**Developing a Content Marketing Strategy for Your Business**

When done well, content marketing can be a game changer for any business. It can transform a marketing department from one that talks at their consumers to one that speaks with them. It can help a business increase the top of the funnel, increase the effectiveness of the middle of the funnel while shortening the sales cycle. Unfortunately, there are very few marketing teams that are doing this well.

The failure or success of your content marketing strategy depends on your preparation. Successful content marketing requires the right pieces being in place before you begin creating content. It also requires your business to be willing to do things differently. Developing a solid content marketing strategy will help your business find success when implementing your plan.

**Align Your Business Goals**

For your business' content marketing campaigns to be successful, they have to align with the goals you've set for your business. When your content goals and business goals are in alignment, it brings the various parts of your business into the discussion, which makes the process of developing your strategy possible. Once you align your traditional marketing, content strategy, sales and client services, you can begin creating relevant and targeted content for all the phases of your sales cycle.

**Create Audience Personas**

One of the most critical elements in documenting your content strategy is knowing who your customers are and understanding their wants and needs. Creating an audience persona will help you to determine what kind of content you should develop that will enable you to speak to and engage with your audience. Creating audience personas will help you to define who your audience is, what motivates them, and how to create the right content to match those personalities.

**Create a Distribution Plan**

After you define your audience, you need to come up with a distribution plan to ensure your audience sees your content. Along with posting your content on social media, you might want to consider creating an email campaign to distribute your content to your subscribers or enlist the help of your team members to share the content with their networks. Instead of allowing your strategy to be dictated by the typical patterns of sharing, find creative ways to get the most out of your content.

Whether your company has been developing content for years or is just starting to dive in, creating a content marketing strategy will help your business reach its target audience. Take the time to develop your goals, personas, and distribution strategies, to set your marketing efforts up for success.