

# Understanding Your Content Marketing Goals Before Setting Metrics

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It's much easier to start a journey if you know where you're going—and much more likely you'll actually get to somewhere you want to be.

**Marketing** has changed drastically throughout the years, but the goal has remained the same—creating long term, valuable engagements with our customers.

Creating useful content and forging relationships with both potential and current customers is now a cornerstone of **marketing**. It's no longer about simply turning heads; it's about also engaging the customer and driving business value.

After all, the buyer's journey doesn't end with a sale. The sale is just the beginning. And, as marketers, our job is to coach customers throughout the course of their journey.

The buyer's journey can be broken down into three phases: awareness, engagement, and business value.

## 1. Awareness

You've seen billboards as you've driven down the highway. You've likely stared at posters when you've ridden the train. And you've certainly come across ads as you've surfed the Web... You know the ones—the catchy cartoon or the all-famous cat photo that somehow holds your attention longer than it should.

Welcome to the beginning of the buyer's journey.

As clever as some of these campaigns are, most likely they leave you wanting more. Probably because too often they don't explain the offering or provide a URL or distinct call to action.

But, hey, if it's catching your eye, then it's a step in the right direction. The campaign has raised awareness of the **brand** or product name in hopes that you, the consumer, will be curious enough to take it upon yourself to take things to the next level.

In other words, the rockets have fired and your **brand** visibility has liftoff.

Good job: you've joined the ranks of the 84% of B2B content marketers who list **brand** awareness as being among their most important goals, [according to](#) research conducted by **Marketing**Pros and Content **Marketing** Institute.

But without a specific call to action, how do you track awareness? A clear CTA is critical to **marketing** success. For example, if you could measure a spike in **brand**-related search traffic or geo-tracking that targets the location of the billboard, that would indicate your ads are delivering the desired impact. Both unique and repeat content views are also metrics that can be used to measure the value of your awareness campaign.

Bottom line: if you don't measure, you can't improve.

## **2. Engagement**

The rise of **social** media has given us a new opportunity for authentically engaging with our customers. It lets us connect, providing a channel for users to consume, share, and join the conversation.

But content must remain at the core of these interactions. For example, if someone reads your thought leadership pieces in the first place, congrats! You're doing a great job captivating your audience. But, if they take it a step further and engage with you on the topic, then give yourself a pat on the back: Not only was the content good but you placed it precisely where a prospect was looking—a sure sign of content **marketing** success.

To prompt readers to further engage with your content, be sure to include the proper CTA, such as "download here" or "tweet this" so that they can be more easily tracked. But why not make it more than just a button? A tweet, for example, could include a link encouraging audiences to download a related asset, share and follow on **social** media, or offer the option to provide feedback in the comments section. When you begin to see those 140-character nuggets float across the **Twittersphere**, you know you've done your job creating something that's compelling enough for others to want to share.

Such engagement should be measured not just by tracking likes and favorites but also by measuring time spent in the link you provided, percent of content scrolled, and number of comments generated—just to name a few metrics. These engagement metrics provide deeper insights into how people are consuming and reacting to your content (so you can learn what works and do more of it.)

## **3. Business Value**

It's human nature to ask, "What's in it for me?" So, before setting out on a campaign, ask yourself: How can my company's resources benefit potential customers? Are we helping them by providing assets such as templates or whitepapers?

When visitors are engaging with useful content—whether they're finding it through **social** media or through Web searches—it's a good indicator that they're interested in what you've got. More weight should be put on that collateral, as it's likely to produce stronger sales qualified leads and influence opportunities and deals. After all, sales is surely among your top five content **marketing** goals, as it is for 94% of marketers, [according to](#) a Forrester Consulting study.

Measuring business value can be done by tracking the number of **Marketing**-qualified leads (MQL) and Sales-qualified leads derived from content, and deciphering whether that piece was a primary source. Also, gauging the dollar value resulting from the content is another important way of assessing business value.

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Though the classifications of the customer journey may differ from company to company, the important takeaway is to understand your content **marketing** goals before setting your metrics. You can then lay down the groundwork for achieving the impact you desire to make and then measure accordingly.

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