10 Steps to a Deal-Winning Sales Content Strategy

Create a content strategy that helps your sales team win more deals

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B2B buyers now own your sales process.

Most spend weeks or months researching before making a purchase.

There’s no shortage of products or solutions to solve their problems…

And they expect you to build a real relationship with them before they choose to work with you.

As they move through your sales funnel, they're looking for a personalised content experience that provides value and is consistent with their stage of the buyer journey.

Your salespeople also need content that supports their sales efforts and helps them win deals without significant extra effort or cost.

Most B2B content marketing won't do that!

But with a properly designed **sales content strategy**, you can create content that’s relevant and valued by buyers regardless of where they are in your sales funnel...

Content that supports your sales efforts, helps you win deals and takes back ownership of the sales process.

Here's how you create a deal-winning sales content strategy.

Step 01

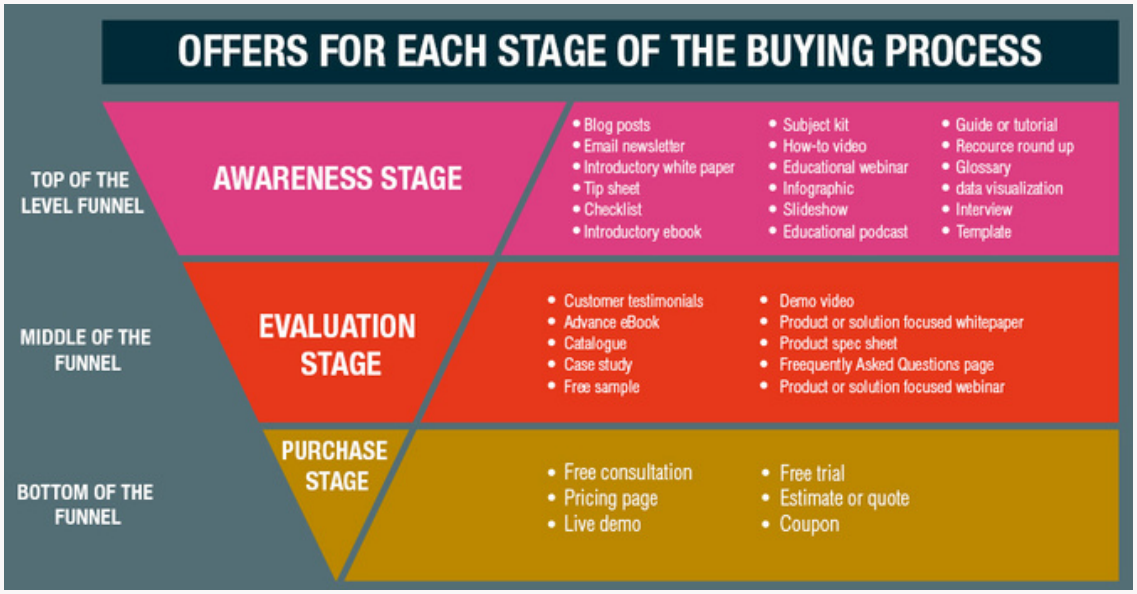
Document Your Sales Funnel

A deal-winning sales content strategy **MUST** follow your sales process.

As content is mapped to your buyer's journey through your sales process, you need to understand and document all the steps of your sales funnel.

This will allow you to create content that targets each stage of your sales funnel later in the process.

To keep things simple, we'll use 3 stages to illustrate the buying process. You'll likely have your own version of this.



Top of the Funnel (ToFu)

This is the Awareness Stage of the buying process.

At this stage, prospective buyers have questions they need to answer or an issue they're looking to resolve and are seeking insight and knowledge.

They're conducting research and looking for options.

Top of funnel content usually includes **blog posts, research articles, e-books** and **white papers**.

This is primarily marketing content territory. However, many companies conduct direct outreach campaigns that are relevant to sales teams, so it's important they're kept aware of any campaigns and activities being run.

Middle of the Funnel (MoFu)

This is the Evaluation Stage of the buying process.

Prospects may still be conducting research, but they're really trying to decide whether your product or service is the best fit for their specific needs.

MoFu content often consists of **videos, product/service-specific blogs, case studies, client testimonials, webinars,** and **comparison guides**.

There'll be a greater level of personalisation in this stage, with Sales taking a more proactive role in distributing and explaining content assets to prospective clients.

This is the heart of the buyer journey. Content produced for this stage allows Sales and Marketing to nurture and qualify leads, build relationships, and move prospects towards making a decision.

Bottom of the Funnel (BoFu)

The bottom of the funnel is where leads are converted to revenue.

Here Sales is communicating 1-1 with prospects, strengthening relationships, and working to alleviate fears and frustrations.

They're working hard to create urgency, demonstrate the value of your solution and communicate the cost of inaction.

Content created for this stage should be highly personalised with specific **case studies** that match prospects' needs, **sales decks, live demos, product sheets, free trials** and **profiles of prospective team members** as required.

BoFu content confirms what buyers already know, gives them confidence in their purchase decision, and charts a course ahead for implementation success.

Step 02
Audit Your Sales Content

Once you're clear on the stages of the buyer journey, you need to audit your current sales content.

Auditing existing sales content is how we identify content gaps and set out a strategy to fill them.

Mapping content to your sales funnel will show what you already have to work with, any areas of improvement, and where new content is needed.

The audit process should also include the gathering of metrics to understand the current performance of existing sales content.

Knowing where the gaps are presents opportunities that your competitors won’t even know exist.

Don’t skip this stage, as missing out on this means not fully utilizing the content you currently have.

Step 03
Identify Sales Goals & Pain Points

If the goal is to help Sales do their jobs better, then alignment between the marketing and sales teams is critical.

Before any new content is created, sit down with the sales team to understand the biggest pain points they encounter during the sales process.

What objections do they face most frequently? What feedback and questions do prospects have about your product/service?

Asking these (and similar) questions allows you to identify gaps in the sales process and strategically create content to address them.

Understanding sales goals allows everyone to focus more specifically on immediate (next quarter), medium-term (next 6-12 months), and longer-term (2-5 years) sales goals.

Identifying specific sales goals for these periods enables you to plan and create appropriate content. For example, medium and longer-term goals are opportunities to plan more elaborate, expensive or resource-heavy content.

Step 04

Buyer-Persona & Value Proposition

If you've not already clearly identified your target audience or ideal client, and created value propositions to position your solution as the best choice for your prospects, this is the next step.

Once completed, the sales content you create going forward should put your buyer personas and value propositions front and centre.

To create real impact the focus should be on the buyer's pain points not on your company's products and features.

Step 05

Different Content for Different Use Cases

While any content that is valuable, relevant, and focused on your buyer's pain points is useful, not all content is created equal.

Some types of content work better for different parts of the sales funnel. Some are better suited to certain audiences, and some are a better fit for certain channels.

Below is a brief overview of the most common types of sales content and when and why you should use them.

Case studies

Case studies are best suited to the middle and bottom of the funnel.

They provide an opportunity for fuller evaluation of pain points to meet buyers' specific concerns.

Case studies highlight the value you provide and the key benefits of your solution without directly selling.

A good case study relies on credible sources, quantifiable results, and digestible stats for prospects.

The shorter the better too. Too much information overwhelms, detracting from the content's impact.

Blog Posts

Blog posts are ideal top or middle-of-the-funnel content.

It's worth digging through your existing blog posts to organize them by funnel stage or amend them to fill identified content gaps.

So much blog content is overlooked or unused by the sales team.

Personalising existing posts for specific prospects is a quick and easy way to increase your content ROI without too much effort.

Email

Behind the telephone, email is the second most popular way for salespeople to connect with prospects.

Standardised email templates that can be accessed from anywhere can dramatically increase productivity.

Collate and refine those emails commonly used by your sales team. Use these to create a logical email sequence, then automate the process of completing and sending.

One-Pagers

One-pagers offer the best form of concise sales content.

Built to deliver the most information in the least space possible, they focus on key parts of the solution and benefits to the buyer.

If your product or solution meets multiple needs, one-pagers allow you to address each one separately.

One-pagers are typically a better fit for middle and top-of-funnel engagement, particularly if you've identified a specific need or solution requirement.

White Papers

A white paper is a long-form piece of content that usually features original research or data. It’s commonly published in the form of a gated report.

White papers are considered “premium” content because they are in-depth and usually take on a persuasive or authoritative tone.

Most commonly, the goal of a white paper is to educate readers, establish credibility for the brand, and generate leads. However, they can also be used as an effective sales enablement tool.

During the sales process, sales teams can use white papers to show off your company's expertise within your field.

They're ideal for the Top-of-funnel or Middle-of-funnel phases, where prospects may be aware of your business but not yet ready to take a sales call.

Demo Videos

Many people prefer watching videos over reading written content.

As a result, video has proven to be a popular medium for sales and marketing teams.

Although there are numerous routes you can take with video, demo videos can be powerful. A demo video is simply a video that shows prospective buyers how to use your product or leverage your service.

A great demo video should be quick, provide fast facts, and be easy to consume.

Using demo videos allows your salespeople to spend their time building relationships and addressing prospect pain points, instead of giving high-level product or strategy demonstrations.

Sales Deck

A strong sales deck sells your business vision, addresses buyer needs and sets out why your business offers the best solution for them.

Keep your sales deck concise, ensuring all copy is relevant.

For greater success, create two versions of your sales deck. One for pitching and one for sending as a follow-up.

Your prospect may wish to share what they've learned with others in the business. In the absence of you presenting, your sales deck is the next best thing.

The most common missing piece of sales decks is the post-sales or implementation plan.

You need to make it easy for the buyer to adopt your solution by showing them a roadmap to success.

Kill Sheets

A "kill sheet", also referred to as a **battle card**, is a piece of content that outlines your business's competitive advantages.

It's common to have multiple kill sheets for each one of your top competitors that feature information such as pricing, features, market share, and any other intel that would be helpful during sales conversations.

Salespeople use these as a quick, go-to resource when they're on calls with prospects. A good kill sheet is concise, up-to-date, and easy to extract information from at a glance.

Step 06

Differentiated Content Creation

In a recent survey by the Content Marketing Institute, only 12% of respondents said their company's content was extremely or very different from their competitors.

Use your buyer personas and value propositions to create content that's both valuable and differentiated from your competitors.

It's pointless creating a sales content database only to have it filled with cookie-cutter content that offers limited value to prospects and looks the same as everyone else's.

Step 07

Make Content Easily Accessible

Your sales content must be easily accessible by your sales team as and when they need it. Whether in the office or in the field.

It should form an integral part of your CRM system with limited gatekeeping so that Sales have the ability to use content as required without needing to continually 'ask permission' or get access from Marketing.

This includes both hard copy and digital copy.

Content **should** be controlled and managed by Marketing, particularly for audit and revision/editing purposes, without excluding the sales team.

You should audit content regularly (at least annually) to ensure it remains relevant.

Ideally, you will have a documented audit process with responsibility for content management given to one person on the marketing team.

Step 08
Help Sales Understand What to Use & When

The challenge for Marketing is to get Sales to use more and different types of content at the right time for the proper purpose.

It's Marketing's role to curate the content and educate Sales on the best ways to use it.

Sales need to be aware of which content assets to use in which situations in order to best support their sales process.

If used correctly, the right content piece can add the necessary persuasive element to a sales call to build trust with the buyer and convince them that you are the right business for them to work with.

Step 09
Develop Shared Metrics

It’s important that Marketing and Sales have shared goals and objectives **and** shared content-related Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

One of the key questions most often asked by Marketers is whether Sales are actually using the content created and what value and impact is it having on the sales process.

Very few marketing automation and CRM systems provide an accurate understanding of shares and views of sales content. This means marketers are often relying on 1:1 communication with Sales, their own observations, or anecdotal evidence from the field.

As buyers move through the sales funnel, it's critical that Marketing and Sales have an agreed understanding of how well the content being produced is working.

While there will be an element of subjectivity regarding the effect or otherwise of each content piece on the sales process, both parties need to agree upfront on what success looks like for the content created.

Step 10

Improve With Feedback

Revisit your sales funnel metrics and performance. Get feedback on the new sales content. Survey the sales team. Review and prove your sales content is doing what you set out to do quarter over quarter.

Review close rates, time to close, buyer satisfaction (NPS), and internal feedback to prove out the impact content had on deal closure.

How many content assets were used in a deal? Which assets are most popular? Which are most effective? How much did it cost to produce?

Use all the data, direct and anecdotal feedback you get from sales, customers, your own measures, etc., to refine and develop your sales content strategy.

It does require more effort but will result in some core sales content assets that are uniquely valuable to the sales process of your business.

This is an ongoing process that will in a short space of time allow you to create a winning sales content strategy that is head and shoulders above the competition.

Summary

To build a deal-winning sales content strategy you must have a solid foundation in place.

Understanding the stages in your sales funnel, auditing your existing content, and understanding your sales team's goals, objectives, and pain points are the key foundation elements of your sales content strategy.

One of the most effective things you can do is to create a **Sales Content Playbook** that sets out whom you want to speak to, when and how to speak to them, and the most appropriate type of content needed to connect and engage with them.

Working with Sales so they understand which content assets to use and when, and agreeing how to measure the success or otherwise of content is critical to the success of your strategy.

This is an ongoing process.

The feedback you receive from Sales, buyers and your own data is the key to refining and improving your content to ensure you have a sales content strategy that will ultimately win you more clients.

I help companies create strategies and content to support their sales efforts and help their sales teams win more deals.

Whenever you're ready there are a couple of ways I can help you:

- **STRATEGIC CONSULTING** and advisory services to deliver a deal-winning sales content strategy for your business.
- **CUSTOM CONTENT** targeting specific stages of your sales funnel and the buyer journey.
- **CUSTOMISED TRAINING & COACHING** programmes to educate your Sales and Marketing teams.

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Book a call: 30-minute Zoom call