PLAN AND CREATE
YOUR ULTIMATE
CONTENT CALENDAR

IDEA GENERATOR

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Introduction

Your content calendar is your roadmap to attracting more people to you. Think about the content you post. Adorable cat videos or ranting about your political beliefs online, how do they serve your ideal audience? Do they portray your business in the best way?

Most likely not. If you are using online platforms for personal use, then keep posting those cat videos. But if you want to leverage the power of online platforms to portray a professional image, then have planned goals for each piece of content you post.

How do you know what they need and want? You need to have a strong understanding of who your audience is and the problems they need solved. Once you have the due diligence to research and ask people in your audience, it will be easier to create content for them.

These ideas will help you create your ultimate content calendar, help you find inspiration, and help you create a content calendar that you will stick with. If you aren't creating content, your audience won't find you. Let's go!

Time Management

A popular, effective time management technique is Pomodoro. This is based on the idea that multi-tasking does not work. You will be more productive when your mind is focused on one thing. Set a timer for 25 minutes to focus on one task, then take a 5-minute break when the timer goes off. Get up to stretch, drink some water or just close your eyes. At the end of the 5 minutes, reset the timer and repeat the process.

You will be surprised at how few Pomodoro sessions you need to complete tasks. This technique can be used to any task in your business. For creating your content calendar, this is an excellent technique to utilize. You can use a kitchen timer or a timer on your cell phone. Be sure to silence your ringer so you won't be interrupted.

Set Up Google Alerts

If you want to be up to date on the latest industry news, ask Google. Type keyword phrases you want to track and Google sends you daily or weekly alerts straight to your inbox whenever that phrase shows up in a news story online.

Once you receive the Google Alerts, create content around that news topic. If it's a time-sensitive topic, then publish your content right away. If it's evergreen, schedule the content anytime.

Ask Your Audience

Go straight to the source and ask your ideal audience what they need. Use the Facebook poll option, or use Survey Monkey to create a survey, then send to your email list.

Scan Google Trends for Inspiration

Google Trends is a quick way to see hot topics anywhere around the world. You can use your own search word, or Google Trends has lists of Recently Trending topics that are easy to find topics to write about.

As you come up with content ideas, see if you can spin the topic with your unique point of view. Your audience follows you for a reason. Anytime you write something, keep your audience's needs in mind. Don't churn the same information. Find ways to make your content compelling and unique.

Remove All Distractions from Your Office

Regardless of the time management technique you choose, it will only work when you focus without distractions. Eliminate all potential distractions. Turn off or silence your computer and phone notifications. In fact, sign out of your social platforms to remove the temptation of 'peeking' at your feeds.

Focus you energy on creating the best quality content, one blog post at a time. For people working from their homes, family and other distractions can be the hardest to avoid. Put a sign on your office door that you can't be disturbed. Find ways to get quiet time to think and create.

Create an Optimal Work Environment

You'll focus better and find your creativity when your workspace nurtures creativity. If you need music as background noise, then play away! Improve you lighting, decorate your walls with inspiring images to spark creativity.

Are you someone that need other people around? Go to your local coffee shop or the library. Think about your personality and what makes your spirit soar and create your ideal work environment.

Keep a Content Ideas Journal or Folder

You can be inspired at any moment by anything. If you carry a content ideas journal, or use an app on your cell phone, you can capture your idea without losing it. Don't fool yourself into thinking the idea is so good that you won't forget it – don't count on it. Document it.

An idea journal can be the spot for your brainstorming or brain dumps. Write anything that comes to mind, no matter how strange it seems. Don't edit in the moment. Allow your creativity to flow.

Review them later and decide what are genuine ideas you can use and develop into great content.

Just Say NO

Saying no is a lesson in setting boundaries. For instance, if you have Wednesday mornings blocked off to create content, never schedule a call or anything else in that time block. Serving your clients is vital, but you need to honor your calendar.

If you struggle saying no to people, hire a VA who can handle your schedule and say no for you. Many times, having someone else say no on your behalf is easier, however you do need to learn how to say it yourself.

"Eat That Frog"

Although this time management theory has a funny name, there's nothing funny about its results. "Eat that frog" simply means do the most difficult thing on your list first. That's it.

If eating the frog equates to creating your content, then allow some time at the very beginning of your day to tackle that challenge. Write that single blog post. Record that video. Write that email with a paid offer. These are content ideas that many people put off until later in the day, except "later" often doesn't come. Take charge of those frogs!

Find Inspiration from Other Entrepreneurs

Who do you admire in your niche? How do they manage their content distribution? What do they do that keeps you interested enough to follow them?

It may be a coach you've had in the past, or someone in a community or group you've engaged with. Always be yourself and don't copy what they do. Instead, use them as the inspiration to create content in your voice for your audience.

Track Your Time Wasting

We've all been down those elusive "rabbit holes," such as going on Facebook for 10-minutes to post something on your page but then you get sucked into scrolling your newsfeed. Before you know it, that 10-minute limit has morphed into 60 minutes. Instead of wondering where all your time went, start tracking where you spend your time online. Of course, there's an app for that!

Rescue Time is just one of many apps that will monitor your computer usage. You'll receive reports of how your time was spent each day and you'll see in black and white if you went down any rabbit holes. Fill in those holes and you'll suddenly have more time for content creation.

Impose the 5-Minute Rule for Easy Tasks

Why put off until tomorrow what you can do today? If you read an email that's asking for something you can do in less than 5 minutes, stop everything and complete that task. Then you can delete that email from your inbox and take pride in accomplishing something easy.

What happens if you don't take care of that 5-minute task right away? Usually, it gets buried at the bottom of your inbox and you forget about it. Or it gets deleted by mistake until that same person emails or calls you again. Instead of causing stress, just take care of the task and move on with your day.

Repurpose Your Old Content into a New Format

When you're stuck for content ideas, try a new format instead. Go Live talking about a topic you covered last year on your blog. Gather some popular blog posts and turn them into an eBook or lead magnet. Expound upon a comment from social media in a blog post or video. Convert your video files into mp3 audio files and bundle them into a class for sale or for a lead magnet.

Updating older blog posts to add new data or case studies is also repurposing content. Make your life easier by asking your VA to keep a running tally of content that can be transformed into a new format. Add that task to your content creation calendar and you won't struggle thinking of something new to say.

Explain How the Current News Affects Your Industry

While it may be risky to bring news and politics into your content creation, some news stories may truly affect your industry or niche, so it's worthwhile to tell your audience about it. Talk about the good and the bad and remember to look at your local, hometown news for inspiration instead of focusing solely on national news.

Test out this format with a single piece of content and track its engagement. You'll either hear crickets or blow up the internet with comments, which will tell you straight away if this is a good or bad idea to pursue. If you're passionate about including news in your content, consider using it on a monthly basis.

Conduct Keyword Research

Make the most of your content by optimizing every piece with keyword phrases. Keywords are what your target audience uses to find you and/or your specialty in the search engines. Utilizing smart keyword strategies also helps raise your search rankings so you're not stuck on page 7 of the search results.

Keyword tools such as Wordtracker give insights into how frequently a phrase is searched, which indicates if it's a high-demand keyword or one that's seldom used. You can also find new keyword phrase ideas that you might not have thought of targeting. Your initial keyword search will be lengthier than the follow up searches, but you can also assign this task to a VA or hire an SEO strategist.

Think "Sideways" When Creating Your Content Buckets

Content buckets are a great way to visualize the topics you want to talk about but if you're questioning how many times you can talk about your

main specialty, it's time to think "sideways." In other words, think about related topics that will still draw in your main audience.

For instance, a local seasonal party rental company only rents party tents, tables, and chairs. There's only so much you can talk about needing a party tent, so they also publish party planning ideas, which also mentions the importance of needing a party tent, tables, and chairs. So, even though this particular company isn't a party planner, they offer party planning info to lead their audience to rent their tents. Thinking sideways can breathe new life into your content planning, simply by mixing up new ideas with the older topics.

Lock Your Browser Tabs to Discourage Time Wasting

If you're prone to getting distracted with "just one more peek" on social media, try using an app such as Focus, which literally locks your browser so you cannot log on to those time-wasting sites. Focus is only for Mac and it also has a timer to use for your Pomodoro technique.

For those with Windows, Rescue Time allows you to block certain sites or you can try StayFocusd, which is a Chrome extension that blocks your list of time-wasting sites after your pre-appointed time limit expires. If you can't log on to your sites, you have no choice but to focus on work, right?

Build Content Based on Promotional Offers

Affiliate marketing is one way to build an alternate income stream to supplement your client work, especially since YOU don't have to do the creating or customer service. Scoping out products and courses that will benefit your audience is also another way to create content.

Write a review of the product. Video a demonstration of the product. Create a webinar about a similar topic or bullet point and poise the affiliate product as the ending offer. Expand upon the product by offering your different perspective or go into more depth about one of the topics mentioned in the

product. Your excitement about the product will be contagious so let that energy drive your creativity.

Make Your Content Calendar Portable

If you travel a lot – or find yourself working from different local locations – make a portable version of your content calendar so you can call an audible while out and about. Since we never know when inspiration will strike, having your calendar with you at all times allows you to reschedule posts or change topics quickly. If your calendar is the whiteboard in your office, what are the chances you'll remember these ideas by the time you get back home.

Planning on paper or whiteboards is great but then import those ideas into a digital content calendar or have your VA do it. Even if you stick with a simple Excel spreadsheet, you can access that on your smartphone from anywhere to make changes or add notes. Don't risk losing your brilliant ideas because you depended on old school methods.

Don't Forget Your Promotional Content

Publishing content is wonderful but if no one sees it, what good is it? Promotional content includes making sales offers but it also includes your online advertising copy and cross promotional posts.

Instead of just sharing one promo piece across all your platforms, add more personalized copy for each audience along with the shared link. If you're connected with members on multiple platforms, they will notice if you're copying/pasting the same link everywhere. They will also notice if you take the time to make each post a bit different. Maybe include different tips related to the topic of your promo. Include a teaser in the copy to encourage them to click the link. Your promo content is equally important as the content in your product, course, or blog post.

Content has been and always will be king in the online world. If you don't create content for your audience, you have no online presence. If you don't have an online presence, you have no sales. It may sound like a vicious cycle but it's a necessary one to cull out the spammers and those who aren't serious about helping their customers.

Take a few of these ideas and implement them. But first, commit to yourself that you'll start planning your content. Even if it's just one week at a time, you'll notice the freedom you have, knowing you have a plan and knowing exactly what you have to create on any given day.