UNCOVER

Your Business Potential

How To Plan Your Editorial Calendar

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How To Plan Your Editorial Calendar

One of the biggest barriers to producing great content is giving it the time it requires, and to do that you've got to be organised and planning ahead.

Where most businesses go wrong with creating content is that they realise they need to send a newsletter tomorrow and they sit down to try and write it today. That's never going to work.

Producing content needs to be a process just like every other part of your business.

Step 1: Identify the top 5 issues for one of your target markets

The first thing to do is to work out the top 5 issues or concerns for the target market (or markets) you'll be communicating with.

Step 2: Brainstorm the topics you could blog, video or podcast about

Set a timer for 15 minutes and see how many article ideas you can come up with.

Step 3: Flesh out some writing notes now while it's still fresh

Now that you've brainstormed some topics, the next step is to flesh out a few key points while all of this is still fresh in your mind.

Open a new Blog Post Template for each story idea (refer to the Online Resources for a downloadable template).

Add a working title.

You'll see below the 'Working Title' area there's a section called Notes. Jot down some ideas for this particular article under Notes. They don't have to be spelt correctly or grammatically correct, it's just your initial ideas on what you might cover in this piece.

By capturing some ideas now, when you do sit down to write the article, you're not starting with an absolutely blank piece of paper.

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Step 4: Plan your writing schedule

The next step is to plan out the next 3, 6 or 12 months of writing, so you know what will be written when, and also when it'll be published.

Go to the Editorial Calendar. In it you can list all of the blogs (in order) that you want to write.

a.) Add in a publish date

b.) Add in a written-by date

c.) Note who's writing the blog - the author

d.) Note the topic and insert a link directly to the Blog Post Template for that particular article.

Plan the next period of content creation (for example, the next 12 months) by:

i.) Opening your diary

ii.) Entering all of your writing days for the year (or period) now

- Make sure the writing day is 2-4 weeks before the publishing date

iii.) Allowing more than enough time to write or create your content

- The first few might require more time as you build your content creation muscles and find your groove. So allow for that in your planning.

What I've learned is that if I allow more time than necessary, the writing process is loads of fun. If I don't do that and jam in meetings and calls around my writing time, it all becomes a massive stress.

Don't do it to yourself, it's totally avoidable.

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Here's What To Do If You're Outsourcing The Writing

Step 1 is to find yourself a copywriter who is happy to work with you and to get to know you and your business.

Once they're in place you can simply schedule a call with that person and brief them on two blogs in the one sitting or call.

I'd allow about 25 minutes to brief each blog, so you can schedule those calls as frequently as you need to, depending on your publishing frequency. You can have them locked in for the next 12 months.

On the call, you need to be telling client stories rather than just trying to give them all the points you want covered.

Give them examples of real work you've done in a particular situation and let them ask you questions and pull the story from that conversation.

Let them ask as many questions as they need to, to get to a place of really understanding.

Then when they feel they've got there, have them read back to you what they've noted and how they think they'd like to approach the piece.

Once you're happy that they seem to be on the same page, let them draft an article and send it across to you. You can provide feedback or corrections then.

Step 5: Write your blog (video, or podcast)

When you go to write your piece, just go to the Editorial Calendar, open it up and click on the link of the Blog Post Template that you've already prepared weeks or months ago.

It's already got your notes and ideas in it.

Then scroll down to the Main Blog Post section and start writing the actual blog under Post.

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Once you've done that and edited your own work as best you can, there are a few other tasks:

- Write the short intro text that will appear at the top of Mailchimp when you send the article.

You only need to do that after you've finished the piece because then it's easy to know what you want to get people to focus on or to summarise the key theme of your article.

- Create 12 headline ideas.

From that list choose the one you like best.

- People To Notify - If you want to tag anyone on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, or Instagram note their details there.
- Create the Click To Tweets.

Read through your article and see if there are any catchy sentences that you can pull out to use as a short piece of clickbait on Twitter or other social media.

Step 6: Have someone else edit it

Send your work to an editor. Sign it off when you're happy with it.

Step 7: Distribute

Send it to your Mailchimp person and on to your social media team, if you have all of these in place.

Final Tips

The most important word in marketing is 'consistency'.

If you're going to write, video or podcast the key to success is planning ahead - miles ahead - and making it a business-as-usual process.

Using an Editorial Calendar as I've outlined here is a giant step forward.