



# INSTIGATE SOMETHING

How to Create  
Killer Marketing Content





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### ● INTRODUCTORY

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Introductory content is for marketers who are new to the subject. This content typically includes step-by-step instructions on how to get started with this aspect of inbound marketing and learn its fundamentals. After reading it, you will be able to execute basic marketing tactics related to the topic.

*THIS  
BOOK!*



### INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate content is for marketers who are familiar with the subject but have only basic experience in executing strategies and tactics on the topic. This content typically covers the fundamentals and moves on to reveal more complex functions and examples.

### ● ADVANCED

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Advanced content is for marketers who are, or want to be, experts on the subject. In it, we walk you through advanced features of this aspect of inbound marketing and help you develop complete mastery of the subject.

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# ABOUT

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# BUDDING CULTURE

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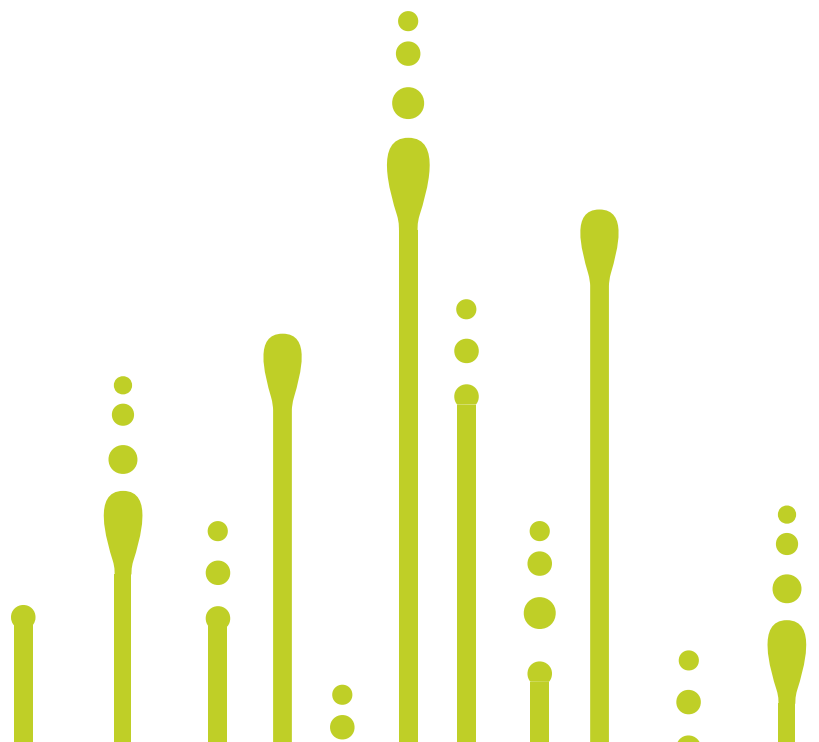
Budding Culture is a digital marketing agency with the right combination of talents, skills and approach necessary to deliver measurable marketing success. Starting with a close collaboration of writers, designers, developers and social media pros, we create inbound marketing programs that get results. Through powerful ideas, compelling content and powerful calls-to-action that gets people fired-up, talking and sharing— we'll motivate your customers and prospects to seek out your business.

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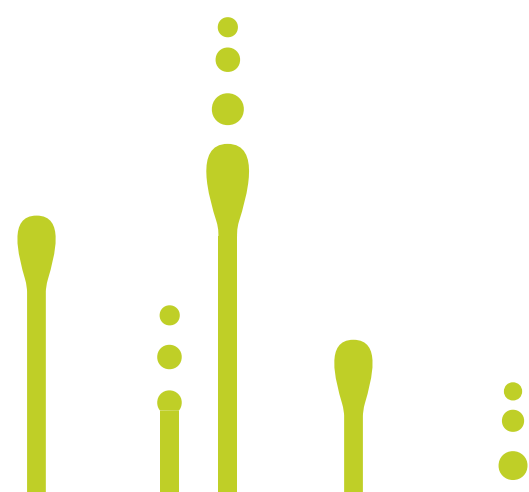


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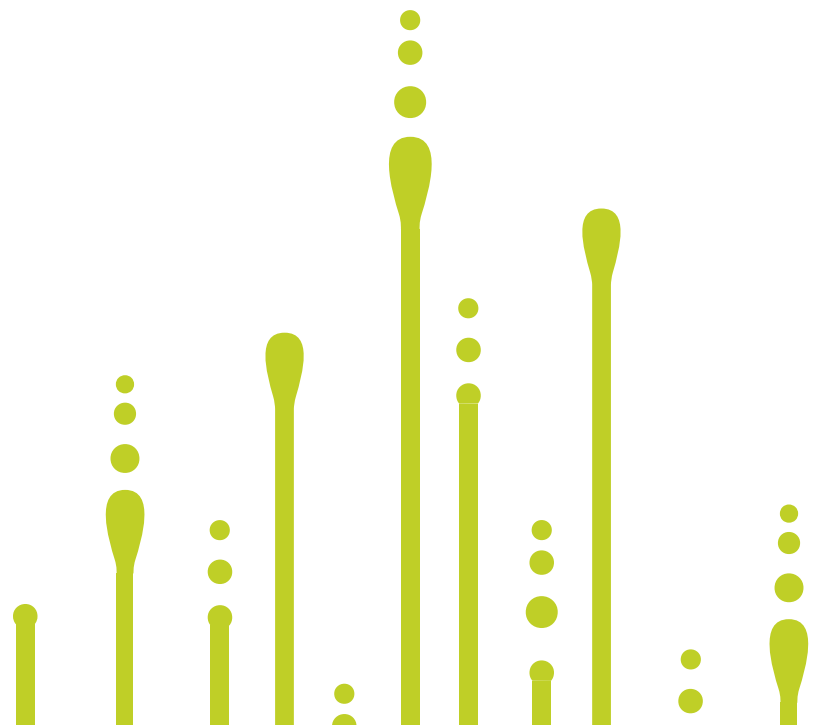
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## Chapter 1

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# NOT LONG AGO



## HOW TO CREATE KILLER MARKETING CONTENT

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Not too long ago, in a galaxy not so far away, companies only needed to create content when they had something new to say, such as when a new product was introduced or a promotion was launched.

Those days are long gone. To succeed now, companies need to constantly produce new content.

## CONTENT THAT CAPTIVATES AND MOTIVATES

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From blog posts to social media updates, videos, ebooks, webinars, and more, you need to publish content that will get you found online using the search engines and social media people use to learn about the goods and services they consume.

This content, when done correctly, will improve search engine rankings, drive new traffic to websites, and nurture and nudge leads into the top of the sales funnel, down through the middle of the funnel, and out the bottom as a converted customer, hopefully for years to come.

## DON'T PERISH, PUBLISH.

If creating killer content were easy, everything you read, watched on TV, or saw in a theater would blow you away. But, it doesn't. Inspiration is in short supply if you don't know how to stoke the creative juices. And, if you stop producing content or produce content that's a bad fit for your market, you risk losing leads, attracting the wrong leads, or turning off the leads you've acquired.

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## SO WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

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Think like a publisher. Of course, you may never have been a publisher; that's where this ebook comes in.

This ebook will help you:

- Develop an editorial strategy to attract new business
- Understand the four steps to creating successful content
- Learn how to come up with content ideas to attract leads and convert them to customers

So, what are you waiting for? Let's start killing 'em – with killer content, that is!

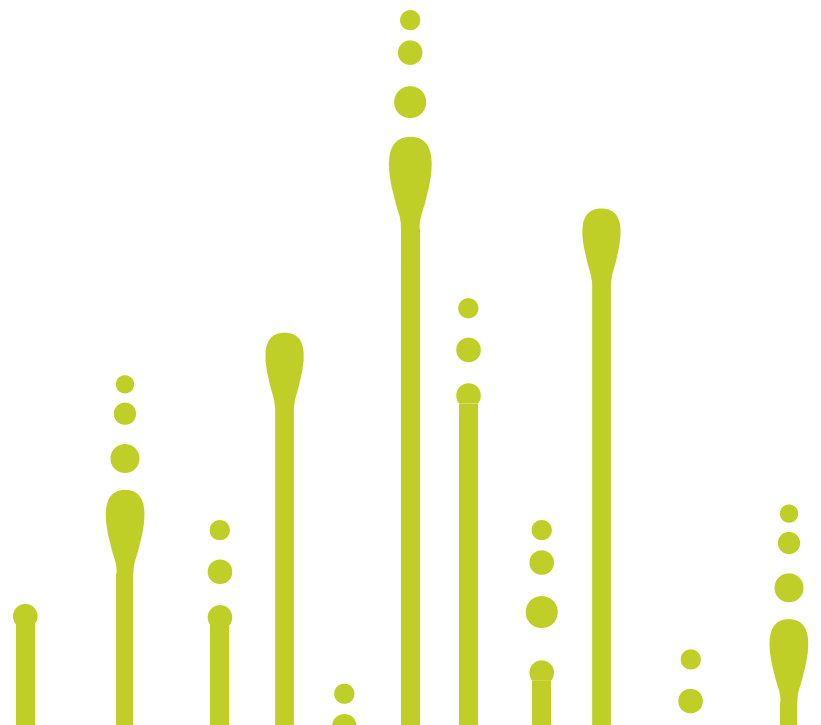
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## Chapter 2

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# PUBLISHER, KNOW THINE AUDIENCE





## BUILD BUYER PERSONAS

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You may already have some knowledge about developing buyer personas, those fictional representations of your target customers based on real-world information and educated guesses about their likes, dislikes, habits, behaviors, motivations, concerns, and demographics.

To write effectively for any audience, you need to know a bit about them:

- What are their interests, their biggest concerns, their most-pressing needs?
- How can you reach them? Do they read blogs, social media, or use search engines to help satisfy their needs?
- Who are these people? Are they parents? Executives in specific roles? Young or old? Do they make their buying decisions solo or as part of a predetermined corporate process?

## IDENTIFY YOUR PERSONAS

Begin developing buyer personas for the people most likely to buy your goods and services by doing research based on your existing customer base.

There may be several different personas, so flesh out each one fully, including name, job title or role, industry or company info, and demographic info.

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For example, your target market might be small or mid-size enterprises (SMEs) or they might be Fortune 500 types. You might refer to these as “Mom & Pop” or “Global Gary.” Using these identifiers, you can infer certain information about them and their businesses, such as their revenues, geographic areas of operation, and other characteristics relevant to serving their marketing needs.

Once you’ve identified the general personas, ask yourself questions that will help you identify their pain points, needs, and challenges including:

- What are the top two or three biggest problems they need you to help them solve?
- What type of information are they typically searching for when shopping for your goods or services?
- How do they typically search for your products or services?
- What trends influence their needs, successes, and business operations?

Perhaps the best way to understand the content your customers crave is to see which sources and which content brought them to you. By following a clients’ path from first click to closed sale with a marketing platform such as HubSpot, you can see the search terms that brought them to your website, which content they viewed and for how long, and any forms they completed. That’s lead intelligence you can use to make better-informed choices when developing buyer personas.

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If, for example, you're wooing Mom & Pop, you might learn that they were reading articles about mobile marketing for hyperlocal audiences and using QR codes in promotions.

Based on their activity on your website, you might conclude they need help with:

- Mobile marketing in general
- Geo-targeting best practices
- Inexpensive technologies and promotions that can boost in-store traffic

## DEVELOP BUYER PROFILES

~~Once you know who your buyers are and what their needs are, you need to understand how they shop for the things you sell. Ask yourself questions like:~~

- What do they do online: Do they read blogs, surf social networks, or subscribe to e-newsletters?
- What search terms do buyers like these typically use?
- What kind of content piques their curiosity, gets them to click through: Education articles, interactive tools, videos, podcasts, trend reports?
- Which of your products or services did they spend significant amounts of time reading about?

Use the answers to these questions to understand your prospects' demographics, needs, and behaviors. The better you understand your personas, the more detail you have about them, the better you will be able to develop content that appeals to them and the more effectively you can place it to reach them.

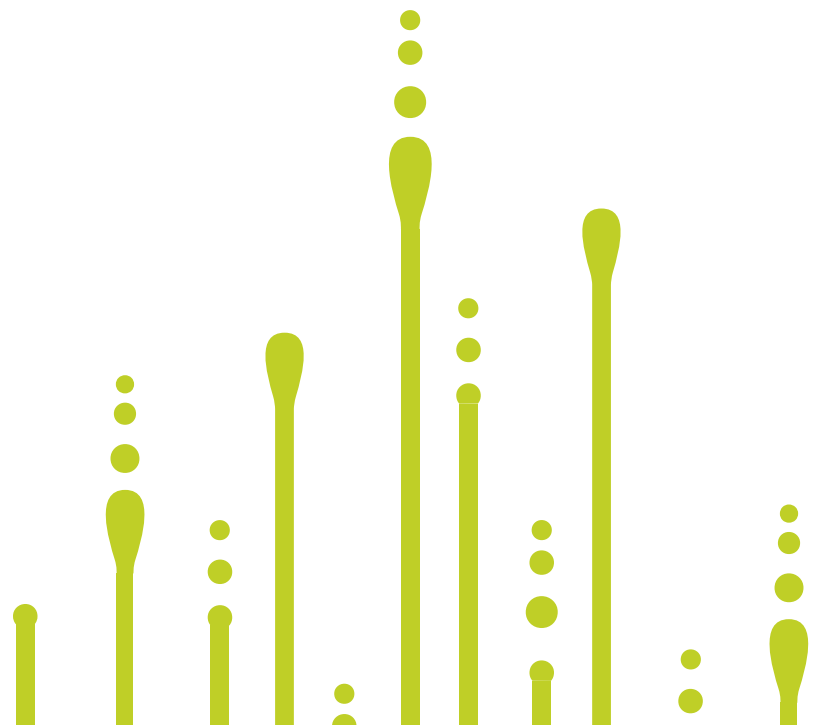
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## Chapter 3

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# CONDUCT A CONTENT AUDIT



So now you know who your prospects are, what they do, what they need, where they get content, and how they use it. You might be tempted to fire up your creative engines and start writing. Stifle that temptation for now, Tiger.

Why? You may already have plenty of content you can use. But without a formal content audit, you may not realize it.

Conducting a content audit will reveal how well you're covering the topics your target audience cares about and whether you have the right mix of content to keep things interesting for that audience.

1. Conducting a content audit is easy.
2. Collect all the content you've created in the past year or so, from blogs to podcasts, ebooks to videos, webinars, whitepapers, and everything in between.
3. Create a spreadsheet to list these items by title.
4. Label them according to: type of content, topic(s) covered, buyer personas, date created, and leads/customers generated.
5. Study the spreadsheet to reveal patterns which indicate whether you're: heavy on some topics and light on others; whether you've got enough content for each buyer persona; whether you have plenty of text-based content (such as blogs or ebooks) and not enough visually oriented content (such as videos or webinars); which content generates the most responses and for which audience.

Content audits help you determine where you have content assets and where your content bank is coming up short. Use the audit to plan what types of content to publish in the coming weeks, months, and year.

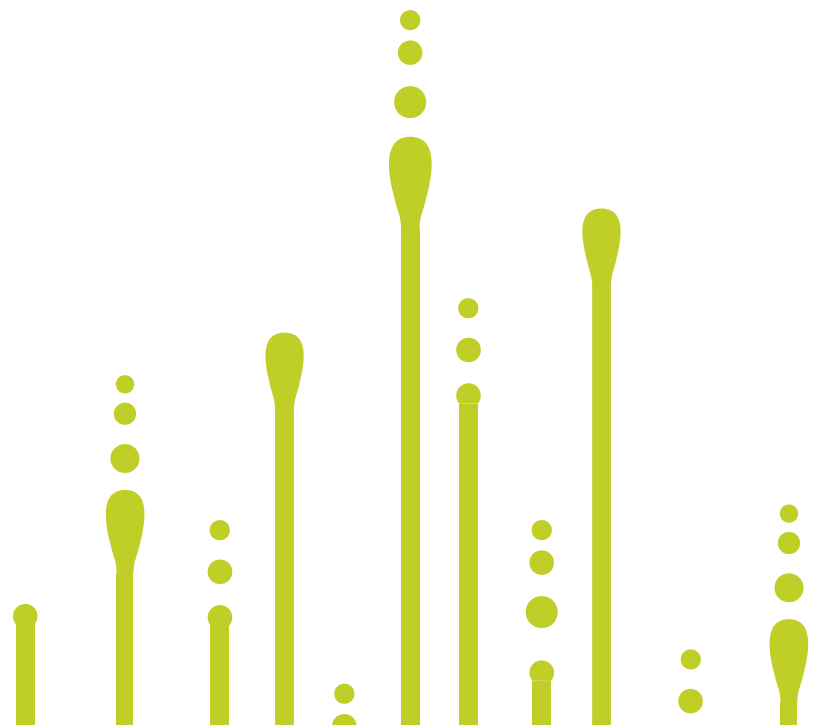
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## Chapter 4

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# MAP CONTENT TO THE BUYING CYCLE



## IDENTIFY YOUR BUYING CYCLE

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The content your customers need varies depending on where they are in the buying cycle. Content intended to generate awareness is usually different from content intended to convert leads into customers. You've got to ensure you have the right content for each stage of the sales funnel.

Study your previous marketing efforts in the context of your buyer personas to determine the buying stages prospects go through before making a purchase.

For many companies, the purchase cycle goes something like this:

1. **AWARENESS:** The prospect becomes aware they have a need and/or aware that your company is in the business of solving their particular needs.
2. **RESEARCH/EDUCATION:** The prospect better understands their needs and begins to educate themselves about the various solutions available to them, perhaps including your agencies and the services it offers.
3. **COMPARISON/VALIDATION:** The prospect starts reviewing their options to see which may best meet their needs and eliminating those that seem to only marginally satisfy them.
4. **PURCHASE:** Having narrowed the field, the buyer makes a decision, hopefully to buy from you!

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## MAP YOUR CONTENT

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Using what you know about your buyer personas, identify the types of content and the channels that deliver them to determine which content is best-suited for each stage of the buy cycle. While it's true that prospects may not always follow the norm, studies show that some types of content play into a buyer's decision at specific stages of the cycle than at other times.

You might find that content maps to the buying cycle as follows:

Awareness	>>>>>	Blog posts and social media updates
Research	>>>>>	Ebooks, webinars, industry reports
Comparison	>>>>>	Case studies, demos, customer testimonials
Purchase	>>>>>	Analyst reports, detailed product information

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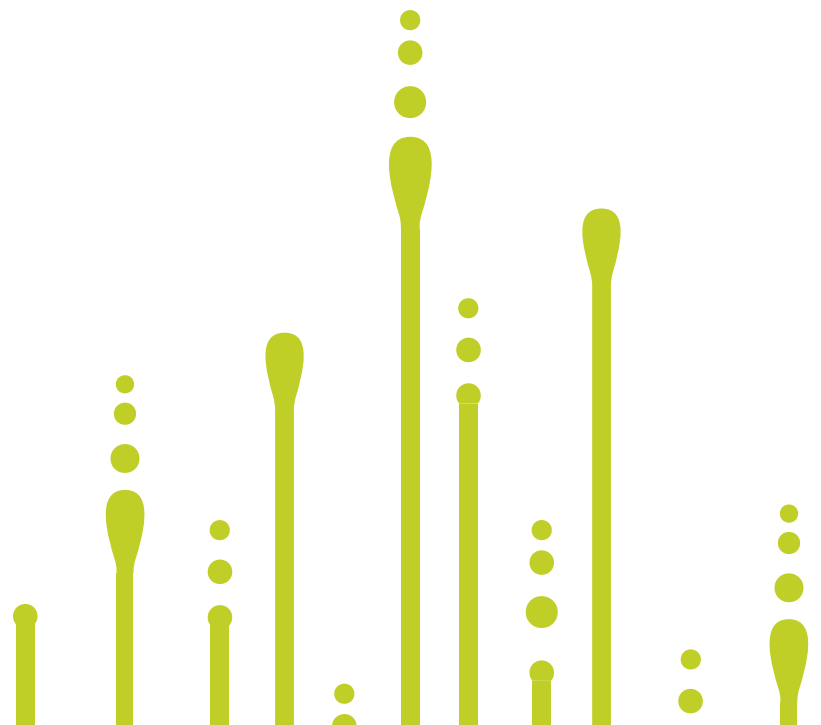




## Chapter 5

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# CREATE YOUR EDITORIAL CALENDAR



Once you understand who your prospective customers are, what motivates them, what actions they take and when they take them in the buy cycle along with the types of content you have or intend to publish, you should create an editorial calendar.

An editorial calendar acts like a roadmap helping you plan and execute the right content at the right time for each buyer persona you've developed.

The editorial calendar will ensure you create and publish content across all the relevant subject areas, in the appropriate and varied types and channels, and for all your prospective buyer personas throughout the buying cycle.

## SET UP YOUR EDITORIAL CALENDAR

Follow these steps to set up an editorial calendar that will guide and inform ~~your content creation efforts:~~

1. Create an online calendar or spreadsheet that outlines your editorial plans. Include the article topics, content channels through which you'll deliver them, and the buyer personas. Try to plan at least three months in advance, six months if you can manage it. Depending on your business, you may be able to plan a year in advance but be wary of topics that might go stale and become irrelevant or dated during that long a period of time.

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2. By reviewing the effectiveness of content you've previously published, you can work backward from your marketing goals. If you understand what results the content you publish produces in terms of leads and conversions, you can plan an editorial calendar to meet your goals.
3. Create an online calendar or spreadsheet that outlines your editorial plans. Include the article topics, content channels through which you'll deliver them, and the buyer personas. Try to plan at least three months in advance, six months if you can manage it. Depending on your business, you may be able to plan a year in advance but be wary of topics that might go stale and become irrelevant or dated during that long a period of time.
4. By reviewing the effectiveness of content you've previously published, you can work backward from your marketing goals. If you understand what results the content you publish produces in terms of leads and conversions, you can plan an editorial calendar to meet your goals.
5. Fill in the dates on your calendar with the topics, types of content to be produced, and the targeted persona. Review the calendar to be sure you've achieved a balance between types of content, such as social media posts, blogs, or e-books, the topics you want to cover, and the buyer personas you want to reach.

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6. Recycling is good. Very good. Look for opportunities to repurpose your content across your various media channels. A whitepaper or ebook, for example, might provide dozens of smaller-sized blog posts that lead back to the original source. Bits of data or factoids might make great teaser content on Facebook or Twitter to guide readers to your website to learn more.
7. Create separate tabs or otherwise highlight the various types of content you publish, such as blog posts, ebooks, etc., to ensure you are creating a balanced, interesting context mix.

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Budding Culture uses HubSpot's integrated marketing platform to help you manage your content and analyze it all in one place. **Contact Budding Culture** to find out how we can help you create the best offers to target, attract, win, and retain new customers.

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## THE BEAUTY OF HAVING A CALENDAR

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Working through these processes you will have laid the foundation for executing an effective, winning editorial strategy to have leads find you, learn about your company, and get in touch learn more or buy from you. The days of scratching your head and staring at a blank screen wondering what to write are behind you.

You may have found a few holes in your calendar or even some calendared items became obsolete before you can publish them. That's normal, every publisher experiences that. The difference is a true publisher is prepared for those days and always keeps a few editorial items that have a long shelf life in their content pantry ready to be pressed into service on a moment's notice.

Buyer personas, an editorial strategy, a calendar; you have everything you need to start creating great content. Let's see how the pros go ahead and do just that!

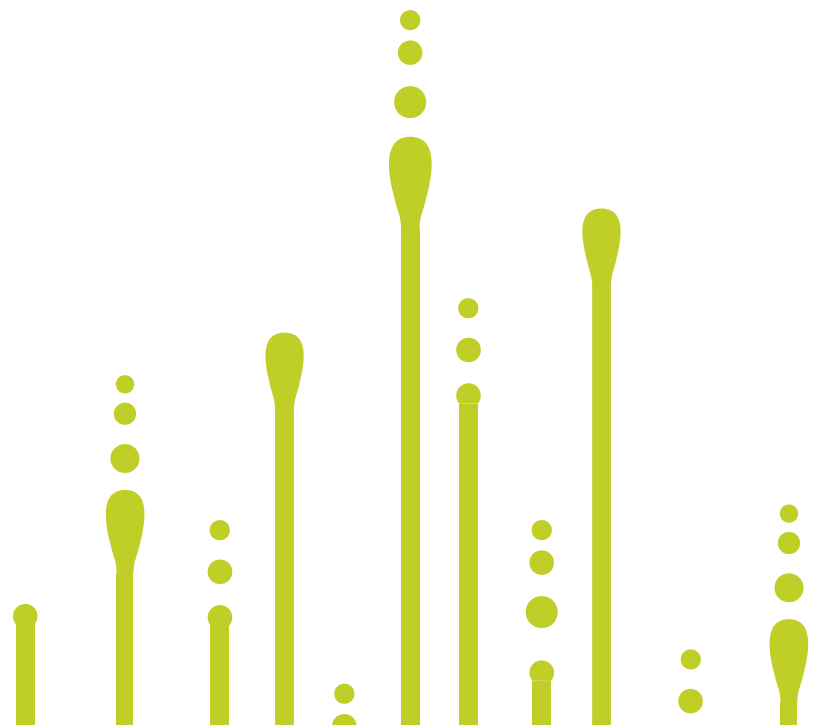
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## Chapter 6

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# 10 TIPS FOR CREATING KILLER CONTENT



## TIP #1 | FOLLOW INDUSTRY NEWS

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Keeping up with a world full of industry information may sound like a daunting task unless you know how to set it up so the information finds you.

- 1) Set up RSS feeds from bloggers and other journalists who cover your target industries
- 2) Subscribe to industry newsletters that cover the niche areas you're interested in, your vendors, and even your competitors
- 3) Set up [Google Alerts](#) to send you everything published on non-branded keywords related to your industry, products, and your buyer persona's pain points

Keeping up with these news feeds will bring hundreds of articles your way. Put your own spin on them or identify trends your clients would be interested in reading about and learning how it will affect them. For example, a landscaper might use a series of articles on climate change to teach customers about changing needs and challenges in their climate zone and which plants will tolerate them

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## TIP #2 | MONITOR SOCIAL CONVERSATIONS

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Social media can be a reflection of your brand, your audience, in real time. Use the comments posted there as the jumping off point for generating story ideas.

If, for example, you see a lot of comments or questions around how SEO works, consider writing a blog post or even an ebook to explain the process to customers and prospects. It will position your company as a thought leader with expertise on the subject matter. Plus, since the idea came from your audience to begin with, it is more likely to resonate with them than something you thought might be important to them.

Tools, such as [HubSpot's social media tool](#) or [HootSuite](#), will help you manage the massive media challenge that social media presents when it comes to monitoring and measuring your effectiveness at marketing there.

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## TIP #3 | BUILD A TEAM OF CONTENT CREATORS

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Too often business owners or managers feel like the burden of content creation is theirs and theirs alone. It doesn't have to be that way.

Make use of other team members in your organization by having them contribute to your content bank.

- Graphic designers might contribute blog posts about effective design techniques.
- Salespeople might record a short video about how best to choose the products or services you sell
- You might even post a Q&A with some of your best customers explaining how they benefited from your efforts.

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Budding Culture has a vast, highly experienced stable of professional content creators at our fingertips. Writers, designers, programmers, film makers, etc.,

Contact Budding Culture to find out how we can help you create the best content to attract, win, and retain new customers.

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## TIP #4 | SET UP A STYLE BANK AND A CONTENT BANK

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Experienced blog publishers, editors, and art directors know something you don't: There will always come a day when you feel tapped out for ideas, a good story goes bad, or you need something to 'punch up' the piece you're working on to make it more appealing to readers.

That's why these professionals keep a content bank of completed stories they can plug in at a moment's notice and a style bank of design templates and ideas they can use to keep things fresh.

Fill up your blog style bank with:

- Bulleted lists
- Product, book, and movie reviews
- Photos and captions
- Videos
- How-to guides
- Interviews

Share this resource with your content co-creators whenever they need a spark to light the fire in their blogging efforts.

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## TIP #5 | REPURPOSE CONTENT

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There's nothing wrong with using perfectly good content you produced previously in fresh, new ways. News organizations and publishers do it all the time to save money and precious resources.

Consider:

Adding videos to an old whitepaper to update the format and the information in the piece.

Turn videos into blog posts. Use the content concepts from the videos to write new blog posts and include links to the videos so readers can digest the information in whichever way they best learn.

Use the questions your audience generates from a webinar or other presentation to put together an ebook. These questions and your answers can be a handy reference guide to pain points your customers commonly have.

Share the wealth by producing all company materials or presentations in as many formats as make sense. Turn an ebook into a YouTube video or a Slideshare post. Take a series of blog posts and turn them into an ebook.

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## TIP #6 | TAKE YOUR VIDEO CAMERA EVERYWHERE

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Video production is no longer the big deal it used to be. Any smartphone equipped with a video camera is your instant marketing content tool.

If, for example, someone tweets a question you think would be of interest to your broader range of Followers, answer the question with a short video and post a link to it in your response.

If you're at a trade show, pull out your video camera to conduct mini interviews with thought leaders who stop by your booth. Or, ask people to give you one of their Top 10 anything-you-want list answers and post those to your website after the show.

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## TIP #7 | WRITE ANNUAL AND “BEST OF” FEATURES

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People love lists, especially “Top” lists, “Best of” lists, “Year in Review,” or “What’s Next?” lists.

Plan to do some type of list every quarter to boost your readership numbers thereby increasing the number of leads, actions taken on your website, and conversions.

- Put together your best blog posts as an ebook in December.
- Make a list of the top products or services you provided this year.
- Make a “Summer Reading List” of books to read or a “Best Videos to Watch” list that can help your customers improve their own businesses.

These types of lists will help you stand out from the crowd and if enough people find and like them or share them, your social share scores will improve, as will your SER.

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## TIP #8 | CONDUCT ORIGINAL RESEARCH

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You don't need an army of clipboard-toting researchers to produce exciting, interesting new data that your customers and others looking for ways to boost their business will like.

Tools like [SurveyMonkey](#) or [SurveyGizmo](#) offer free and paid services where you can quickly craft surveys about topics of interest to your customers.

Take the answers and the trends revealed in your surveys and create blog posts, press releases, Facebook posts, Tweets, and more. These surveys have the potential to get your brand name out there quickly and over the long-term as people search for the answers to questions you've already posed to an audience of first-hand experts.

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## TIP #9 | LOOK BEYOND YOUR INDUSTRY AND AUDIENCE

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Variety, they say, is the spice of life. It's also a great way to keep your creative juices flowing and provide unique takes on how your company helps its customers.

If you're looking for great content ideas, don't stop at your industry or audience boundaries. The world is more interconnected than it's ever been and that means more ways than ever before to demonstrate your understanding and command of those connections to clients and prospects.

Did an airline recently suffer a public relations nightmare (we know, that's rhetorical)? Use it in a blog post to demonstrate how a good company, let's say, yours!, would turn that horrible customer service experience into an opportunity.

Did a blockbuster movie just open and get everybody buzzing? Hitch a ride on that PR train with a Facebook post and some tweets that tie into the movie's themes.

The world is your content cabinet. Keep your eyes peeled open and the possibilities are virtually endless.

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## TIP #10 | KEEP A BANK OF EVERGREEN CONTENT

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Yes, there are exciting ideas popping up every day, but sometimes you're busy putting out other fires and your ability to take advantage of them is limited. Or, a story you thought would be great three months ago, now seems stale and dated.

Enter your trusty content bank filled with evergreen stories you can plug in on a moment's notice. These are stories that have a long shelf life when it comes to remaining relevant and useful to your audience.

Some ideas for evergreen content include:

- Ideas for saving money or time
- How-to articles that solve basic or intermediate challenges your audience will always face
- Inspirational articles that motivate people to do new things or look at problems in new ways

Don't delay in preparing this content, you never know when you'll need it. And, be sure to keep your inventory stocked and fresh. Pull stories from the front of the shelf and replace them with a new one at the back so you'll always have content when you need it.

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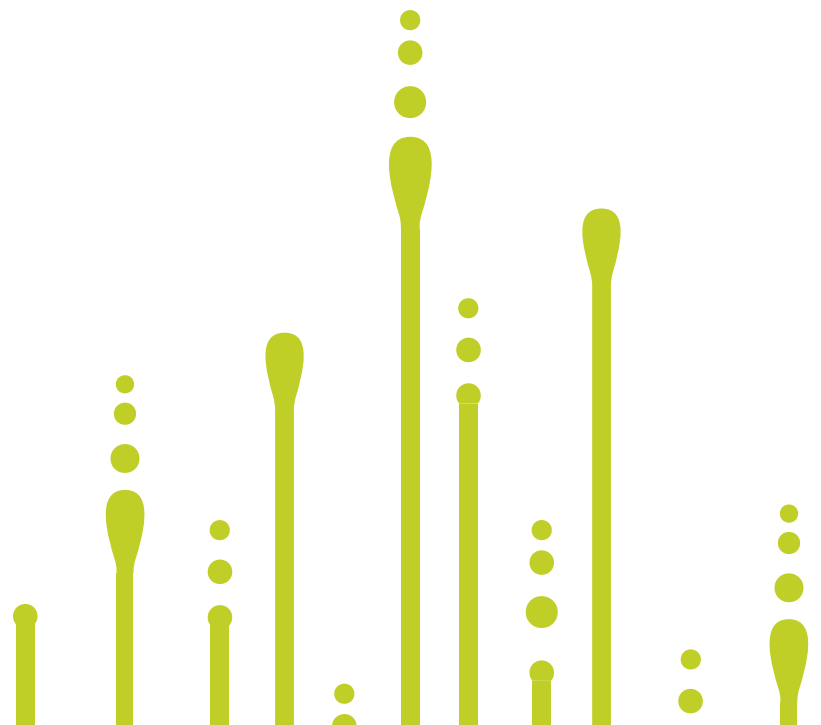




## Chapter 7

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# CONCLUSIONS AND RESOURCES



Now you know what the pros know. Keep our key points in mind, then start creating!

- Use behavioral data to create buyer personas and target content to those personas
- Conduct an audit of existing content to identify gaps in your content, then plan to fill those gaps with great content for each topic and every persona
- Map content to the buying cycle so you're addressing customers' and prospects' needs throughout the purchase process
- Develop an editorial calendar to help you plan and execute content that consistently meets your needs, goals, and objectives
- Find new ways to come up with content that go beyond the usual suspects and keep a backlog of stories at the ready to meet any short-term need that arises

Of course, content alone is not enough to be an effective inbound marketer, but it is a key part of the foundation. Combine great content with SEO, social media, lead nurturing, measurement, and analysis to get the job done for your business!

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Get our FREE 42 point assessment of your Content Marketing strategy and tactics. It's the first step toward igniting your brand's instigation potential.



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