

The Financial Advisor's Guide to

Content Marketing



The Financial Advisor's Guide to Content Marketing



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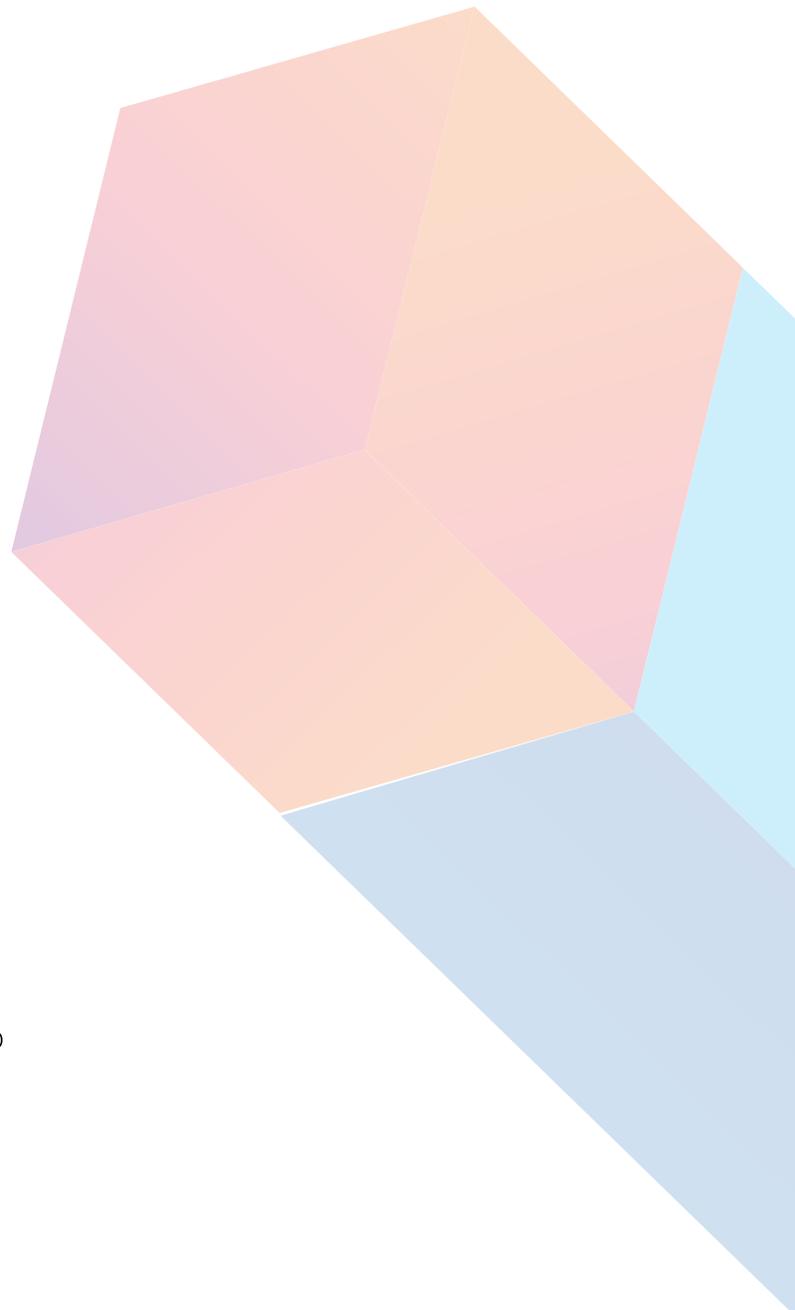
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Introduction

Marketing has evolved tremendously in the past decade – and more importantly ***the way we market to people has changed.***

Content Marketing has proven to be essential in today's marketing world, and a very important element of Search Engine Optimization (SEO). In today's world, people do not choose to do business with you just because you offer the right services at the right price. People will often choose to do business with you because of your specialized knowledge about best practices or services in your industry. To be successful in today's digital economy, many people are relying on their specialized knowledge to sell their business. In other words, people are turning to content marketing. An effective content marketing strategy is about being a part of the conversation.

So, how do you start your content marketing journey?



Introduction

Well, first off...

What is content marketing?

By dictionary definition, content marketing is *“a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience – and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.”* Content marketing aims to attract and retain customers by consistently creating content that is relevant, unique, and provides value. It is one of the most important marketing strategies you can implement for your business as it helps you build trust with your audience, connect and engage with prospects, all while further establishing yourself as an expert in the Financial Services industry.

Content marketing is the technique of communicating with your customers and prospects without selling, often referred to as uninterrupted marketing. Your content acts as a beacon to capture your prospects' attention and answer their questions (even your existing clients) so your potential customers come to you.

Content creation

There is a variety of content that you can create to attract a wider audience of prospects and clients. By creating content in different formats, and publishing through different channels, the chance of your audience finding, reading, and referring back to your content increases. Just as you may promote the importance of having a diverse investment portfolio for your clients, you also want a diverse content library to share with your audience.

To make things easy, start with one idea and decide which medium would be the most appropriate way to share it. Would the information be better communicated as a blog post, an infographic, a video, etc.?

Introduction

Why content marketing?

Content marketing is a means for solving problems for prospective clients, while articulating your brand and expertise in the industry. If you think back to a problem you may have encountered, or a question that came up such as, “How do I stain my porch?” or “What are the best restaurants in Toronto?” Did you search for an answer online? Just as you turned to the Internet to find answers, many people do the same for topics related to the Financial Services industry.

By including content marketing in your digital marketing strategy, you have the potential to be a hub for people looking for answers to their every day questions and challenges.

Getting started

To get started on your content marketing journey, here are some things you can do:

- Find an area that you can be an expert in and use content marketing as a means to solve your target audience’s questions and challenges.
- Make a list of blog post ideas – kind of like an extensive FAQ, or relevant topics that would be of interest to your audience.
- Create a content calendar – this will help keep you organized throughout the process.

4 Keys to The Practice of Content Marketing

Balance Content Creation and Curation

Did you know that original authored content statistically has a higher ROI? According to the Custom Content Council, 2/3 of consumers say that information provided through custom media helps them make better decisions and more than half of consumers are willing to buy from companies that provide custom media. Spending too much time curating content and sharing articles with your audience and not enough time generating your own content, at a regular tempo, is having adverse affects on your marketing. Simply being visible on social media by curating and sharing third party content can impact the results of your efforts.

Why? Well, in short, you're directing your audience's traffic somewhere else. While you may be demonstrating awareness of your industry, the simple fact remains that you are losing traffic with an audience who may be very engaged with your content. Any content marketing strategy must first start with a content creation strategy, no matter what the frequency, as long as it's consistent.

As you ramp up your content marketing efforts, consider placing a slightly higher focus on the creation of content. You might be surprised at the results of your own writing.

Created content is yours

Ok, I've made the case to balance content creation and curation but in case you're still not convinced, here's another point to consider. Always remember that created content is yours, and your voice is unique. No one else has the unique life or work experience that you've encountered. No one has the exact same opinions, perspectives or advice as you. Creating content will differentiate you from your peers (in addition to a good value proposition). And best of all, you can distribute it as many times as you want through as many mediums as you desire with as much frequency as your audience will tolerate. Also, it's completely free!

4 Keys to The Practice of Content Marketing

Curating content with prejudice and care

Every content marketing strategy must eventually have a curation component to it. It is obviously impossible to create great content every single day the of week especially if you have limited time and resources. Curating content will help support your thought leadership position and it will compliment a creation strategy.

Think of it like the accessories you might add to your smartphone (like a case to protect it) or the ottoman that matches your couch. When you share content it helps to show your audience that you have awareness of your industry, as it relates to your practice and business. It also has a branding and positioning effect.

Sharing content about retirement planning, savings and strategies would suggest that you have knowledge of this subject and could also suggest that your business specializes in this area. But (there's always a 'but'), avoid blindly sharing content. Avoid just pushing content, that you haven't read, into your social media accounts.

Most of all, avoid just sharing a link with no opinion or commentary and be selective with the articles you curate. Sharing poorly written content or content that doesn't reflect the "tone" of your brand will have your audience disengage.

Create and Share H.U.G.G.E.R. Content!

Ok, you're probably wondering what I mean by HUGGER. Yes, it's an original acronym created by yours truly. It stands for:

- **H:** Helpful
- **U:** Useful
- **G:** Genuine
- **G:** Giving
- **E:** Educational
- **R:** Relevant

Creating and sharing HUGGER content that helps solve your audience's greatest challenges and helps them achieve their life, career, health, financial (and the list goes on) goals has a positive effect on building credibility, trust and loyalty with clients and prospects. Credibility, trust and loyalty are the obvious essentials to building strong relationships and a growing business.

Old SEO vs. New SEO: Content Marketing

One thing that we know for sure is that what used to work, doesn't work anymore. One of the biggest game changers in SEO over the years has been content marketing.

The old SEO was largely focused on researching your target keywords and then building an SEO campaign around those focused keywords. It was understood that search crawlers looked for keywords in website content, and that it was most effective to use those keywords in titles, meta-descriptions and the first 100 words of an article. Content was created and those targeted keywords were inserted in all the right places. If you were an Advisor that was early to market, and there wasn't a lot of competition around your keywords, chances are you would see some success. Traditional SEO focused more on trying to rank high using target keywords and less on trying to fulfill the needs and requirements of the people using these keywords to make searches.

SEO used to be a strategy that was fairly easy to take advantage of. It didn't take a rocket science to trick Google into ranking a poorly put together website high on their search results page.

But then...Online competition increased, consumer awareness improved, and out went the days of a keyword focused SEO strategy.

Unlike old SEO strategies, the new SEO puts focus on value, quality, and engagement. Keyword research has become far less important than good content marketing and content creation. Today's SEO is a combination of creating and sharing great content. It has become about communicating with your current and future customers without trying to promote your Advisor services, a method of helping your prospects by teaching instead of directly selling. The idea is that if you are creating valuable content focused on questions and topics that are relevant to your business and your client's and prospect's interests and challenges, they should naturally contain the keywords for which you want to rank.

Old SEO vs. New SEO: Content Marketing

Google is now looking for more active engagement with your site's content. This is why unique and valuable content is more effective than ever. High quality content offers Advisor's clients and prospects unique and applicable information that they can engage with, like and share. If more people are liking and sharing your content, you have a better chance of getting ranked higher in search engines than if you were to solely target the "right" keywords.

Additionally, creating high quality and unique traffic helps to drive more traffic to your website, drives client engagement and leads, and has a long-term effect for your web presence.

So, what are three of the most important things Advisors should be doing to get results?

A dynamic website

Search engines love websites that are constantly being updated with unique and fresh content. When content is constantly updated that means that your website is always changing.

When Google spiders come to audit your site to see if anything has changed, they report their findings back to Google; they report back whether your website is of high quality (or not) as a result of whether it is constantly updated with new, unique, and quality content.

A dynamic and constantly changing website is good for you because this not only means that Google will send spiders to your website more often, it also means that your website has a better chance of ranking for your targeted keywords.

Blog, blog blog!

The new SEO is all about great content. New content builds trust and keeps your visitors engaged and coming back. Your blog articles should be focused on quality and share-ability.

Old SEO vs. New SEO: Content Marketing

Be Active on social media!

Social activity allows you to build links and engagement (likes, shares, tweets ect) around your website content. Infographics, eBooks, guides, webinars, how-tos, case studies, interviews, research and original data, reviews...are all great ways to share information and insights.

Today, SEO is in large part a byproduct of excellent and unique content. By taking time to invest in sharing and creating high quality content, you can educate your clients and prospects, and build a credible, industry-leading business in the process.

I think this is a win-win that we can all agree on.

How to Come Up With Blog Topics in 60 Seconds

Blogging is an extremely useful digital marketing practice that can generate valuable leads by attracting new traffic to your website. If you're not blogging, it's time to get started, or get left behind. If you need some inspiration, here are 6 of the most important reasons why your business should be blogging:

1. Drives traffic to your website
2. Increases your website's rank in organic search results (Search Engine Optimization)
3. Positions yourself as an industry leader
4. Builds trust and respect with your clients, prospects, peers and competitors
5. Retains your current clients by providing free online resources
6. Provides you with content that can be re-purposed many times over

What do I write about? What do I have to say that's important enough to publish? Okay, I've written one post, now what? I can't come up with anything. I'll try again tomorrow. Anyone who blogs, or has blogged before, has experienced this.

Blogging can be an intimidating space. Studies have shown that content creation is one of the most difficult parts of starting and maintaining a successful blog for any business. Nothing is more difficult than coming up with an idea or two to write about. But without topics, you have no articles, content and therefore no content marketing.

If you are having trouble generating blog ideas, try using the quick tricks below. We have found these steps to be extremely effective for coming up with content ideas of our own.

Step 1: Grab a notepad and pen, sit for 60 seconds, and write down as many questions as you can think of that your clients ask you on a regular basis. Don't worry about grammar, or being clever, just write every question a prospect or client has ever asked you.

Step 2: Take a look at your list and answer the easy questions first. What you may not have realized is that each question/answer that you've come up with is a potential blog post. Blogging involves writing about single topics as opposed to writing a long article that covers anything and everything on a subject.

How to Come Up With Blog Topics in 60 Seconds

The questions that you thought of will probably break into many different shorter blog posts.

What do I mean by breaking up questions and subjects into multiple blog posts? Well, let's look at the question, "when can I retire?". Writing a single blog post about this question would result in a post that would lose the readers interest because it is too long, has too much information, and doesn't focus on a single topic of retirement.

To create an effective blog post, break this topic up into a few shorter blog posts covering retirement. Some good examples of this are: "5 ways to save for retirement", "How important is it for you to have a written retirement plan?", "10 things you need to know about TFSAs", or, "what is a TFSA and how does it work?"

If you follow these steps, you will be amazed at just how many questions and ideas come to mind. Following these steps will also help you to start thinking like your prospects and clients, and answering questions with content that provides real value to them.

Great content can be one of the best sales tools because it is still working even when you aren't around, by teaching and moving prospects in the right direction, and positioning yourself as a thought leader.

The blogging space is big enough for everyone to be successfully involved, so start blogging today, or get left behind!

6 Strategies for Repurposing Your Content

If you are constantly looking for new content ideas and blog topics with which to engage your target audience, you could try digging a little closer to home.

What many Advisors don't realize is that they have valuable, ready-to-use content right at their fingertips. After all, we all know that content marketing can take a considerable amount of time and it isn't always possible to be pumping out new content on a daily basis.

Fortunately, great content can be repurposed into something new and different, and extend your content's longevity while also maximizing the reach of your content's idea.

Content repurposing involves taking your work and adapting it to a new content angle or format. Incorporating this approach into content marketing can help to expedite production and increase audience reach and effectiveness. In addition to saving some time on content production, repurposing your content into different formats means being able to focus on different aspects of your content.

For example, a blog post may focus on explaining some concepts of the topic, while an Infographic may focus on a different angle of the topic such as stats or data analysis.

Some visitors prefer visual over text, while some would choose eBooks over webinars. Reformatting your content in different formats means appealing to more audiences and extending your reach.

Content repurposing also gives you a second chance at promoting your content and ensures that visitors who missed your content the first time around have a chance of seeing it in round two, or three.

Below, are 6 strategies that Advisors can use to repurpose their existing content in order to get the most mileage out of their content marketing.

6 Strategies for Repurposing Your Content

Types of Content Repurposing

Newsletters

Pushing out your content to your client and prospect list is a must. eNewsletters are one of the easiest ways that Advisors can repurpose their content in an effective and easy way in order to engage their audience. Why not send out an eNewsletter with content that you've already created?

If you are not feeding your content into an eNewsletter, then you're missing out on a way to save yourself a lot of work while also furthering your content investment along the way. Advisors can provide the content in the eNewsletters in its entirety, or offer a quick summary with a link to the original article on your website.

eNewsletters deliver high quality content right to your client's and prospects inboxes, while also driving traffic to your website.

Infographics

Visual content is not only easier and faster for the human brain to process, but it is also a great way to generate more engagement. An Infographic is a great way to present processes, statistics and other content that lends itself more to visual presentation. If you have existing content that explains a topic in a step-by-step way, shows a process, or has some interesting statistics and analysis, think about how you can present this content as a visual story.

eBooks

Repurpose your blog content into an eBook. You can create eBooks by compiling all of the blog posts you've written about a certain topic and add additional components such as a table of contents and images. eBooks are considered to be high-value pieces since they usually include more detail than blog posts. When offering an eBook, you may be able to collect visitor information in exchange for access. eBooks are a great way for Advisors to collect information from prospects who are visiting their website.

6 Strategies for Repurposing Your Content

Webinars

Whether you're walking your audience through some tips, a process, presentation or concept, webinars are a great way to present your existing content in an interactive online experience while also building a subscriber base for future content.

Holding a webinar is also a great way to introduce yourself and your business, and start building a brand name. The audience can put a face to your business as well as interact with you through real time question and answer periods. Not only is a webinar an effective way to repurpose content, it also helps to build credibility and creates a connection and trust between yourself and the attendees.

Social media posts

Take your blog posts and turn them into small snippets of your content on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, linking them back to the original post. Social media gives you the opportunity to create conversations around the content. For example, if you've written an article on retirement planning, tweet the question, "How

can you balance saving for retirement without sacrificing today's priorities?" with a link to your article. This will not only get people looking at your content, but will also help to drive engagement.

SlideShare/presentation

Make a list of bullet point takeaways from your content or blog articles that people will get from reading it. Perhaps it is the main idea of the post, a statistic or quote, a supporting idea or an actionable tip. You can create a new slide for each bullet point that you listed from your blog post, grab some images for each point, and turn it into an insightful PowerPoint presentation. Speakers will often put their slide decks on SlideShare and the content will do really well for those who couldn't attend a webinar, or a speaking event. SlideShare is a slide hosting service. Users can upload and create slide decks from their PDFs or PowerPoint presentations. SlideShare has a strong community so you should be able to get some search traffic from within the community and from search engines. You can also embed your SlideShare presentation into one of your web pages.

6 Strategies for Repurposing Your Content

In summary, the benefits of content repurposing include:

- Makes the most of your content, ideas and research.
- Focuses on different aspects of your topic or presentation.
- Reaches different audiences by offering your content in different formats and publication periods.

So, how can you get started with repurposing your content? Start by taking an inventory of all of your existing content whether it is blog articles, brochures, videos, etc.

Create a spreadsheet where you can list all of your existing content and ideas on how this content can be split up or repurposed into a different format.



Toronto, Canada

1.888.706.2817

