

Content Marketing

Best Practices

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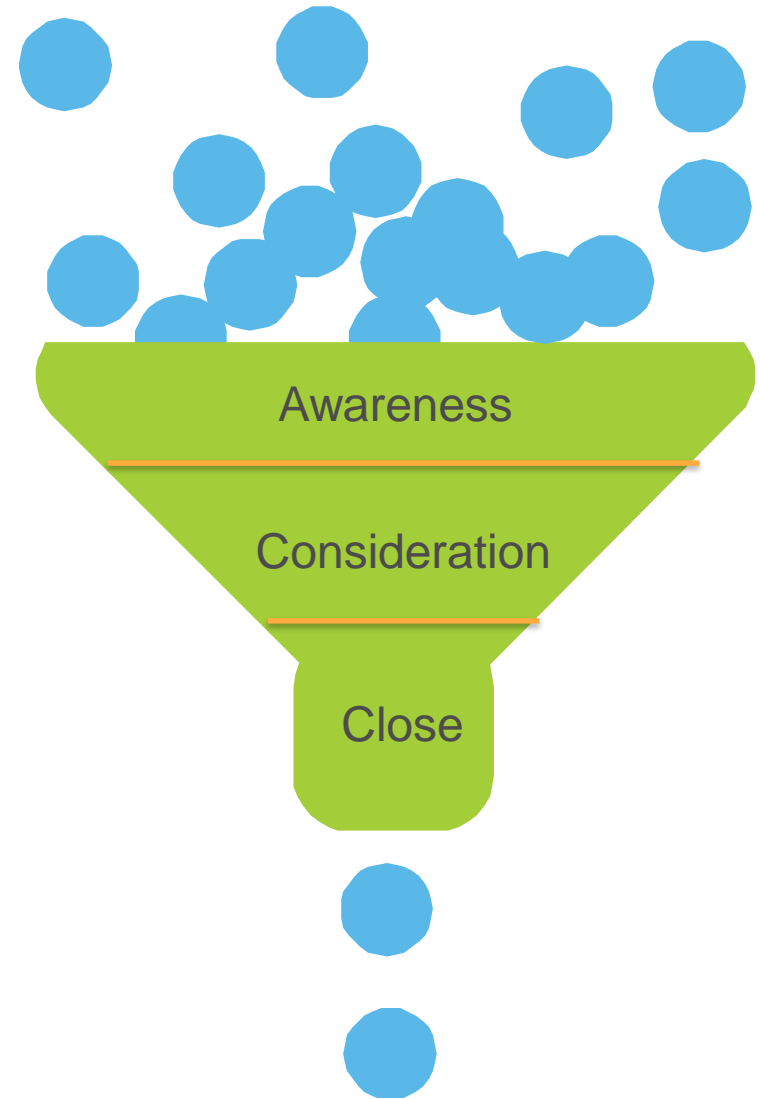
What is Content Marketing?

- Content marketing is the practice of creating relevant and compelling content in a consistent fashion to a targeted buyer.
 - Focuses on **all stages** of the **buying process**, from brand awareness through to brand evangelism.
- Information can be presented in a variety of formats, including:
 - Articles
 - Video
 - White papers
 - Ebooks
 - Infographics
 - Case studies
 - How-to guides
 - Q&As
 - Photos

The 3 Stages of the Demand Funnel

The B2B buying cycle has recognizable stages, each requiring a different approach

Stage	Description	Objective
Awareness (Top Of Funnel)	The buyer is standing at the edge, or quietly wading into the market. The buyer might not know they have a problem.	Content should be educational.
Consideration (Middle Of Funnel)	The buyer has identified a need and is looking for a solution.	Content should answer “why buy you” and “why buy now.”
Close (Bottom Of Funnel)	The buyer will become a customer.	Content should be validating.



Content differs by stage

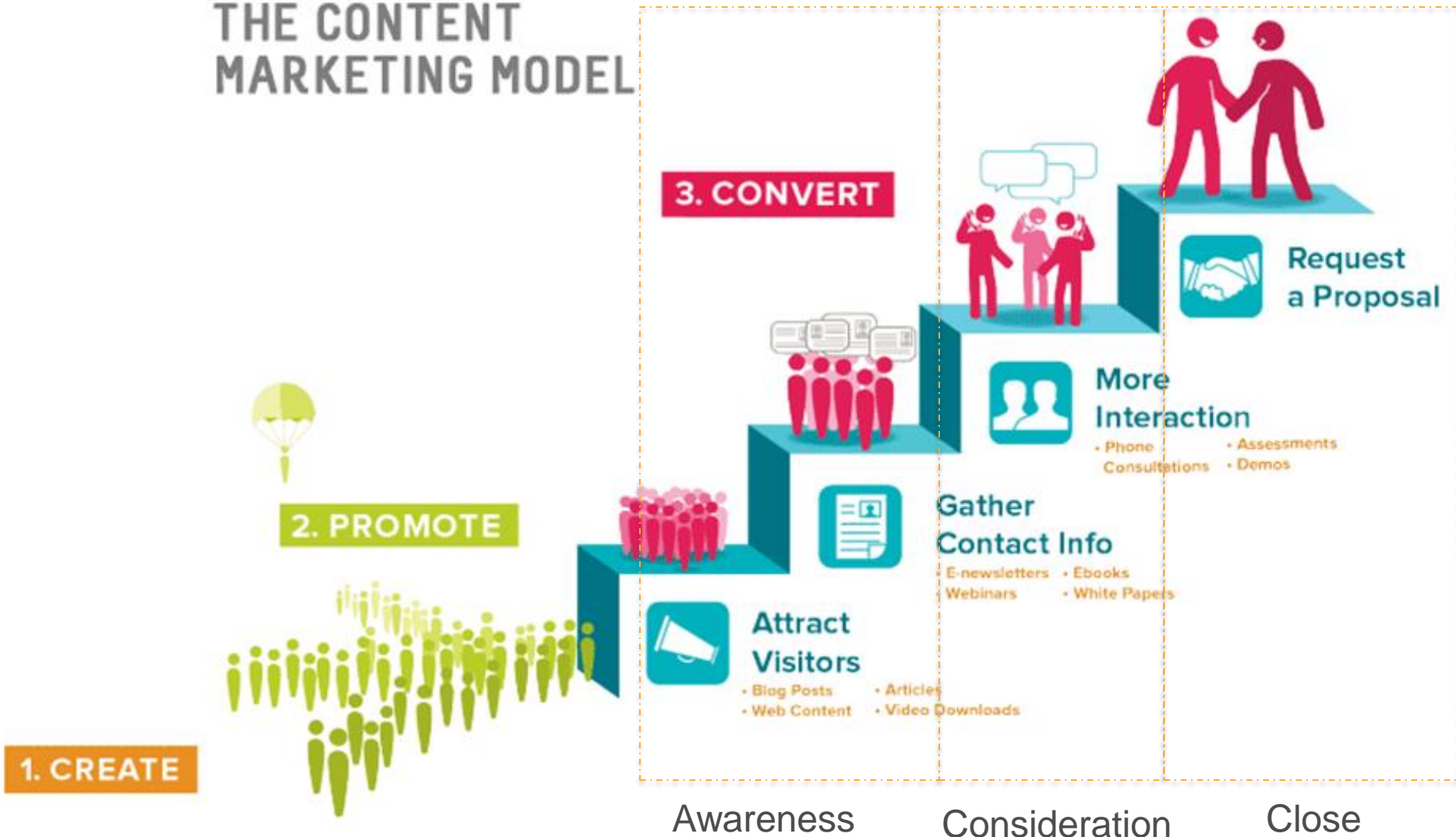


Awareness (TOF)	Consideration (MOF)	Close (BOF)
<p>Goal: Attract qualified visitors through search engines, social channels & surfing.</p> <p>Content Should: Be memorable, shareable, & search engine optimized.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tips & lists blog posts• Curated articles• Free, downloadable guides/reports• Infographics• Meme marketing• Videos• White papers	<p>Goal: Help prospects research the best solution & evaluate your offering.</p> <p>Content Should: Demonstrate your offering's effectiveness & show that you're a reliable vendor.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case studies• Testimonials• Analysis reports• Demo videos• Tutorials• Webinars• Newsletters• eBooks• FAQs	<p>Goal: Help leads buy your offering & make the most out of using it.</p> <p>Content Should: Give leads confidence in your offering & help them understand its value.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Events• ROI calculators• Pricing information• In-depth, how-to articles• Help & support documentation• Special offers• Direct emails• Tools to use the product

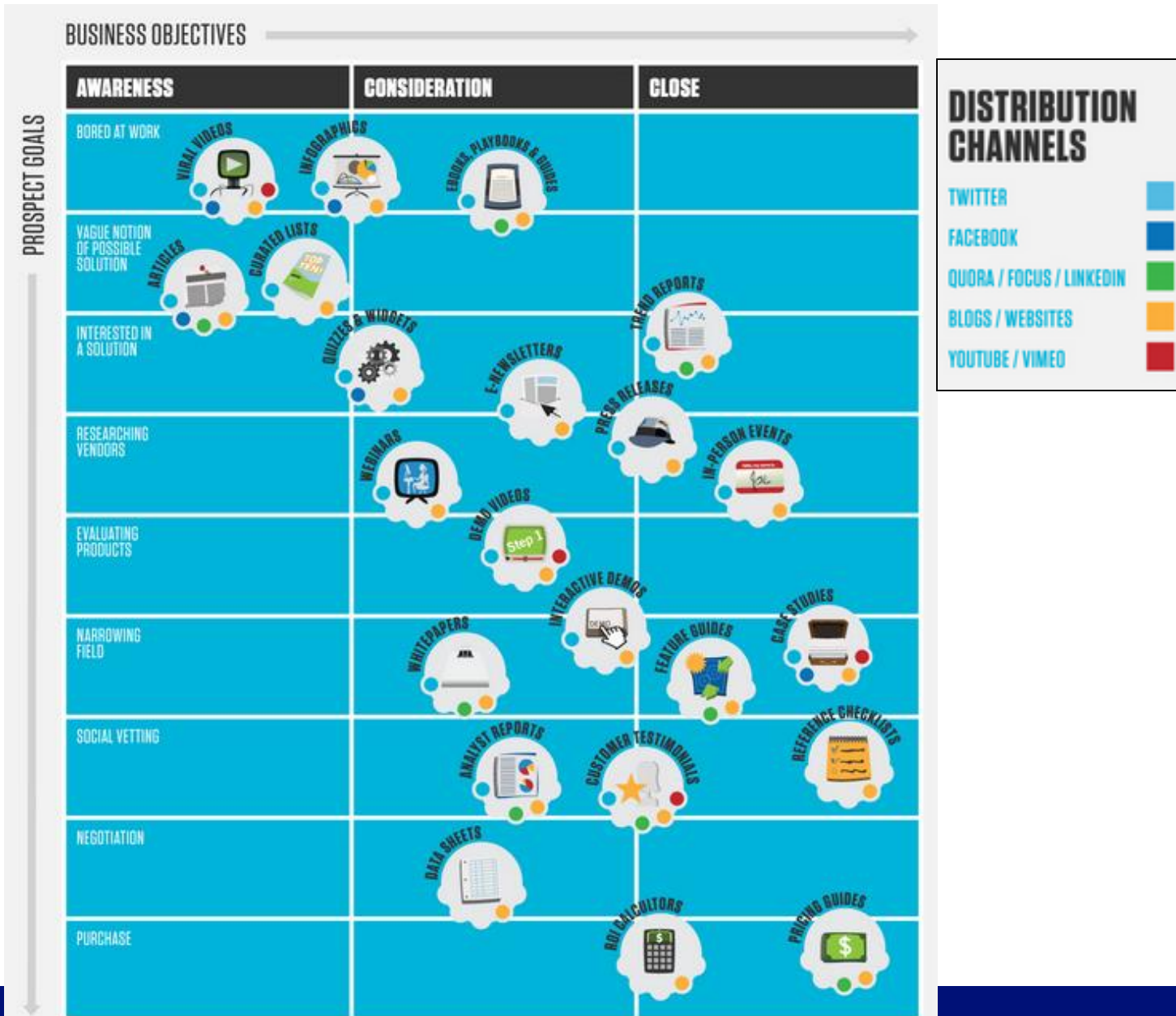
How Does Content Marketing Work?

Encourage prospects to move to the next step

THE CONTENT MARKETING MODEL



Example: Content Audit



How to get started with Content Marketing

Plan

- Determine what type of content you're going to create. Think broadly about ideas -- think "Top of Funnel."
- Use the *Content Marketing Guidelines* and *Target Personas* slides as reference.
- *Audit* current content and determine what needs to be added

Team

- Involve a variety of people. Ask for content creation volunteers from across your team to distribute the work and get different perspectives
- Suggest at least two people from your team who work on content marketing: A **team leader** who drafts/reviews content for accuracy and a **final approver** to approve content posting

Ideas

- Create an easy way to collect content ideas, like an email alias, trello board, or slack channel
- Create a **Content Marketing Council** to brainstorm ideas and topics as well as approve topics for production

Produce

- Once ideas are approved, meet to discuss production of the content
- Secure any necessary resources, like editor/writer, designer or others as needed

Schedule

- Add to the content marketing **editorial calendar**
- Update the Content Marketing Calendar regularly, to keep all team members updated on upcoming deadlines

Promote

- After it's scheduled, we'll need to determine how best to promote it. This can be via Social Media, Blog, Slideshare, etc.

Plan: What Guidelines Should I Follow?

1. **Boost your stories share-worthiness.** Think in terms of stories about your products that prospects (and you) want to share with their social networks.
2. **It's all about them, not you.** Your content marketing strategy needs to consider the different stages in the buying cycle (see Target Personas) and the issues most relevant to them. Once you know who and what those are, then your content can be tailored to them and their interests.
3. **Use titillating headlines.** Spend time crafting highly effective headlines to hook readers into the content.
4. **Concentrate on hot topics.** Focus on the stories that prospects want to know about. By covering a broad range of stories, you'll also attract readers to the dominant stories of the moment. (Ex. World Cup, Target Security Breach, Fantasy Football, etc.)
5. **Variety is the spark.** People consume information differently, so try different mediums—video, text, infographics. It's OK to go out of your comfort zone—but smartly!
6. **Choose images to enhance story.** Images (and their accompanying captions) are used to extend the story. Remember that a picture is worth a thousand words. Today's time-crunched readers may not have time to read all of your content. Compress your information into a visual infographic to get their attention.
7. **Pitch content to the lowest common denominator.** Focus on easy-to-read content with a lot of photos so that readers don't need a strong command of the technical language. For marketers, this means eliminating marketingspeak and jargon.
8. **Succeed despite the competition.** Consider how to position MicroStrategy to differentiate us from the competition.
9. **Show your firm's culture.** There is an expectation of transparency. Answer the question, "Who would my firm be working with?" Show your people, don't just talk about them.
10. **Channel excitement.** Everyone can contribute to the production of content—some by writing, others by contributing industry insights and topic ideas.

Ideas: What Makes Great Content?

“Triangle of Relevance” Content Strategy

