role in the content marketing team.

Team Contributions

- Brings a visionary, connect-the-dots perspective to the team
- Uses internal tracking data, reports, disparate data, heatmap data to continuously evaluate and assess customer interactions with the people, processes and systems
- Leads a CX team in journey mapping sessions to identify areas of friction and opportunities for improved experiences
- Conduct surveys and observations as measures of satisfaction
- Communicates customer experience results throughout the organization to continuously champion the think like your customer mindset

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User Experience

While customer experience is the collective interactions with an organization, user experience (UX) deals with customers' interactions with a web site, product or app. User experience has a direct bearing on customer experience so both are critical to overall customer satisfaction.

Team Contributions

- Gathers requirements by listening and observing
- Thinks logically with a “what happens next” approach to product design
- Continuously encourages empathy and customer-centric thinking
- Possesses solid experience with web development and the technologies that support product and services creation
- Translates and communicates requirements to the technical leader and web developer
- Participates in usability reviews prior to delivery

Content Writer

It goes without saying that there can be no content marketing without writers. Creating content that clearly and effectively communicates the organization's message is a talent that might already exist within the organization. If you need to look outside the organization for writing skills, then actively include these resources in your team. Experienced writers who are willing to quickly learn and understand your organization can be valuable additions to the team.

Team Contributions

- Experienced in creating content in the buyer's voice
- Experienced researcher using trusted sources
- Uses storytelling to build engagement
- Develops uniquely engaging stories that are not just copycat materials
- Creates content in a voice, style and content model defined in the content strategy
- Understands the audience and speaks to it

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- Discovers creative ways to deliver engaging content in industries that might not be considered exciting
- Delivers informative and educational content that is clear and readable without fluff
- Understands delivery timelines

Content Editor

All content creators regardless of talent and experience benefit from the editor's review. If you do not have an experienced editor in your organization, you will likely find a resource ready to assume this role. This team member can function as an editor who has broader input into content or a copy editor who focuses on structure and wordsmithing. Regardless of the scope of duties, the important thing is to fill this role to ensure top quality content.

Team Contributions

- Experienced in creating content in the buyer's voice
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Collaborative team member who respects the work of the content writers
- Communicates effectively with team members
- Understands project timelines and the editorial calendar
- Prioritizes recommendations for changes
- Contributes to the ongoing content idea inventory
- Actively reads and explores the work of partners as well as competitors

Web Developer

Since we recognize that the organizations website is an integral part of the customer engagement strategy, the web developer is a collaborative content marketing team member. Developers often think from a largely technical perspective. Shifting that mindset to an outside in view can at times be challenging. The technical leader's role includes continuous nurturing to this attitude shift.

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Team Contributions

- Experienced in a wide range of industry-accepted web technologies
- Experienced in web architecture including database design, reusable structures, maintainability, extensibility
- Ability to focus on deliverables defined by the creative team members
- Adopts the [lean methodology](#) approach to all deliverables
- Understands project timelines and the editorial calendar
- Understands the buyer personas and target market segments
- Collaborates with the user experience and customer experience team members to continuously improve interactions and reduce friction
- Seeks input from the creative and strategic team to ensure technology and vision are always in alignment
- Continually offers recommendations for improvements in tools, technologies, methods and processes

Social Media

The ongoing growth in social media channels creates seemingly endless opportunities for customer engagement. It is all too easy to fall into the trap of trying to be in all places at one time. Unless you are a very large organization with extensive team depth, being everywhere is simply not a practical approach. Your buyer personas are your guiding star in focusing on the social media channels that are right for your organization. Don't be afraid to stay focused.

Team Contributions

- Understands your buyer personas and target markets
- Experienced in speaking the voice of the customer on your chosen channels
- Continuously listens on all channels to ensure you are in the right place with the right message
- Explores new channels and trends to continually grow the organization's reach
- Understands the techniques, tools, technologies and data provided on each channel
- Effectively communicates verbally and visually

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- Collaborates with team members to achieve strategic goals
- Contributes ideas and suggestions for new initiatives
- Monitors competitors social media activities
- Active learner always exploring new techniques and opportunities for improvements

SEM and Analytics

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) are often used interchangeably. According to [Wikipedia](#) “Search engine marketing is a form of Internet marketing that involves the promotion of websites by increasing their visibility in search engine results pages (SERPS) through optimization and advertising.” SEM includes SEO tactics, as well as several other search marketing tactics. These tactics include such things as pay-per-click (PPC) and social media marketing (SMM).

The approach selected for your organization is largely determined by your strategy, audience and where you are currently in your digital marketing presence. This is a separate discussion that we’ll explore in another detailed post. For our purposes here it’s important to consider how this role contributes to the content marketing initiatives.

Team Contributions

- Experience with SEO, PPC and SEM tactics
- Experienced in data analytics tools, technologies and methods
- Understands your buyer personas and target markets
- Ability to look at data creatively
- Identifies trends and anticipates opportunities for change
- Contributes to the digital marketing strategy by recommending the appropriate SEM tactics to meet strategic goals
- Continuously monitors all activities and results against established goals for each deliverable
- Communicates results in non-technical terms to all stakeholders and team leaders

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What's Next

If you've gotten to the end of this post, you may be thinking "Way too complicated. We should just get on with publishing content and see what happens." Here's how you can get started building a content marketing team that is not only less complicated than it seems but also delivers a more sustainable content marketing strategy.

- Start with a success mindset. "We're ready to create even more value for our customers."
- Start at the top of the team member circle. Who is the strategic visionary in your organization?
- Work your way around the circle, and you'll notice something interesting. Every role has some very similar characteristics. Other roles fit into logical groups. As you begin connecting the dots, your team begins to take shape.
- When you come to a role that leaves you with a big question mark, just keep moving.
- If you aren't sure about a particular right fit, that's okay too. Leave it for now.
- It's natural to be thinking "But she is already doing x and y and z. How can she do a and b too?" While these are ultimately the considerations that will help shape your content marketing strategy, they will also provide you with opportunities to look at your organization from different angles.
- Remember "collaboration drives creativity"? If you don't have a best fit team member in house, think about that perfect person you know. Can you build a collaborative partnership with him? The great thing about relationships with people outside your walls is their unique perspectives and experiences. Some amazing results can be achieved through creative collaboration.

Free Resources

[Build Your Content Marketing Team Template](#)

[Content Marketing One-Page Plan Template](#)



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In Conclusion

Building lasting customer connections is an exciting ongoing journey.

Quest Technology Group is here to help you explore, learn and create a successful content marketing team

A person with long hair, wearing a plaid shirt, is sitting on a large rock, looking out over a vast, hazy landscape. The scene is captured in a soft, slightly desaturated tone.

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About the Author



Linda Rolf founded Quest Technology Group in 1991. She has traveled the technology landscape for more than 35 years. Linda has designed and developed enterprise applications for a wide range of industries including insurance, healthcare and private member communities. Linda sees unexpected connections among everyday business and the ever-evolving technologies, propelling Quest Technology Group's clients to new growth successes.

Linda is a passionate entrepreneur, avid learner, creator and connector of ideas and people.