



CONTENT CREATION A TO Z

*Printable, At-A-Glance Reference Sheets For
Faster, Easier And Better Content Creation*



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Reference Sheet One

A Is For Actionable

People are most satisfied with content when they get good results, which means you need to create content that helps them take action.

Check out these ideas...

Convey Quick Wins

You can create satisfied consumers by including tips and advice to create quick wins/results. Specifically:

- Share a tip that only takes a minute or two to implement.
- Provide a strategy that's known to get fast results.
- Offer advice that creates relatively big results for a small amount of effort.

For example:

- Give home educators a tip they can implement in just a minute or two.
- Provide bloggers with a strategy for creating articles faster than ever.
- Show dog owners how a slight change in their body language can produce fast, sometimes dramatic, results during a training session.

Create Assignments

You can encourage people to take action on what they've learned by creating assignments for courses, guides and tutorials. Consider these tips:

- Be as specific as possible in recommending the step that should be

taken.

- Be sure each assignment puts the user one step closer to their goal.
- Create simple, easy-to-do assignments that don't take long to complete.
- Ensure the lesson provided all the necessary information needed to complete the assignment.
- Consider offering feedback or "grading" assignments, which will encourage more students to act.
- Offer tools to help people complete assignments, such as checklists, cheat sheets, planners, templates, worksheets and similar.

Call Readers to Action

You can get more people to take action simply by telling them exactly what to do next. Examples include:

- Take action on the information they just learned.
- Buy a product or service.
- Request a lead magnet/freemium.
- Consume another piece of content.
- Fill out a form.
- Register for an event.

Use these templates to encourage people to take action on what they just learned:

- Now that you know how to [do some specific thing], your next step is easy: get started. Go back to Lesson 1 and [take the first step] –

and do it now, because the sooner you get started, the sooner you [get a good result]!

- If you want to [get some great result], then you need to [take some specific action]. You can start right now by [taking some specific step].
- Congratulations: you know have a blueprint for [achieving some goal/solving a problem]. You can start [getting a good result] right away by [taking a step to achieve a quick win].

One key to creating high-quality content is to be sure it's actionable. This includes conveying quick wins, creating assignments and calling readers to action.

Reference Sheet Two

B Is For Better

If you want to get and keep your audience satisfied, then you'll need to continually improve your craft as a content creator. Here's how...

Better Content

Check out these tips and ideas for creating better content:

- Profile your audience – the more you know, the easier it will be for you to create content that really resonates with readers.
- Use “everyday” language in your content. (No \$100 words.)
- Utilize a friendly, conversational tone as if you're writing to a friend.
- Read your content out loud to see if it flows well.
- Ask someone else to read your content out loud to you.
- Create content focused on the reader and the benefits they'll get by reading and taking action on your content. (Your content should always provide help.)

Better Skills

In order to up your content game, you need to up your skills. Check out these ideas:

- Read a lot of content from the best and most popular non-fiction writers.
- Study copywriting in order to learn how to create more engaging content.

- Learn about the craft of storytelling and use it to connect with your readers on an emotional level.
- Brush up on your technical writing skills (sentence structure, grammar, etc.).

Here's where to find good content to read:

- Check out non-fiction bestsellers on Amazon.
- Read the most popular blogs in your niche (and outside of it).
- Ask your audience for recommendations of their favorite non-fiction bloggers, authors, etc.

Better Hacks

Once you have the writing basics down, then you can create next-level content with these hacks:

- Improve your content using similes, analogies and metaphors.
- Coin unique phrases to help your content stand out from others in your niche.
- Share unique examples, tips, stories and case studies in order to stand out.
- Build anticipation in the introduction for what's coming.
- Create curiosity in order to keep your audience reading.
- Keep a thesaurus handy and choose words with the right connotation.
- Remember that "you" is one of the most powerful, attention-getting words.

- Think of yourself as a teacher or educator – not just as a writer or blogger.
- Entertain readers while you educate them to keep them engaged until the end.
- Consider hiring a ghostwriter to create the meat of your content, and then you put on the finishing touches to make it perfect. (Alternatively, use PLR content as the base.)

You don't need to be born with writing skills to create great content – you just need to be willing to learn how to create better content and build your skills.

Reference Sheet Three

C Is For Calendar

The old adage is true: If you fail to plan, then you're planning to fail. That's why you'll want to plan your content and your daily writing schedules. Here's how...

Define Your Goals

Before you can create your six-month or yearly publishing calendar, you need to define what you want to accomplish through and with your content. Answer these questions:

- What platforms will you publish content on this year?
- What are your goals for your blog, newsletter, social media pages and other platforms? (Be specific as you consider brand awareness, traffic, list-building, conversion, influence, etc.)
- How often will you publish content on each of these platforms? (E.G., once weekly newsletter, twice weekly blog posts, daily social media posts.)
- Which of your own products will you promote as additional helps to your audience?
- Will you promote any sales on a specific date?
- Which of your marketing partners' products will you promote?
- Will you create any seasonal content (or other time-sensitive content)?
- What do you want to teach your readers this year? (E.G., how you will help them.)

- How many pieces of content will you distribute for each event on your calendar (e.g., how many for a product launch, sale, new series, etc.)?

Develop Your Calendar

Now that you've laid out your goals and other guidelines, you can develop your calendar. Here's how:

- Start by filling in spots on your calendar where you want to promote your products.
- Fill in spots on your calendar where you're planning for sales (flash sales, launch sales, etc.)
- Create space in your calendar for time-sensitive materials (e.g., holiday-related content).
- Fill in your calendar with the other articles, tools, reports, etc. you'd like to share over the next six to twelve months that all work together to help your audience reach specific objectives while growing your sales.

Detail Your Writing Schedule

Now that you have your publishing calendar for the next six months to a year, you can plan your daily writing schedule. Answer these questions:

- How long will it take you to create each piece of content you've planned?
- What is the minimal deadline cushion? (E.G., finish a piece of content at least one week before you plan to publish it. Always, always, always give yourself margin!)
- When do you need to start each piece of content in order to finish it by your deadline?

- What days of the week will you devote to creating content?
- How much time do you have each day to write?

You can now use your answers from the list above to create monthly, weekly and daily “to do” lists and writing schedules.

Planning your calendar includes defining your goals, planning content around those goals, and then planning your daily schedule around your content.

Reference Sheet Four

D Is For Drafts

One of the keys to good writing is to write first and edit later using a three-step strategy. Let's take a look...

Your First Draft

At this stage, you write quickly to get all your ideas down on paper. Follow these guidelines:

- Don't judge what you've written until you're done (then edit).
- Be sure you define a goal before you write.
- Determine your thesis (big idea) before you write.
- Let your "big idea" and goal help you form your content. (E.G., write with them in mind.)
- Offer enough detail so that the reader can replicate your results.
- Don't rehash – share your own unique viewpoint.
- Share fresh tips readers can put to work immediately.
- Provide examples to clarify complex concepts.
- Connect emotionally to your audience with stories.
- Share mistakes and how to avoid them.
- Ask yourself: if you were doing this for the first time, what would you need to know?
- Provide dos and don'ts to help someone complete a task.

- Check if your content provides some variety (e.g., different-length sentences).

Your Second Draft

For this editing step, you fix the big issues. Ask yourself these questions:

- Does the overall content flow well? (Hint: read it out loud.)
- Did you support your “big idea”?
- Did you provide enough detail to help people complete a process?
- Did you simplify the process so readers don’t get overwhelmed?
- Is there any fluff or filler to delete?
- Are your facts accurate?
- Is the content structured in the best way possible?
- Is the content formatted for easy readability? (e.g., Plenty of white space.)

NOTE: consider getting beta readers at this stage to help you improve your content. Ask your beta readers these questions:

- What parts of the content are difficult to understand?
- In which parts would you like more tips and examples?
- Can you complete this process without any additional information?
- How would you improve this content?
- Which parts of this content work well/are easy to understand?

Your Third Draft

Your third draft is all about fixing smaller issues. Follow these steps:

- Run a spellcheck and grammar check.
- Proof the content for errors not caught by your spellcheck.
- Print off your content, which can help you identify errors.
- Ask someone else to proof it for you.
- Consider hiring a proofreader.

Look for these common errors:

- Wrong word use (e.g., “your” vs “you’re”).
- Sentences ending in prepositions (e.g., “with”).
- Run-on sentences.
- Incomplete sentences.
- Improperly structured sentences.

If you create your content using the three-step draft strategy, you’ll find it easier to write and edit the content effectively.

Reference Sheet Five

E Is For Engagement

You're not just creating information for your readers; you're creating meaningful interactions. That's what attracts readers and keeps them coming back for more. Here's how to do it...

Start Strong

Your audience is going to give you just a few seconds to engage their interest, so be sure your content starts out strong. Open with one of these (and be sure to let the reader know you're there to help):

- A story to connect with your audience on an emotional level.
- An intriguing, relevant quote from a famous person.
- A surprising statistic or other fact.
- A question to get the reader thinking about their own situation or help them identify as the ideal reader for this content.
- An opener showing you understand the problem and empathize with the reader.
- A prompt for the reader to imagine how life could be different if something changed.
- A preview to build anticipation for what's coming by showcasing the content's benefits.
- A joke or other piece of humor to make readers smile and engage them. (Know your audience before you attempt this.)

Keep Them Progressing

Your opener got attention, but now you need to be sure the reader keeps consuming your content...

- Share some of the content's best ideas right away to show the value and usefulness of your content.
- Create curiosity about what's coming. (E.G., "In just moments you'll discover a simple hack for _____...")
- Provide hope – let readers know you've got the solution to help them reach their objective.
- Empathize with the reader. (E.G., "It's frustrating when you feel like you're starving yourself, but the scale doesn't budge.") You want your audience to know you can help them because you've been there too.
- Share your own background of how you solved the same problem to give them hope they can too.
- Provide variety in your writing with varying sentence and paragraph lengths and interesting word choices.

Dos and Don'ts for Engaging Readers

Follow these best practices for crafting engaging content:

- Do focus on one main idea (solving one problem, reaching one goal) for each piece of content.
- Do share lists since people love them: tips lists, gear lists, a list of ideas, etc.
- Don't be predictable, because readers are looking for fresh viewpoints and ideas.

- Don't bore your readers with difficult words (but do speak niche language. e.g., words they are familiar with.): use everyday words and language to make your content easy to read.
- Do format for easy readability – if content LOOKS easy to read, most folks will keep going.
- Do show your personal side to build rapport, such as sharing a personal, relevant story.

You need to engage readers from your first line, keep them interested in the middle, and get them reading right until the very end.

END OF EXCERPT

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