

# My Approach to Content Strategy

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An illustration of my method for developing  
content strategy *(without giving away my secrets)*

# The Purpose of this Document

## A Glimpse at How I Develop Content Strategy

In the slides that follow, you'll find a framework for how I approach creating content and the strategy behind it. This includes the order of operations, which may change depending on the specific needs of a given project, as well as a glimpse at the techniques and processes I've learned and developed during my career.

While I can provide a snapshot of my point of view regarding content creation and some of the broad strokes of what I value and how I approach tactics and strategy, I can't give *everything* away.

The areas in which my particular expertise comes into play have been redacted, replaced with **TOP SECRET**. Also, please forgive the watermarks. If you're interested in my specific methodology and the frameworks I use...sorry...**you'll just have to hire me.**



# The Key Questions I Ask:

- 01** Who Are We?
- 02** What's Our Purpose?
- 03** Who's Our Audience?
- 04** What Are Our Competitors Doing?
- 05** What Are We Currently Doing?
- 06** How Do We Create Content?

01

# Who Are We?

Establish our mission statement and  
our vision for content

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# Who Are We?

## Mission

Our mission captures what we're here to do and what drives us to accomplish our purpose.

When it comes to content strategy, our mission statement defines why the brand exists, who it serves, and what it aims to achieve.

The mission statement grounds all of our content efforts by ensuring that every piece of content — from blog posts to social media — supports the brand's purpose. Content created without alignment to the mission can feel inconsistent or confusing to the audience. The mission statement is more closely tied to content strategy via the [Content Strategy Statement](#). Our mission statement should include... **TOP SECRET** .

## Vision

Our vision expresses what we think is possible and defines the brand's aspirations. The vision statement guides the future direction of the content by... **TOP SECRET** .

The vision shapes tone, ambition and long-term storytelling by positioning the brand's content as working toward something bigger than immediate business goals. Our mission statement should include... **TOP SECRET** .

02

# What's Our Purpose?

Define the objectives and goals for our content

# What's Our Purpose?

## Purpose

Our purpose expresses our cause — why we do what we do. It defines the deeper motivation behind everything the brand (and its content) does, emphasizing its impact on people, communities, or the world at large.

It's not just *what* the brand offers (products or services), but *why* the brand matters.

The purpose statement gives a "soul" to our content strategy — it addresses, "Why are we communicating at all?"

It typically influences many parts of the content strategy, including audience segmentation, brand messaging, topics, tone, voice and storytelling.

Our purpose statement should include... **TOP SECRET**.

# Objectives & Goals

## Objectives

Our objectives are the reasons why people look to our brand and come to our site. For example:

People come to *[BRAND'S PLATFORM]* for *[KEY REASON]*. They are looking for actionable content about *[TOPIC A]* and *[TOPIC B]*, as well as *[SUPPORTING TOPIC AREAS]*. The three main objectives of *[BRAND'S PLATFORM]* are:

1. *[OBJECTIVE A]* **TOP SECRET**
2. *[OBJECTIVE B]* **TOP SECRET**
3. *[OBJECTIVE C]* **TOP SECRET**

## Goals

Our goals can be an expression of the intent of our content, but also the important, measurable metrics (KPIs) that will help define success. For example:

The content on *[BRAND'S PLATFORM]* is designed to be helpful for both *[AUDIENCE 1]* and *[AUDIENCE 2]*, and we measure success via:

- *[GOAL 1]* **TOP SECRET**
- *[GOAL 2]* **TOP SECRET**
- *[GOAL 3]* **TOP SECRET**

03

# Who's Our Audience?

Develop personas and understand the buyer's journey

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# Who's Our Audience?

## Audience Profiles

Audience profiles identify for whom we're writing or creating content. Each profile includes the needs, decision points, pain points and pleasure points that users require or encounter along their website journey. When creating content, we need to refer to the appropriate profile so we can properly empathize with our audience(s) and address their needs, incorporating the relevant details into our content.

## Personas

The audience profiles we develop will be organized and separated into segments that will be further separated into personas representing particularly valuable parts of our audience. This may look like this:

- Segment: Customers
- Personas: New; Existing; Prospective
  
- Segment: Customer Level
- Personas: Passive User; Active User; Advocate
  
- Segment: User Roles
- Personas: Member, Editor, Administrator

Our personas can be fleshed out in such a way as to create a detailed Persona ID Card for each, making each one feel more like an actual person we can empathize with and develop content for. The next slide provides an example of what a Persona ID Card might include: **TOP SECRET**

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**TOP SECRET**

04

# What Are Our Competitors Doing?

Understand what's already in the marketplace and  
evaluate how we should react

# What Are Our Competitors Doing?

## Competitive Analysis

Understanding what our competitors are doing on their platforms and with their content can be an important part of developing content strategy. Researching and evaluating our competitors' content allows us to learn about their strengths, identify their weaknesses and uncover opportunities to differentiate ourselves in meaningful ways.

When it comes to content strategy, a competitive analysis should include answers to these questions:

- How much content do they have?
  - Where does it... **TOP SECRET** ?
  - How is it... **TOP SECRET** ?
- How often do they publish?
- What types of content do they create?
- How visible is their... **TOP SECRET** ?
- Who are their... **TOP SECRET** ?
- How/where do they... **TOP SECRET** ?
- How does their content... **TOP SECRET** ?

05

# What Are We Currently Doing?

Evaluate the quantity and quality of our existing content

# What Are We Currently Doing?

In order to develop a valuable, effective content strategy, we need to first understand what content we already have. That's where a comprehensive content audit comes in.

## Quantity

The first step in a content audit is identifying how much content we have and where it lives. This sounds easy, but can include multiple CMSs across many different sites or platforms. Developing this comprehensive inventory of all existing content assets helps prevent duplication, among other things.

## Quality

The second step, which may actually be more important, is evaluating the quality of the content. We'll need to develop the scope and criteria for how we're evaluating quality. This is can include things like:

- Content format
- Content length
- Subject
- Target audience
- Total impressions
- Total clicks
- Avg page position
- Quality score
- Readability
- Lift effort

So, how do we identify and evaluate these things and what tools should we use?  
Let me tell you, I would start with... **TOP SECRET**

06

# How Do We Create Content?

Best practices to set up our content for success

# How Do We Create Content?

## Content Strategy Statement

The Content Strategy Statement serves as a north star to guide the writing for the entire site. This can be seen as an extension of our Mission or Purpose and helps us maintain a consistent path through the writing and revision process by answering these questions:

- Who is... **TOP SECRET** ?
- What are... **TOP SECRET** ?
- What are... **TOP SECRET** ?
- What content will... **TOP SECRET** ?

## Topics & Organization

Identify the products and topics on which our content will focus. These topics should provide thought-starters and guardrails for brainstorming. Develop the main categories and sub-categories by which our content will be organized and the criteria that determines within which category a piece of content will live. This exercise can allow for collaboration with our UX team.

## Brand Personality

Our personality describes how our brand communicates and behaves. Our brand personality may include “pillars” that represent the elements that make up our unique positioning, as well as “values” that express what we believe in. This can be seen as an extension of our Vision.

# How Do We Create Content?

## Messaging Framework

The Messaging Framework is a structured, strategic guide that defines what a brand says, how it says it, and to whom — across all content and communication channels. It typically incorporates big themes filtered through the brand's personality and customized to fit particular audience segments. The Messaging Framework is designed to address four key elements: **TOP SECRET** **TOP SECRET** **TOP SECRET** **TOP SECRET**

## Tone & Voice

A company's voice conveys its brand personality and content plays an integral part. The tone of the content may change based on the audience, platform or format, but its voice always stays the same. This kind of consistency strengthens the brand, making it easier to form authentic relationships with customers and users. Our voice can be defined by a few key traits that explain exactly how the brand will sound in a particular context, channel or to a specific audience.

A helpful tone profile can be constructed using sliding scales to define the range of expression with the brand's voice. This profile may look like this... **TOP SECRET** .

## Page Analysis

Good content can affect our audience's attitude, opinion and behavior. The type of change we create in our audience depends on the content we present on given page. So, how do we determine what the purpose of each content page should be? Well, there's a simple way for establishing that... **TOP SECRET** .

# How Do We Create Content?

## Content Modelling

A content model visually represents the way content should be structured on a webpage. This planning tool can help clarify requirements and often serves as a collaboration between content and information architecture. Content modelling occurs before wireframing and often takes the form of content hierarchies. The purpose of these models is to... **TOP SECRET** . Models help to... **TOP SECRET** .

## Content Workflows

A content workflow is a clearly defined sequence of steps that outlines how content moves from idea to publication. It ensures that content production is organized, consistent and aligned with strategic goals. Workflows turn the content strategy from a plan into a repeatable operational process.

## Responsible Use of AI

Every company or brand creating content these days is undoubtedly using generative AI tools like Chat GPT to help speed up the process. But how should *we* use AI? We can get to that answer by developing our core principles for responsible use of AI. These principles can be defined through 5-6 core values for governance. This will typically include... **TOP SECRET** .

While there is obviously more to creating content and developing a comprehensive content strategy, I hope this gives you a glimpse into my thought process and the structural frameworks I value.

# Thank You

If you'd like to learn more about how I approach content strategy or would like to **hire me** for a full-time, contract or consulting role, please email me at [brendano73@gmail.com](mailto:brendano73@gmail.com).