


Quick Start Guide to Content Marketing For Smaller Orgs

The Small Organization Advantage

You, small nonprofit or government agency professional, can quickly conquer the content marketing maze. Content marketing is one of the best things you can do to promote awareness and increase fundraising and outreach.

Smaller organizations actually have an advantage in the content marketing game.

Why?

- You're nimble.
- You're grassroots, or close to it.
- You've got the relevant expertise others need.

In it's 2018 M+R Benchmarks Study, nonprofit marketing powerhouse, M+R, said, "Each visit to a nonprofit website is a singular opportunity to establish or deepen a relationship. These millions and millions of minor interactions add up minute by minute, day by day, over the course of the year."

[\(https://mrbenchmarks.com/\)](https://mrbenchmarks.com/)

The evidence is clear, it's time to start - or revamp - your content marketing today.

Content Marketing: A Brief Description

Content marketing is the words, photos, infographics, data, videos, reports, or other media you share online or in emails to your subscribers, constituents, social media followers, clients and fans.

That's it. Simple. And the beauty of it is, you control it; and it's cheaper to create than traditional advertising.

To Create Meaningful Content, Know Thy Audience

In marketing speak, your "target audience" is the group of people you most want to influence. Intuitively, you probably already know who they are.

Study your bookmarked blogs, websites, and social media feeds. Pay attention. Gain insights.

As you dig deeper, find out:

- What are the hotly debated topics?
- Are these people current or potential donors, community members, or clients?
- Any other popular online “water coolers” where you can find them?
- What organizations and agencies are represented?

Over time, you’ll discover your ideal reader, the one you most want to read all the awesomeness you’ll be sharing online. Specifically, these are the people who will read, click, share, or donate to your cause.

Consistently research their issues, interests, and concerns. Hone in on topics that equally coincide with your organization’s mission and services.

Soon, you’ll effortlessly create content others find meaningful and useful.

Make a Plan to Reach Your Audience Online

Nothing earth shattering here. Your aim is to systematically incorporate multiple opportunities for people to find you.

That's what you'll do. Consistently upload, tweet, pin, post, blog, or email your content. Trust me, people are already looking for it. All you have to do is give it them, on a schedule.

Step 1: Schedule Your Writing – Use a Marketing Plan & Editorial Calendar

Editorial calendars and marketing plans vary widely.

[Dan Blank's Weekly Workflow Calendar](#) is great for managing blog posts.

Here's what a small workforce development consultancy, [Pathways Consultants](#), said about the marketing plan I crafted for them: "It guided us through the first two years of marketing and once we started to see some progress, and we definitely did, we updated it to include more social media...It has been invaluable to us."

Regularly customize and update your plan to best fit your content marketing goals.

Step 2: Create a Style Guide to Save Time Later On

You'll save a ton of time if you decide, up front, how your content will look and sound. For example, here's a basic list of style rules you might incorporate for a website:

- Blog Posts: Garamond, 12pt, dark blue
- Headings: Arial, 16pt, dark blue
- Tone: light and cheery
- Photos: black and white
- Words/Phrases NOT to Use: if only, client
- Calls to Action: *Click here, Sign up here, Donate here*

Document your style guidelines and you'll ensure consistent content that fits your organizational brand, every time. It'll also help speed up any approval processes.

Editorial calendars and style guides make content creation much easier to achieve. You'll keep your head clear, focused, and on track.

Write Everything, But Start With What You Do Best

There's no need to conquer every content type all at once. Start where you are. If you know you're really good at blogging, for

instance, commit to conquering that particular format. Study it. Master it.

As soon as you can, bring other forms of content into your marketing mix.

Different audiences resonate with different types of content, and you want to give it to them.

- Instagram devotees love great photos.
- LinkedIn followers salivate over 200 word tip-filled articles.
- Facebook loves photos and smart taglines.

Your research may have revealed that your key donors respond to visual content. Or, they overwhelmingly like Twitter. Or, Instagram is their favorite social platform. When you reach people in different ways over time, your content never gets routine.

Create Systems to Get Your Work Done Faster

Like your editorial calendar and style guide, your processes will evolve over time but it's a good idea to create some preliminary systems to get you started.

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- Who will be the content creators on your staff?
 - How will content get saved, filed, uploaded and shared?
 - What about deadlines?
 - Which social media platforms will be used? Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram? Only your website for now?

Dropbox, Slack and GitHub are all popular apps you can use to share, revise, and update files within your organization. Find or refine the method that works best for your team, get those processes in place, and start creating that content!

What You'll Do Again and Again: Brainstorm, Write, Publish, Repeat

Important Note: Whatever you decide to write - make sure it's designed for mobile device users.

Brainstorm for Quick Idea Generation

Now, before you set words to any content drafts, do some brainstorming. It'll quickly get your ideas out of your head. Then, draft your content quickly, saving your edits and refining to the very end. You'll complete this process week after week:

Brainstorm, write, publish, then repeat.

Two idea generation methods to try:



[Mind Mapping](#) - The visual approach

- CENTRAL IDEA**
- Opening
- Transition
- Headline
- Paragraph
- Headline
- Intro
- Tip #1
- Tip #2
- Tip #3
- Tip #4
- Tip #5
- Transition
- Headline - Tip #1
- Paragraph

[The Skeleton Outline](#) - The linear approach

Both work quite well. There's software you might use, like MindNode and Inspiration 9, but a pad and pen are fine. For variety, I tend to switch between the two methods. Have fun with both and find your own brainstorming magic.

Set a Timer and Write Quick Drafts

Once you've done your research, pegged your ideal audience, and brainstormed a few topics, set a timer and bang out a quick draft.

Some call it sucky first drafts because your first attempts to write something coherent will likely be a mess you'll have to clean up a bit - and that's okay. It's all part of the process.

The Pomodoro Technique, where you write for 25 minutes and take a 5 to 20 minute break in between, is a great tool to keep your writing nimble and productive.

Use What You Write, Again and Again

Turn the content you'll create into other forms of itself. When you repurpose your content, you're honing in on what's best about it - those tidbits of data, or a compelling donor story, for example - and showcasing it in another format: an infographic, a picture, a video, a tweet, or a shorter blog piece.

Case studies, email newsletters, white papers, and blog posts are all fodder for the repurpose machine. [Lingual Learning](#) used the case studies I wrote for them in their online and print marketing collateral. Repurposing is a smart content marketing move.

Rewrite, rework, update, and add to what you've already written and upload it to different online platforms for maximum exposure.



Measure Your Results

It's always a good idea to find out who is seeing your content and who isn't. You want to know: who you're reaching, where you're reaching them, how they're engaging with your content, and if you're investing your time effectively.

Here are a few tools to help:

- Google Analytics
- [M+R's Benchmark Tool](#)
- [Facebook Engagement Rate Guide](#)

In the End, Quality Content Matters Most

Share your particular brand of awesomeness with the world.

Craft meaningful donor, community, or constituent-centric content that informs, inspires, and educates those you serve. Get them clicking to your website or opening your emails. Get them on your team. That's what a well-planned content marketing strategy can do.

While it isn't exactly true that, if you build it, they will come; you certainly can influence people and nurture fruitful relationships

over time. Your mission, after all, is to serve. And that, my friend, is a worthy calling indeed.

Your Mission's Fierce Advocate Here

Ready to plan a content marketing strategy for your organization? I craft words and sentences to help your content and communications work triple time to influence, inspire, and inform targeted audiences for the long haul.

My copywriting service is dedicated to helping socially conscious businesses and non-profits in the following areas:

- *Web Copy*
- *Brochures*
- *Newsletters*
- *Case Studies and White Papers*
- *Press Releases*
- *Trainings and Curriculum*
- *Grants*
- *Internal Communications (company bios, reports, etc)*
- *Video Scripting*

If you work to create positive change, I'm your wing woman. Contact me at tanya@latanyawest.com or call (858) 356-4236. Get in touch to find out what I can do for you.