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want to)—with countless articles on hand that tout the importance of developing useful, timely content to support a strong marketing program.

**Gaynor Meilke • Kristy Short • Aug. 29, 2013**

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you and your team as credible advisors.

And in a world where the Internet is THE research tool of choice, content marketing is the ideal tactic to employ.

If you're still not sure about content marketing, don't worry. Read on for an easy-to-understand definition of content marketing and sound tips on how to deploy a content-driven strategy for your practice.

## **Content Marketing – What It Is and Why You Need to Embrace It**

Content marketing is not exactly an intuitive descriptor. The main issue is that the word 'marketing' on its own can throw accountants into a head spin. Add the word 'content' (considering most accountants don't exactly get jazzed up about writing) and you may hit full-on seizure mode. To truly grasp what content marketing means, it's best to think of it as a tactic and not an action.

If you read nothing else in this article, understand this: *Content marketing is a tactic used to generate traffic by sharing valuable and free content.* By developing content that your existing clients and prospects *want* to read (an important distinction), you can increase interest in your firm, create rapport, and build trust, which ultimately leads to new business. Content marketing provides another benefit as well: the more quality content you publish, the more 'findable' you are online—especially if proper attention is given to creating keyword-strong content (keywords are words and phrases that search engines use to index web content). The main goal of content marketing is to engage your audience and drive them back to you (inbound) for more information.

Simply understanding what content marketing means is the first step to mastering this tactic and building a strong marketing program overall. It's also important to note that content marketing should include both existing clients and prospects.

Current clients want to be educated too, and, bonus, this offers another way to

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outsourcing these services, including cost effectiveness, convenience, and assurance of proper accounting principles. This will allow readers to get to know and trust you enough to do business with you, or in the case of existing clients, to expand their business relationship with you.

Once you have decided the type of content that your clients and prospects will find valuable, it's time to consider the channels you will use to deliver it to them. In other words, where should you publish your content? The good news is that you have many options. The web has made publishing content easier than ever. Today, you are in control of what is published and where it appears. You can even create your own channels. As such, your content can take many forms—from YouTube how-to videos (e.g., How to Effectively use Online Client Accounting Software) to educational articles published on your website or within a local magazine (e.g. Top Benefits of Outsourcing Payroll for Small Businesses). Other options include writing a regular blog, developing a newsletter that can be sent to clients and prospects, or tweeting and posting useful, timely tips (e.g., reminders for quarterly estimate payments). There are numerous delivery options available to push your content out. Take full advantage of them.

### **Final, *Helpful* Thoughts...**

The key to good content marketing (and pay close attention to this) is that it should not read, sound, or feel like marketing. The content you develop should always be informative...while very subtly selling your services. Prospects will know who you are because you are the content provider, so no need to get into detail about your firm and your services within the content (save this for an 'About the Author' section at the end). Keep in mind the primary objectives of content marketing: build relationships, create rapport, and gain trust through appropriate and consistent knowledge sharing. The essence of effective content marketing is to offer something a viewer or reader wants and needs—information!



In general, the most powerful content focuses on helping clients and prospects,

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