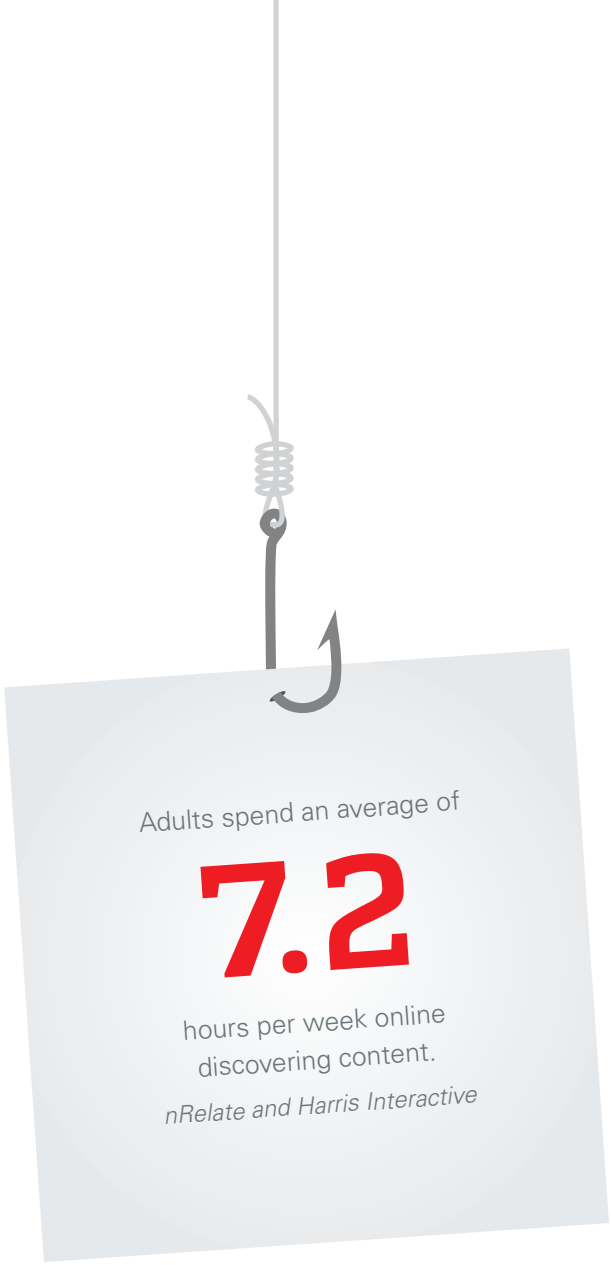


Solve Your Content Crisis

with Four Essential Strategies

Reaching customers, engaging them, and growing your business through content marketing—don't let these goals intimidate you. Find out why, with a fish story.

ORACLE
MARKETING CLOUD



Remember The Good Old Days?

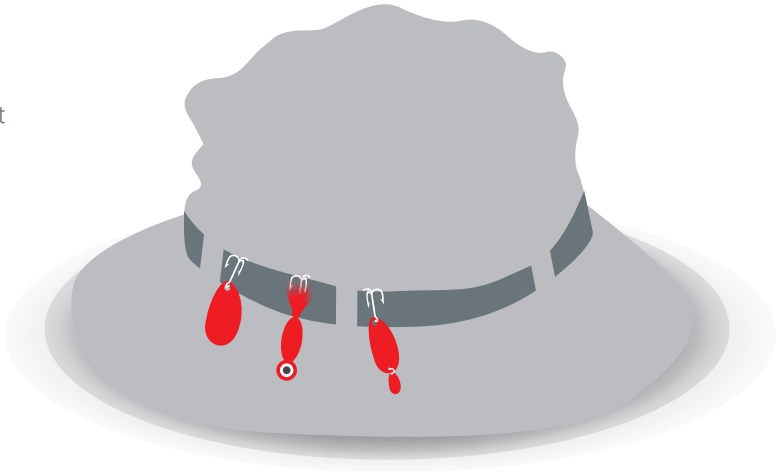
You'd develop a print ad campaign, billboards, and radio spots—television ads if you had the budget. And to get close and personal with customers, you mailed out a quarterly newsletter and some postcards. A handful of channels—nothing overly complex.

And then came the internet. Now there are information-hungry people all over the world searching for answers on Google. There are also millions upon millions of social media posters, tweeters, bloggers, and commenters who want to share their two cents—along with content—with all of their friends. This means your brand is most often discovered online. But to be discovered, you need content—lots of it. And it has to be valuable to your customers.

To help you wrap your head around the complexities of this issue, this paper will take you through the content marketing math and then provide step-by-step advice on how to make the numbers work in your favor. Always fish where they're biting, right?

When you see the volume necessary to make an impact, you may fear you're in the midst of a content crisis. But you're not. Effective content marketing leverages assets within your organization that you may not be considering.

It Starts with Key Word Research



Imagine you're the owner of a sporting goods store that specializes in clothing, gear, and travel excursions for individuals who love to fish. With more than 3 billion searches a day on the web, according to Comscore, it's clear that having meaningful content on your website will help prospective customers find you.

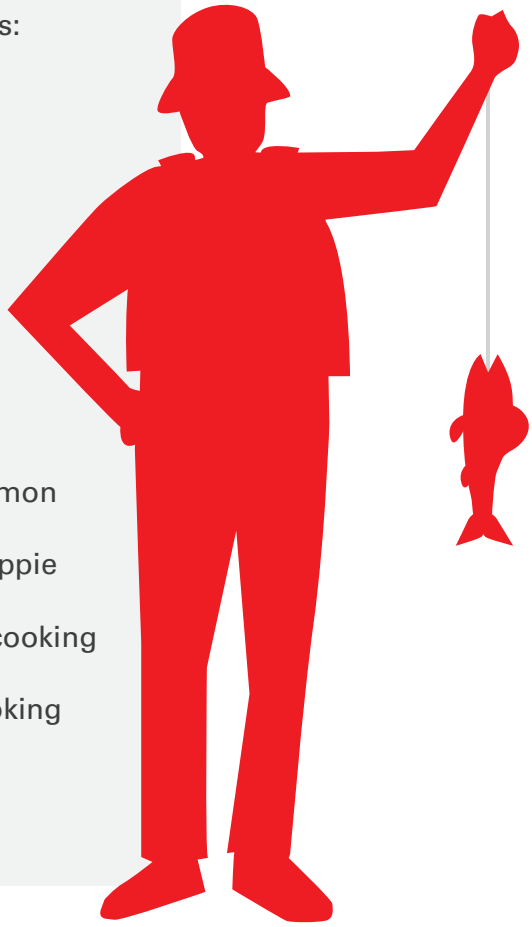
So, let's say you decide to start your content marketing effort with 30 fishing-related stories—a solid base. Rather than guess at what consumers will want to read about, conduct keyword researches to find out what they're really looking for and then build your list of topics around the most popular search terms and phrases.

Tools you can use include Google Adwords, a free, easy-to-use option. Using our fishing outfitter scenario, use the Keyword Tool (under Tools and Analysis). Type in a word or phrase you think a person might use such as, "best places to fly-fish." The tool will tell you how many people are searching for that specific term and will share similar keywords.

Search phrases that are three words or more are called "long-tail," and they comprise 70 percent of search traffic. Beyond just helping you improve your search rankings, integrating long-tail terms into your content also drives more qualified leads because long-tail searchers are looking for very specific information. Crafting your content around these terms means you're delivering exactly what people want. Visitors generally clock more time on a site when they find content they need—and Google rewards that stickiness.

As an example, we used a mix of keywords and long-tail terms in the following story topics. Depending upon how frequently you're updating content, by consistently integrating the most-searched phrases into your article headlines, you could experience possible search volume in the millions.

1. 35 fishing tips
2. We share the best bait for fishing
3. Reel 'em in with the best fishing lure
4. Fishing jigs: Experts pick the best
5. How to read fishing reports
6. Charter fishing trips for all skill levels
7. Saltwater fishing: Everything you need to know
8. Freshwater fishing: Tips for every skill level
9. Fly-fishing for beginners
10. Learn to fly-fish: The 7 things you need to know
11. Fly-casting like a pro
12. Fly-fishing videos for fishers of every level
13. Fly-fishing magazine: Why you need a subscription
14. Fly-fishing gear: Everything you need
15. Fly rods: What to look for
16. Fly-fishing and fly-tying: Expert tips
17. Fly-fishing for trout
18. Fly-fishing in Montana
19. Fly-fishing Colorado
20. Fly-fishing Canada
21. Fly-fishing Scotland
22. Fly-fishing guides: Hiring the best
23. Bass fishing tips
24. Pike fishing tips
25. Northern pike fishing tips
26. Tips for catching catfish
27. How to catch salmon
28. How to catch crappie
29. Prepare fish for cooking
30. Fish recipes: Cooking your catch



Content Marketing Math: 30 Stories

Target Your Content

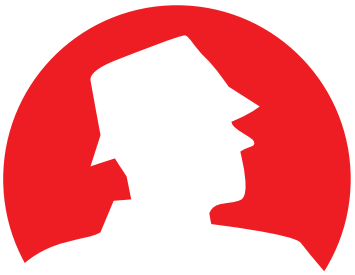
So, you have 30 topics based on solid keyword research—fantastic. But think about your customer base. It's vast, right? As an outfitter for fishing enthusiasts, you attract everyone from the guy who lives by a lake and goes out every weekend, to the buddies who enjoy once-a-year excursions where reeling 'em in and knocking 'em back take on equal importance.

Successful content marketing depends on connecting with customers through stories, videos, podcasts, infographics, and other content that address their specific wants and needs. So you need to segment your customer base into those key groups that will drive the greatest sales results.

That's where personas come in. Archetypal characters defined by demographic information and behavioral characteristics, personas serve as guideposts for creating highly tailored story topics. Instead of just loading 30 general fishing stories to your website, you create unique topics that appeal to the preferences of each of your personas.

A business can have dozens of personas. Narrow yours down to about three to five at the start of a content marketing program, and track customer responses over time to see if there is room to add more.

The fisher personas might include:



Bud White:

A 60-something guy who has fished all his life and loves nothing more than heading to a lake, a river, or an ocean on vacation to fish the days away.



Wade Smith:

A weekend warrior who enjoys all manner of outdoor sports with his friends—including fishing.



Lucy Anderson:

One of 17 million licensed female anglers in the US.



Content Marketing Math

30 stories

x **5** personas

= **150** content elements



The Fisher Family:

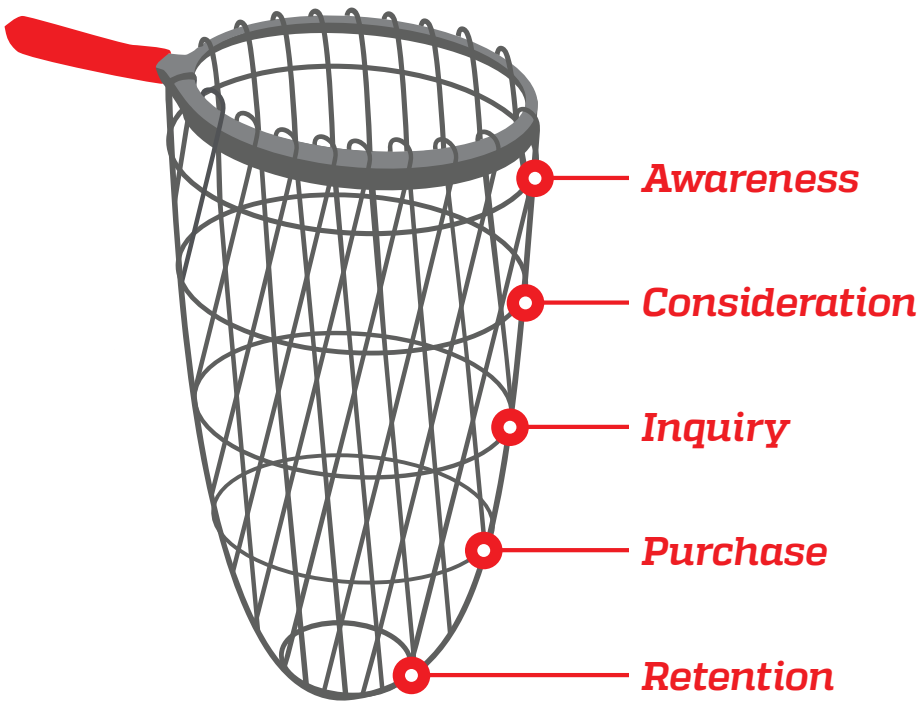
A close knit clan that's passionate about camping, hiking, fishing, and exploring the great outdoors.



James and Joey Langston:

Father and son who love spending quality time together enjoying this leisurely sport.

Fill Your Funnel



With any content marketing program, you want to set goals that can be tracked and measured to determine a return on your investment. So, in addition to segmenting customers and delivering tailored stories to each group, you also need to think about where they are in your sales funnel. Are they not yet familiar with your brand, so you need to create general awareness? Are they considering your store as a place to shop for their fishing gear? Have they inquired directly about a product or service? Are they customers who recently made a purchase? Do you want to retain them and do some cross selling?

At each of these funnel stages your personas will have different things on their minds, which you can address with more tailored content.



Package Your Content for a Variety of Channels

Now that you have all that content on your website, people will start to find you when they search. But there are other channels you can target to drive further engagement and fill your funnel. For example, targeted e-mail newsletters that tease relevant content are an effective tool for driving website traffic—they drive 208 percent higher conversion rate than batch-and-blast, according to Marketing Sherpa. You can work with fishing bloggers to share your content in exchange for links back to your site. Instead of running plain-old banner ads proved to be minimally effective, you can use the banner space to tease your content—again, driving traffic. And of course, promoting content on social media channels will do double duty: It will drive direct traffic to your website and—if your customers happen to share your content with their friends—it could further enhance your Google ranking. After all, Google rewards companies for producing content that gets around.

Of course, all of this requires even more content. As a best practice, Facebook and Twitter alone require a minimum of four posts a day. And a monthly e-newsletter program should tease at least four or five stories with each issue.



Don't Sweat It

Nearly 1,000 content elements and 1,520 posts—by now your heart is racing. But take a deep breath. Generating and managing all that content is not that hard. It just requires a methodical approach, broken down into four straightforward steps:



Step 1: Develop Your Strategy

Which people are you trying to reach and what actions do you want them to take as they work through each phase of the sales funnel? Put this in writing. Create your personas, map them to the funnel phases, and then identify specific actions that you can track to determine the ROI of your program. Every type of business measures different metrics. Here is a selection of some of the most common:

- **Reach.** This metric measures the total of a company's e-mail database, social media following, blog subscribers, and anyone else touching your content or marketing messages. The key: It measures the very top of the sales and marketing funnel.
- **Leads generated.** This is the most typical marketing metric because it's important. The key: A lead, with contact information, can be moved all the way through the funnel.
- **Visit-to-lead ratio.** This measures how well offers and Calls-to-Action work. The key: It shows the quality of the marketing content—or lack thereof.
- **Lead to marketing-qualified lead (MQL) ratio.** You need to know how effective you are at converting leads beyond simply gathering contact information toward qualification. The key: Quality MQLs move further down the sales funnel toward becoming actual customers.
- **Lead-to-customer ratio.** This single metric tells you the overall effectiveness of your sales and marketing funnel. The key: While the other metrics track the various stages of the sales pipeline, this number helps everyone understand how the sales and marketing team is doing.
- **Average deal size.** Number of customers is important, but revenue is the ultimate goal. The key: Increasing average revenue per customer account improves financials all by itself.
- **Revenue.** This is, literally, the bottom line of the entire sales and marketing team. So measure it both at the end of your sales cycle and also throughout the month. The key: Revenue metrics will tell you if you are on target to reach your goals—or not. No surprises.

Step 2: Create Your Editorial Calendar



With your personas mapped out and metrics defined, you can build an editorial calendar of story topics. This is where your keyword research comes into play. Build a six-month calendar based on a mix of keyword driven topics and purely creative ones that you feel in your gut customers will like. Then, as you review your analytics, refine your editorial calendar to deliver more of the content that appeals to your customers and less of the stuff that isn't generating interest.



Step 3: Recruit the Players

Any truly effective content marketing program requires a leader, and it's recommended that you put someone in charge of this effort. Call the person a chief content officer, content strategist, or simply content editor. Whatever title you give this person, it should be someone with a solid track record of at least a decade developing content for both print and digital platforms. The print experience is important because it's a sign that the candidate was trained as a traditional journalist and their storytelling standards are high. It also means the person can look beyond purely digital platforms to extend your brand stories in a multitude of ways.

Leadership skills are equally important. You'll want someone who is assertive and who has experience managing teams, collaborating, and building consensus within organizations.

In short, this is not a position to fill with a junior staff member looking to rise up the ranks of your organization. If you're serious about content marketing, you need to hire an expert to help lead the way.

Your content leader will be the key to recruiting your contributors—essential for building that volume of content. Among the groups to tap:

- **Professional writers/bloggers.** If your budget permits, you can hire freelance writers who specialize in your industry and who have perhaps even built a name and a following. Our fishing company, for example, could recruit writers or contributors from *Field & Stream*, *Outdoor Life*, *Fly Tyer*, *Bassin'*, or other popular print magazines. Or they could convince successful fishing bloggers such as Keith Barton of Singlebarbed, Ken Sperry of the Fly Fishing Reporter, Magnus Tangen of A Fish Blog.com, or Cameron Mortenson of the Fiberglass Manifesto to contribute. All of these bloggers have hundreds of unique monthly visitors who would drive traffic instantly to your site.

- **Employees.** These are your inside experts. And while they may not all be professional writers, they have a connection and (hopefully) a passion for your business. Staff who recommend fishing gear in a store, for example, could share that same advice in an article that helps someone make decisions online. How do you motivate employees to participate in your content program? Demonstrate how doing so can elevate their stature inside your organization and also as experts in their field. By producing content, they will become thought leaders, making them even more valuable to your organization.
- **Partners.** The companies you work with may relish the opportunity to write articles for your content program, as it gives their business further exposure among your customers. Also, writing for your program will provide them with a way to drive links back to their own website or blog. Where appropriate, consider sharing some of your content with your partners. Let them use it on their own websites to extend the content's reach. Just be sure they agree to link back to your site.
- **Customers.** No one can tell your story better than a satisfied customer. Every content marketing program should be built with functionality that enables you to solicit stories directly from the individuals who use your products and services. Imagine someone who just bought a fishing rod, reel, and lures. She goes on a fishing trip with friends, catches a slew of fish with her new gear, and then shares her story on your website. This type of testimonial not only validates your business and service, it serves to influence customer friends when they share the link to their story on their own social channels.

Recruiting and managing contributors is an important responsibility of your content lead. In addition to finding sources for producing original content, the individual should also be able to look inside your organization to find ways to repackage and repurpose collateral, press releases, annual reports—even e-mails—into customer-focused stories.

54%

54 percent of respondents to a 2013 Technorati survey agree: The smaller the community, the greater its influence among friends with like interests.

How Your Content Contributors Pay Off

You've recruited a wide enough pool to manage the high volume of stories needed to fuel your content marketing strategy. But the variety of content types requires differing levels of effort yielding differing levels of results, which you should take into consideration as you plan your perfect mix.

Thought Leadership	Employee-Generated	Consumer-Generated
Contributors: Senior executives, strategic partners, and industry experts	***Contributors:*** Staff	***Contributors:*** Happy customers
Effort Level: High	***Effort Level:*** Medium	***Effort Level:*** Low
Traffic Level: High	***Traffic Level:*** Medium	***Traffic Level:*** Medium
Conversion Rate: Low	***Conversion Rate:*** Medium	***Conversion Rate:*** High
Long-Tail Search Opportunity: High	***Long-Tail Search Opportunity:*** High	***Long-Tail Search Opportunity:*** High



Step 4: Maximize Your Workflow

Currently the content production process inside most organizations is chaotic at best. A bunch of team members across the organization use a slew of different tools to execute the various stages of the content marketing process, sometimes overlapping each other, sometimes missing great opportunities. It's a shame, really, because Oracle Content Marketing offers a comprehensive content marketing platform—the only tool you need to smoothly manage the entirety of your program.

Oracle Content Marketing is a one-stop shop for:

- Planning editorial calendars including aligning story topics to personas and specific themes and events.
- Producing content including creating original content, repackaging, and repurposing content that has already been produced in your organization.
- Managing the review and approval workflow.
- Publishing content directly to all your key digital channels.
- Promoting content on social channels and through easy integration with all of today's most popular e-mail marketing tools.
- Proving the success of content marketing efforts through built-in analytics capabilities and a dashboard that lets you monitor daily activities across channels.

Content Crisis? There's No Such Thing

There you have it—four steps to averting your content crisis. And they're relatively simple. Approach content marketing in a strategic way, plan an editorial calendar around your personas and sales funnel, assign a content lead to recruit contributors and repackage existing content, and use Oracle Content Marketing to streamline your content marketing workflow. And, with all those lines in the water, you will start reeling those customers in.



Solve Your Content Crisis
with Four Essential Strategies
eloqua.com/content-marketing

Copyright © 2014, Oracle and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

ORACLE
MARKETING
CLOUD