

# How to Use the Template



By moving through the stages below, you can build your content marketing strategy that will inform all of your content development and distribution strategies. In each stage, I'll explain the columns you should be working with, and I'll define what those are and give examples.

One of the most valuable functions of the framework is to create a dynamic content mix that aligns with the range of the interest of your audience and your company's expertise and offerings.

## STAGE 1

### Ideation and Strategy

In this phase, you'll focus on the bigger-picture elements that will guide you in every subsequent step in the process of ideating and planning your content.

#### Column A: Audience

Just like any good marketing strategy, you need to start with the audience. With your knowledge of your company's target audience - and/or specific audience personas - map out the various audiences you want to reach.

You can list these out broadly by specifying *industry* or *business type*, and you can get more personalized with *role, job title, seniority, or persona*.

#### Column B: Brand Pillar or Service Offering

If your company has established brand pillars and your content marketing efforts lean towards a broader brand awareness play, you can use those as guideposts in content creation. If not, this column can be used to list all your company's product or service offerings that will guide you in choosing related topics for your content.

The purpose of varying these (and making sure you're covering all your bases) is to highlight your company's expertise and provide value to prospective customers across a range of areas.

#### Column D: Content Channel

This one is pretty self explanatory. Where do you plan to publish this piece of content? Ideally, you will distribute one piece of content in different formats and lengths across multiple channels to maximize its value.

## STAGE 2

# Content Development

With the above columns filled out, you can use those foundational criteria to spur ideas and guide the creation of actual content topics, formats, and conversion goals.

### Column C: Topic

This should be a concise few words on the topic of the content you will develop. Be specific as possible. This column will help you, at a glance, make sure that you're covering a wide range of topics and not dedicating too much content to only one or two.

### Column E: Content Type

What format will this content be in? While this can be an incredibly wide array of types, your company likely has go-to types based on your overall strategy, the channels you publish on, and the needs of your audience. Content types can include articles to videos, social posts, company news, podcasts, demos, and so much more. [See a more comprehensive list](#) of content types here to give you ideas.

### Column F: Desired Action/CTA

Arguably the most important to determine here is what you want your audience to do next. What's the call to action? No matter what the content type, it is essential to think through the appropriate next action for them to take to lead them through the awareness to purchase cycle. These desired actions can include engagement, click through, download, signup, purchase, form submission, social follow, app install, and more.

## STAGE 3

# Content Creation and Publication

Now that you've laid the groundwork and specified a dynamic mix of content types, it's time to create the content and get it out into the world.

### Column G: Key Asset Title (title and link) - *if applicable*

Think of this as a flagship piece of content you create that gets broken out into lots of smaller pieces of content. For instance, one whitepaper may be turned into several blog posts and a number of social media posts. A long-form video gets edited into short clips for social media. If one of the short-form types of content ties back to such a key asset, include that information here.

Columns H-L are self-explanatory. They will help keep your process organized and serve as a reference point for the copy and graphic/video assets you create.

# Final Points

You may find some of these columns may not be necessary, and you may discover you need more for your specific use case. Hide or delete the columns you don't need and add new ones to fit your needs. Think of this template as a starting point and customize it in whatever ways work best for you and your team.

With this framework filled out, you will have a strategic, well-planned approach that will serve your customer and the business — and level up the performance of your content marketing.