

How to Create a Content Marketing Plan Without Content

Mark W. Schaefer

View the presentation:

<https://www.brainshark.com/brainshark/vu/view.asp?pi=959179278>

Slide 2 – It's All About Time

Hello, and welcome. **This presentation is all about time and how to use content in your marketing plan, even when you have very little of it.**

Slide 3 – What We'll Cover

Today we'll cover:

- The challenges of content engineering
- The concept of micro-content as an alternative for the resource-constrained company
- Three areas where you can start using this concept today
- Actionable steps to begin realizing business benefits through this strategy.

Slide 4 – Introductions

I guess I should introduce myself. I'm Mark Schaefer or @markwschaefer for those of you who may connect with me on Twitter. I've had 28 years experience in corporate communications, sales and marketing, and now I run my own consulting company, Schaefer Marketing Solutions. I'm also an Adjunct professor in marketing and management, and I love writing my blog, "Grow". That can be found at www.businessesgrow.com.

Slide 5 – Content Marketing ... or Engineering?

So let's get to it. What we refer to as content marketing is really content engineering, isn't it? Scientifically optimizing documents such as blogs, case studies and white papers to create search engine results and sales leads can be an extremely complex and involved process that can soak up a lot of money, not to mention valuable time and professional resources. We realize that many companies want to take advantage of the fantastic benefits of content marketing but just commit to this extent.

Slide 6 – Pressures on Business

When you take this complexity and add on top of this the constant pressures of business, it's easy to see why some companies need another solution.

Slide 7 – Micro-Content!

And that solution is what we call micro-content!

Slide 8 – What is Micro-Content?

Micro-content is different from white papers, case studies and blogs in that it is very easy to do. You don't need to be a professional writer or have hours each week to blog. It's a flexible strategy that can be accomplished in as little as 15 minutes a day, and best of all, it can still drive inbound leads and business benefits to your company.

Slide 9 – A Formula for Success

Before we get into some micro-content specifics I wanted to mention that content alone will rarely work in a vacuum on today's social web. In another Content Marketing Institute presentation I covered this [success formula](#) in more detail.

But it's crucial to surround yourself with targeted connections for your content, otherwise, what good is it if you're marketing to nobody? We also need to throw in a healthy dose of authentic helpfulness. If prospects think you're only trying to sell to them without building relationships, you're probably going to fail. So you need to connect with people in helpful ways. So content is extremely important but not the only part of the success formula.

Slide 10 – Preparation

Let's get started on some specifics behind this idea. Like any marketing initiative, you must have a firm idea of your strategy, selling points and target audience.

Spend some time thinking through a set of key words that represent your business and your customer needs. You'll need to weave these keywords into your micro-content.

Also, be mindful that you are becoming a publisher on behalf of your company. Be sure to work through your companies normal legal channels when posting content to the internet. Most companies find a formal social media policy is essential in providing guidelines to those involved in this activity.

Slide 11 – LinkedIn

Let's examine some specific ideas, starting with **LinkedIn**. If you're like most people, you have a profile on LinkedIn and haven't done much with it. This platform is a goldmine of opportunity to create micro-content. There are about **600,000 groups on LinkedIn**, covering every imaginable business interest. You're sure to **find one with like minded people who might be interested in you**.

If you're in a very specialized field consider starting your own special interest group and make sure you use relevant keywords in the title of the group so people can find you. Look for some Q & A sessions within relevant groups and get involved. **Simply answering questions is providing meaningful content and that can attract attention to you and your website.** I've personally made some fantastic connections and acquired my two most profitable customers just by answering questions in LinkedIn group forums.

Slide 12 – Forums

Here's an example of how this might work. In this screen shot from the B2B Marketing Forum I found a really interesting question posed by one of the members. This is a group with lots on interesting folks who discuss many of the same topics relevant to my own business.

Slide 13 – Q & A Commentary

Adding my own comment to the question takes just a few minutes but allows dozens, maybe even hundreds, or maybe even thousands of people to see my profile and potentially click through to my website. **Participating in Q & A for a few minutes each day or providing short status updates on LinkedIn every week, now provides one of the top four traffic sources for me and my website.**

Slide 14 – Importance of the Profile

On LinkedIn, if people click on your icon, it'll take you to a page like this. Notice that my profile is very complete and informative so folks clicking through on my contact can see a lot of information about me. They can see what I do, and they can very easily find my blog and my website.

Slide 15 – Use of Keywords

In the specialty section of the profile, I list the keywords that best describe the problems I solve for customers. This also helps people find me through LinkedIn search.

Slide 16 – Making Connections

But answering questions also gives me a chance to build my network. Let's look at the person who initiated the question in the first place.

Slide 17 – Building a Network

By simply clicking on her name, I see her complete profile. **It looks like Laurissa and I have a lot in common.** Perhaps we could even work together on something some day. I'm already on her radar because I answered her question. **I think I'll invite her to be one of my connections, too.** You never know where these new business connections can lead.

Slide 18 – Twitter

Let's move on to more micro-content ideas, through **Twitter**. Again, we're looking for quick little bites we can serve up to get people to know us, trust us, and eventually seek us out to provide business benefits.

Slide 19 – Micro-Content Regimen

Even if you've never used Twitter before it's easy to start providing meaningful content that will lead to new connections and business benefits. The first idea is to **create a habit of sharing**. You're already reading a lot of interesting and relevant articles about your business and industry, every day. Most sites

today have an option to share, through social media sites like Twitter. When you see something that would create value to your audience make a habit of sharing it, it only takes a few moments.

The second idea is to leverage your network. Your friends on Twitter are sending great content to you every day. By re-tweeting those links you can take some of the pressure away from finding original information and still provide great content to your audience.

Finally, **if you're just starting out, try this tweeting formula. 3 tweets a day, 3 different times a day on 3 different subjects.** Mix it up by providing work related information, life-style tweets, you know, just stuff you're interested in and your views about what's going on around you.

Slide 20 – Twitter and Keywords

Just like LinkedIn, **you eventually want people to connect to you and your company by driving them back to your website.** Make it easy for them by providing your web address in a bio centered on the keywords for your business.

Slide 21 – Commenting!

The final idea is to provide micro-content through **social media commenting.** Nearly every news source on the web now allows reader comments. This is a great way to get broad exposure on websites where your customers may be gathered. Where are your potential customers getting their news and is it possible for you to participate in the conversation and add value through short commentaries?

Slide 22 – Success Story – Magazine

Let's look at **a few cases of how commenting has lead to direct business benefits.** In this example, one of my friends in Nashville commented on the Woman's Day Magazine, Facebook Fan Page and mentioned a home decorating product she'd invented. This lead to a request from the magazine's editor for samples that lead to coverage of her product in the magazine.

Slide 23 – Success Story – Posts

Commenting on popular blog posts can create benefits for months. These valuable sources of information have a long shelf life. The posts will keep coming up in search results and search's on the blog itself and when people find the blog post, they will also find your comments, for as long as the post lasts. **I'm still getting hits from links I left on blog posts over a year ago.**

Slide 24 – Success Story – Blog

Posting comments on relevant business site's connect's you to a community of like minded people. Soon people in this community will get to know you and look forward to your ideas and observations. **Becoming active in blog communities has introduced me to many new online friends who have become business partners and contributors to my blog.** I've found great people who've helped me on client projects as freelancers, and I've even been invited to a national speaking engagement through a connection I met through comments I left online.

Slide 25 – Next Steps

These have been just a few of the thousands of ways that you can meaningfully engage and connect on the social web even if you have limited resources to devote to content marketing. **I think if you get started in a systematic way you'll find even more creative ways to connect with potential customers.**

Let's review 3 important steps.

1. Start with strategy. Make sure you have a vision for how you're connecting and who you're connecting with.
2. Do a little research to find out where customers are getting their information.
3. Look for opportunities to contribute to conversations through micro-content.

There's no substitute for persistence. To be effective on the social web you need to show up, and that means spending, at least a little time out there, every day. While there are lots of ways to contribute and connect, I've highlighted three good places to start:

- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Commenting on relevant business sites.

Slide 26 – Further Reading

I hope you've enjoyed this presentation and that maybe I got you thinking in some new ways about content marketing. Here are some links to related articles, if you'd like to learn more:

- [Building Influence Through Twitter](#)
- [The New Marketing Realities of YouTube](#)
- [Why Comment on Blogs? For the Money!](#)
- [Content Marketing... Without Content!](#)

I've enjoyed presenting to you today and I hope we'll remain connected through Twitter, or I can be found @markwschaefer, or through my blog, which is at www.businessesGROW.com. I hope to see you again soon on another great Content Marketing Institute presentation.

Slide 27 – Thank you

