

The Content Pyramid

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The Content Pyramid

People use the internet to find answers to their problems. This is the main reason why so much revolves around content online.

When you're building your online presence you'll hear over and over again that you need lots of free content for your site. In addition to that you may even need content for your email newsletter.

And you'll probably need special content to encourage people to opt in (sign up) to your newsletter. This might be an ecourse, a free report, or a set of videos. Again, all that's considered content too.

The thing is if you don't have a strategy in place then much of this content will be wasted. It won't help you bring in traffic or result in sales. And if that's the case then it's not really worth the effort it took to create it.

I'd like to show you how to structure all this content so you're leading people to take you up on your offers. That way your business grows.

This training report covers what I call the content pyramid.

The key is you need 3 components:

Free content --> Opt in --> Offers

The free content is accessible to anyone who lands on your site. This free content includes your articles, videos, audio files, images, and whatever other formats you use to publish content that anyone can view freely when they land on your site.

The opt in is what you use to encourage people to sign up to your email newsletter. Collecting emails is widely agreed upon by many to be a highly worthwhile business activity because it allows you to follow up with people interested in what you offer.

You'll want to have an opt in form if you don't already.

If you've got useful, relevant content on your site, it's only natural for people to want to opt in (or sign up) to get more of it from you. So make it easy for them by offering them a way to sign up for this.

The offers are your products or services. Offers can also include affiliate products, affiliate services or even advertising you run on your site.

Each component needs to have a thoughtful structure, with one leading to the other if you want to maximize your efforts. You can send a ton of traffic to your site, but if you don't plan out a structure behind these crucial components, that traffic may not turn into anything worthwhile for your business.

Why the Content Pyramid

If you remember learning about the different food groups back in grade school then you'll know what I'm talking about when I mention the food pyramid.

You've got the bottom section which is the biggest part of the pyramid. And that's the bread, cereal, rice and pasta group. Sounds crazy now with all the carb police, but that's what we're supposed to eat the most of according to USDA nutrition guides.

Then the next layer up are the fruits and vegetables. Even smaller still is the next level up made up of dairy and meats.

Finally you've got the top of the pyramid, consisting of the fats and sweets. That's the stuff we're supposed to eat the least of.

You want to structure your content efforts like this pyramid.

The bottom is all the free content you've got on your site.

There's probably a lot of it.

And it's available for anyone to get.

So it takes up the most space on the pyramid.

Then the next level up is the free content that requires an opt-in. In order to get this content, people have to give you their email address. That's the only way they can access it. It consists of the content you give away to encourage the opt in and your follow-up messages.

Then at the top level are your marketing and sales messages for your products, services, affiliate products or services, or ads you allow others to place on your site.

That's all content too.

Whether you like to use text, video, audio, or images to help sell your offers, it's content nonetheless.

The content pyramid can change a little depending on the type of business you're running (it's possible to offer a free trial instead of free content at the opt in level), but let's go through the basics of this assuming it will be actual content.

Just like the concept of a pyramid shows, there's a lot of content at the free level.

And that's usually a good thing because each free piece of content out there can attract people to your site, your brand, and you. The more targeted eyeballs visiting your site, the more of the right kind of people you'll have looking at your offers. This will result in more income for your business.

You want to optimize this content for the search engines, include triggers for sharing and commenting, and promote it to the right type of people.

Every time you publish a piece of useful content you have the potential to get a lot of links (links that will result in higher rankings and direct traffic from the sites linking to it), and you'll have the potential to get more people sharing it too.

If you set it up right, this free content will help you generate recurring traffic. The better you are at this, the more traffic you can get.

However, it has to be the right kind of traffic. Targeted traffic is what you want, which is why it's important to think about your content pyramid before you start creating a whole lot of content.

One goal of this free content should be to drive visitors to your web site to become your fans.

The best way to convert visitors to your site into fans is through email. There are dozens of social media platforms now, but it's really better if your visitors sign up to your email list because you have more control over that than a social media profile run by some other company.

Facebook can decide to lock down your account and screw you over at any time. They offer you a free service so they don't really owe you anything.

Building up a massive profile on Facebook or Twitter instead of an email list is not a good way to build a solid business. If you want to have those profiles as a way to keep in touch that's great, but think of them as extras. Put the focus on email.

The opt in, your list of newsletter subscribers, is also another source of traffic for you. And it's actually the most powerful source you can ever have. So adding as many people as possible to your email list will make a big difference to the success of your business.

It's important enough that it's worthwhile to track how many visitors are coming to your site and see how many of those visitors are opting into your email list. Google Analytics will do this for you as will many other tracking programs. You want that conversion rate, that percentage of people opting in to be as high as possible.

If you have everything all lined up right as I'll explain then as your opt in rate increases, so will your income.

Here's the very first part of our content pyramid:

Free --> Opt in

One way to encourage people to give you their email address is in exchange for the notification of new content. That's a very minimal thing, but it works.

If you're using this then visitors see your free content. They hope to get more free content just like it so they opt in to get updates when you publish something new. This is fine, it definitely works.

It works best if you have a specific theme on your site. So your visitors are really opting in to hear more from you about the theme or topic you cover.

But in many markets you'll be able to increase your conversion rates by offering something extra in addition to those free updates.

Like a free report, toolkit, training, video, etc...

A lot of business will incorporate that into their opt in so that their visitors now get the updates + the free thing in exchange for their email address.

If you do this your opt in conversion rate will probably increase. The trick with the free thing is to make sure it matches and is in alignment with your content pyramid.

It needs to serve as a bridge between your paid offer and the free content. That way it'll attract as many targeted people as possible. You don't just want random people, you want targeted people.

Free --> Opt in --> Offers

Having a good call to sign up and opt in is important and it needs to align with your end goal (which are your offers).

One way to accomplish this alignment is to think about what your business is about.

What are you providing?

Who are you helping and how?

Write this out in a sentence. Just make it the shortest thing you can. It doesn't need to be catchy. You're not turning this into a USP or a tagline, it's just for you.

What exactly do you do?

You can work backwards with what your product, service or offers provide for people.

What is the point of them?

You can do this even if you're an affiliate.

As an example, let's say you're an affiliate for car insurance. You put some kind of widget on your site and if people fill it out it goes out and gets them a ton of car insurance quotes. It helps narrow down their search and makes finding a decent car insurance provider easier for them.

So here's your sentence:

'Help consumers get the best car insurance for their needs.'

You're not just getting quotes. The end result here is they'll hopefully wind up with car insurance, be happy with the price and the service, and not have to worry about this anymore. Now they can just drive around and know they're covered.

So your offer is to 'help consumers get the best car insurance for their needs'.

Now this makes coming up with an opt in and even your free content so much easier. All your free content and your opt in needs to support this in order for you to see the highest conversions with your traffic.

You will attract the right kind of visitor to your site by keeping this in mind.

So your opt in could be a free checklist that includes the little things consumers should get coverage for before they settle on a car insurance plan.

For example, you could talk about windshield insurance.

And how to figure out the amount of a deductible they should get.

You could also talk about any reductions they might qualify for.

The end result is a nicely put together report, checklist, video, or ecourse delivered by email with everything you promised them.

You can even take some of the content already on your site (the free content) and present it graphically in a nice readable format.

The main point is with our particular example, the opt in should be the thing they need before they start calling for quotes.

They need to understand a few things so they're more informed about car insurance. You could even call your checklist or report, '10 things you must absolutely know before calling for car insurance quotes'.

And there isn't just one right thing to offer here.

You've got a lot of choices.

The point is the opt in needs to match your goal which in this example is to 'help consumers get the best car insurance for their needs'.

Your report, '10 things you absolutely must know before calling for car insurance quotes' is in alignment with what your site provides.

That means the people who opt in will be more likely to take you up on your offers.

The next logical step for people who opt in for this report is to now go get quotes and that's what you offer on your site.

So if you get people to opt in and read your report or checklist then when you're following up with them you can send emails like this:

Hello,

Now that you're armed with the information you need to pick a car insurance provider we've got this form you can fill out and you'll get 5 car insurance quotes.

You can find it here: listurl.com

So it leads them along a path.

And that path goes from opt in to offers.

The free content on your site (that helps drive traffic) should also match with the goal of 'helping consumers get the best car insurance for their needs'.

You should find out the topics related to car insurance that are being shared, get lots of links (and who's doing the linking), as well as the type of keyphrases people are actively searching for so you incorporate those into the content you end up creating.

Make sure it is created to 'help consumers get the best car insurance for their needs'.

So that means if you create a bunch of content on how to get your car insurance provider to pay for your accident, that's great and valuable and all, but it's not going to attract the right people.

These people already have car insurance so they aren't likely to be interested in your offer.

You can still include content that doesn't quite match up if you want to.

The visitors you attract to that content may still share or link to it, but know in advance that they aren't going to convert for you. You won't get a whole lot of revenue from that content. Let that guide your decision on whether to include content that doesn't quite match up or not.

If you're trying to maximize the results of your content creation, you should look for the type of content that's in alignment with your goal. In our example, again it's to 'help consumers get the best car insurance for their needs'.

So you might instead create detailed content on insurance deductibles or information on car insurance for students.

I'd keep in mind all the elements for creating recurring traffic from that content, but I'd also keep in mind the ultimate goal for the site.

So if you put together a content idea list like suggested in the training on using content to create recurring traffic that would be refined even further to only include content that will drive conversions to your offers.

Colgate.com has a resource section on their site where they use content to attract visitors interested in dental hygiene. It's full of articles, videos, and interactive content on common dental topics like sensitive teeth, tooth whitening and more.

The interesting thing is for each major topic, they also list product solutions.

So if you were searching for stuff to help with sensitive teeth then you'd see they've got products to help you with that like what's shown below:

Sensitive Teeth

Search Resource Center All Categories

Colgate® Sensitive® Multiprotection Provides Clinically Proven Sensitivity Relief

Use Colgate® Sensitive® for daily protection from painful tooth sensitivity.

Featured Materials

- Articles
- Videos
- Interactive Guides

Product Solutions

TOOTH SENSITIVITY: hard to ignore, but easy to treat

Almost half the population suffers from tooth sensitivity and many accept it as normal. The good news is that sensitivity can be treated with simple in-office and at-home treatments.

Articles: The Basics

What is Tooth Sensitivity?

Tooth sensitivity is a common name for dentin hypersensitivity or root sensitivity. If hot, cold, sweet or very acidic foods and drinks.

• [Read "What is Tooth Sensitivity?" article](#)

What Causes Tooth Sensitivity?

Tooth sensitivity is something that affects a number of people. It is often caused by eating or drinking something hot, cold, sweet or acidic.

Related Videos

Understanding Tooth Sensitivity

Discover the causes, prevention and treatment of sensitivity.

• [Watch "Understanding Tooth Sensitivity" video](#)

Related Guides

They match up the right product with the free content on their site.

And they also have a newsletter where you can get more dental health information and special offers.

So if you're searching for information for sensitive teeth you may land on an article covering sensitive teeth on the Colgate site. Then you have the opportunity to opt in to a newsletter on dental health that provides you with special offers from Colgate. And in addition to that they offer paid solutions for sensitive teeth.

Everything is alignment.

It will really pay off for you if you think about your free content, your opt in, and your offers and make sure they align.

Are you attracting the right type of people to your site?

Are the right type of people most interested in opting in to receive more information from you?

Here's another example. Let's say you offer accounting services for businesses.

Your opt in offer could be a short course on tax breaks for businesses. You could put this together in any format you want; video, PDF, audio. Or you could even do a free 30-minute call if you've got an assistant or a lot of time on your hands.

You'll also follow up with them in an email follow-up sequence that leads them toward your accounting services and introduces them to your free content.

Your free content could cover popular topics related to small business taxes and small business accounting. You'd want to include topics that are actively searched for, shared, and linked to. The topics should be popular and be in alignment with your opt in which will attract small business owners.

So you know it's not going to be worth it to include a lot of content on taxes for employees. Those visitors won't convert for you because you specialize in doing small business taxes. But it may be worthwhile to create content on the difference between an LLC and a corporation. That's the type of information a small business (especially one just starting out who may not have an accountant yet) is interested in.

The key is that all this free content has to support your offers. You've got to have a connection between the opt in and your offers.

It's best to really draw this out. It's easiest if you start at your offer and work backwards through the opt in and your free content. Make sure your free stuff really supports your offers.

Otherwise you can have a large volume of visitors landing on your content, but when it comes time to sell them something, no one buys.

The phrase "content marketing" is thrown out there a lot now, but there's more to it than just simply creating content, promoting it and sitting back letting it attract visitors and collect money.

It's all got to be integrated for you to get the results you want.

In contrast, many people start a blog or a web site, but they don't have a clearly defined strategy. Instead they have a lot of variety in their content. That's not necessarily a bad thing except that the content may not bring in the right kind of visitors.

Or they may keep to a specific theme or topic with their free content, but it just might not line up with their offers.

If the content doesn't relate to their offers and their opt in (or worse, they don't even have offers or an opt in) then they won't gain a whole lot of traction. It really doesn't matter how much effort they put into their site and the content that goes on it.

Without a strategy it's going to be hard to attract the right people.

So it's worth it to think this through.

Even if you don't have a product or service right now or you're waiting to monetize your site with ads or affiliate offers you can (and really should) think all this through in the beginning. Of if it's way past your starting point, stop what you're doing and think through it now.

Otherwise, you may wind up with a large audience, but that audience will not be targeted. When you do tell them about your offers, you'll see a lot less traction than you would if your free content and your opt in were in alignment with each other and your offer.

Your Next Step

Make sure to think through a content pyramid for your business.

Content marketing is a great way to attract new visitors and convert them into customers, but it's a lot more effective if your content is in alignment and there's a strategy in place.

Work through the content pyramid checklist and apply this information quickly and easily. You can [find that and other VIP resources here](#).

Also, if you found this information helpful, please share it by linking to our site from yours. We also appreciate if you'd take a moment to [tweet about us](#) or spread the word in whatever way is most convenient for you.

This training report walks you through a plan for increasing your results from content marketing by making sure your free content, your opt in, and your offers align.

We offer paid training to help you create highly authoritative free content we call Magnetic Content. This type of free content will result in much more exposure for you, getting you more links and more visitor sharing. And that means more traffic.

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