



## Planning Your Monthly Content Worksheet

You already know that content marketing is about more than writing a keyword focused article and posting it on your website, blog or article directory. Sure, you can do that. You can write and post and write and post. Some of the articles may help grow your business and drive traffic. Others may not.

However, I doubt you really have time for the “throw the spaghetti at the wall and see what sticks” approach. You want more return on your time, money and energy investment. You want each piece of content you write and publish to have optimal results.

That requires monthly planning and a creating content strategy. This worksheet is designed to help you develop your monthly content strategy. It’s designed to help you make each piece of content you create work hard for you. Combine this worksheet with the corresponding checklist and mind map and you’ll have a comprehensive monthly content plan. A plan that you can create each month that is designed to grow your business.

### Phase One - Your Content Goals

What goals do you want your content to achieve? Each article, blog post, or video should have a purpose. It should be designed to achieve a goal or purpose. Some potential goals or purposes include:

- **Search Engines** – Use keyword focused articles and content to drive people to your site through keyword searches.
- **Word-of-Mouth** – This is content that gets people talking. We’re talking about content that is funny, controversial, touching, engaging or extremely informative. It’s the content that people link to and forward to their friends.

- **Pre-Sell Material:** Pre-sell your readers on your products or services. For example, if you sell an information product about parenting twins and triplets you might write articles on parenting multiples that talk about your product. You can also publish reviews, product comparisons and even case studies.
- **Ethical Bribes:** Quality information can serve as an ethical bribe to get someone on your list. If you sell debt consulting services, give your readers something they can use to learn more about solving their debt issues. For example, a report on understanding your credit, information on how creditors actually work against debtors, etc.
- **Establish Credibility and Authority:** Content can establish your credibility and authority in your niche, so that people will call on you to work with them. Whether it's as a contractor or contributing author, good content can get you noticed. Put together a report, publish articles, make guest blog posts that highlight your skills and knowledge. Just make sure the people who read the content know how to join your mailing list, request your products and services.
- **Reader Satisfaction:** There's something to be said about keeping your current readers satisfied. They come to expect certain quality from you, so deliver that. If you use content to build an audience and generate sales, do it with some consistency. That doesn't mean YOU have to write day in and day out. You can employ ghostwriters, use PLR or guest writers.
- **Customer Relationships:** Content for customers that helps them consume your products, make BETTER use of them and shows how further products can help them is a win-win for all. Provide your customers with a surprise bonus guide that shares stories from other parents who successfully parented newborn triplets (and include information on other helpful products for parents of twins and triplets). Or give them even further strategies and introduce products that will help your clients reduce their debt even faster.
- **A Product to Sell:** Of course some content is a product itself. Sell ebooks, checklists, resources, spreadsheets...whatever satisfies your target market's wants and desires.

What do you want your content to accomplish? Make a list of your top goals and how your content might fit into that plan. Right now you're still in the preliminary phases of your plan. If you have a few hard and fast ideas that you want to stick with, great. Otherwise simply be aware that content with a purpose will perform much better than content without. Your top content goals include:

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## Phase Two –Creation and Distribution

During this phase you'll decide not only where you're going to publish your content but also how much and when.

For example, you may be launching a product soon. You might decide that the two weeks leading up to the launch would benefit by a large content onslaught. Maybe you decide to publish an article, email or blog post each day leading up to the launch.

Each piece of content might be designed to build your opt-in list. Once your product launches you may decide to drive traffic to your sales page through article content, autoresponders and freebie giveaways.

On the other hand if your goal is to boost credibility, client relationships or traffic you may choose a different approach. You might decide to publish one article each week on an article marketing site that leads to a report or giveaway. You might supplement that with a weekly autoresponder message and content or blog posts published directly on your website.

You can use the space below to detail your thought regarding how much content you need to create each month to achieve your goals and also where and when you will publish it.

Quantity	Type of Content	Publishing Schedule	Medium (Where will you publish?)	Goal
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## Phase Three – Research

Research is actually an ongoing phase. When you connect with your followers on social networking site, that's research. Pay attention to the questions they ask. When you receive comments on your blog posts, that is research. It's great fuel for future content too.

Research is also something you can schedule. For example, you can publish a survey to find out what is important to your audience. You can also spend some time on keyword search tools. They're important for providing you with keyword phrases and they also tell you what information your audience is searching for online.

You now know what your content goals are. You also know how they fit into your overall marketing and content strategy. You have a good idea of how much content you need, what type of content you need and where you're going to publish it. How can you tie your research into your content creation plan? There are two ways:

1. **Scheduled Research.** Decide what you need to know for each content type. For example, if you decide you're going to publish autoresponders to drive traffic to affiliate products then you need to provide information your audience will value and credible products to represent.

Keyword research, social networking research and careful attention to your audience will help you create autoresponder topics and headlines. You might sit down for a few minutes at the beginning of the month and brainstorm your topics/headlines.

2. **Ongoing Research.** The other way, and they're not mutually exclusive – you can do both, is to keep a notebook with you. As you come up with content ideas, jot them down. Then when you sit down to create your monthly content plan you already have a head start.

Plan how you're going to research your monthly content. Will you schedule it into your month? Will you keep a journal? Both? What content research tools are you currently using? What content research tools can you add to your planning process?

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As you work through your monthly content plan you may start to feel overwhelmed. It's possible you may need dozens of articles, blog posts and autoresponders each month to achieve your goals.

You don't have to create it all yourself. You can find guest bloggers. You can use PLR and you can hire a ghostwriter to create all or some of your content. You've done the hard work; you've created your monthly content strategy. Now use your resources to get the content creation done.

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