



●-●-●-follow
●-●-your-●-
buyer-●-●-▶

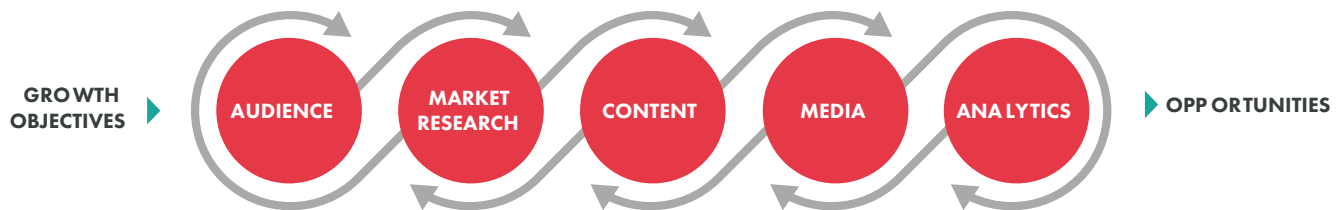
Engagement Engine Toolkit

Engagement Engine Overview

A framework for engagement

Your prospects have access to troves of information—and the amount is increasing by the day. Your challenge now is to capture their engagement and beat your competition for Share of Voice and Share of Consideration. Engaging your prospects requires that you understand who they are and what they care about—in great detail and with accuracy. This intelligence will help you to create content that helps them in a unique way. After all, your prospects are attracted to content that solves their problems (and this type of content can be hard to come by). Your content program must be dynamic, leveraging real-time data on prospect engagement to assess your content's performance and empower you to react appropriately.

Enter the Engagement Engine—a framework for planning your content program. The Engagement Engine comprises five interconnected components of a comprehensive content marketing strategy—audience, research, content, media, and analytics. Defining your Engagement Engine is challenging work, but the process will position you to succeed in engaging your prospects with compelling content.



How to build your Engagement Engine

We bet you can make solid, educated decisions about your content marketing program. Chances are you'll even make the right decisions more often than not—a fine situation ... unless your competition does better. You can improve the effectiveness of your program by committing to maintaining a fully vetted, rigorous planning framework. This methodology is designed to transform educated guesses into specific validated opinions that will drive content themes. Follow along to learn how you can build your Engagement Engine from the ground-up, guided by your company's overall growth plan.. Then, use the step-by-step worksheets to do the hard work of planning your program. A few pointers: complete the worksheets in stage order, test your thinking with outside opinions or research whenever possible, use terminology that suits your organization, and expect to make changes—a lot of changes. Consider your plan a living document and revise as you gain market intelligence.

Use this packet as a reference for completing the engagement worksheets for each step in the engine.



Profile Audience | Market Segment

Characterize a key market segment. Segments are groups of business that have common characteristics and are likely to respond to similar content themes. Example segment groupings include products/services delivered, geography, and business interest.



Profile Audience | Company Type

Group companies that have similar problems and are likely to respond to similar content messaging.



Profile Audience | Persona

Characterize persona types. Complete all target personas for each target company and anticipate overlap. This foundation will allow you to align content themes with personas' key needs and challenges.



Focus Research

Define your understanding of persona challenges, needs, perceptions, and preferences. Think through what other information you would like to know. A validated framework will ensure that personas are not only interested in your content, but also are poised to act in response.



Position Content | Early Buyer's Journey

Determine content themes. Pay attention to each persona's role in the buyer's journey and to ensure your content provides real help.



Position Content | Middle Buyer's Journey



Create Content

Outline the development of each piece of content. Stay close to the identified positioning themes and don't lose sight of persona needs and the buyer's journey.



Plan Media

Determine appropriate content delivery formats.



Define Analytics

Define the key performance indicators of your content marketing program. Understand how to interpret engagement data and use the information to improve outcomes.

PROFILE AUDIENCE



Market Segments

Characterize a key market segment. Segments are groups of business that have common characteristics and are likely to respond to similar content themes. Example segment groupings include:

1. Products/services delivered
2. Geography
3. Business interest

DEFINE ALL MARKET SEGMENTS

- ▶ **Name of market segment**
- ▶ **Priority, compared to other segments**
- ▶ **Size of market segment**
Ex: estimated annual revenue
- ▶ **Characteristics**
- ▶ **Why is this a target segment?**
- ▶ **What is our market share?**
- ▶ **How has our market share changed over the past 3 years? Why?**
- ▶ **What is our goal for market share over the next 3 years? Why?**

PROFILE AUDIENCE



Companies

Group companies that have similar problems and are likely to respond to similar content messaging.

COMPLETE FOR EACH MARKET SEGMENT

▶ **Name of company type**

▶ **Size**

Ex: estimated annual revenue and/or number of companies of this type in the market segment

▶ **Characteristics**

▶ **Why is this a target company type?**

▶ **What are the common interests and challenges?**

▶ **What makes this type of company unique?**

PROFILE AUDIENCE



Personas

Characterize persona types. Complete all needed target personas for each target company and anticipate overlap. This foundation will allow you to align content themes with personas' key needs and challenges.

COMPLETE FOR EACH COMPANY TYPE

- ▶ **Name of persona group**
- ▶ **Common job titles and levels**
Ex: manager, direct, VP
- ▶ **Key job functions**
- ▶ **Education level**
- ▶ **Which stages of the company's buyer's journey is the persona actively engaged in?**

The 8 stages of the buyer's journey are: understand issues, establish objectives, set strategy, explore options, set vendor criteria, examine alternatives, purchase and implement, measure results

- ▶ **Primary role in buying process**
Ex: gather information, evaluate, influence, recommend, veto, decide
- ▶ **Motivator/reason for buying**
- ▶ **What are the biggest problems faced?**
- ▶ **What are the biggest challenges to solving the problems?**
- ▶ **What opportunities do they look for?**
- ▶ **Preferences for format/media to support role**
- ▶ **Preferences for content theme to support role**
Ex: business, technical, etc.
- ▶ **How is the persona evaluated in his or her job? What does success look like?**
- ▶ **Attitudes and beliefs that guide decision-making**
- ▶ **Personal interaction with product/service**

FOCUS RESEARCH



Define your understanding of persona challenges, needs, perceptions, and preferences. Think through what other information you would like to know. A validated framework will ensure that personas are not only interested in your content, but also are poised to act in response.

COMPLETE FOR EACH PERSONA GROUP

- ▶ **What do we think we know about how this persona group's perceptions?**

 - Their problems, challenges, and opportunities;

 - Our ability to help;

 - Our competition

- ▶ **How do we know this?**

 - Ex: data collection method

- ▶ **How confident are we in this data? What are the consequences if we are wrong?**

- ▶ **What would we like to know about this persona group?**

- ▶ **How can we learn this information and how would we utilize it?**

CREATE CONTENT



Content Positioning | Early Buyer's Journey

Determine content themes. Pay attention to each persona's role in the buyer's journey and to ensure your content provides real help.

COMPLETE FOR EACH PERSONA GROUP

- ▶ **Key problem, challenge, or opportunity**
- ▶ **Our sustainable, unique strengths tied to persona group's biggest problems**
Consider product, business unit, and corporate level
- ▶ **Which strengths are underappreciated and why?**
Consider market research to validate "distant" opinions
- ▶ **What does the persona group fail to understand about their own business that leads to underappreciation of our business?**
- ▶ **What other perceptions prevent the persona group from considering us?**
- ▶ **When we lose, why do we lose? What are the top 3 objections from this persona group?**
- ▶ **What do we need to teach this persona group about their business that would lead them to value us more (content themes)?**
Consider market research to validate "distant" opinions
- ▶ **Topics that need covered in each theme to change persona group's perceptions**
- ▶ **Amount of content needed to educate and win share of voice over competition**
- ▶ **Reliable, available sources of information on themes**
Ex: internal SMEs, customers, analysts, market research

CREATE CONTENT



Content Positioning | Middle & Late Buyer's Journey

COMPLETE FOR EACH PERSONA GROUP

- ▶ **Key problem, challenge, or opportunity**
- ▶ **Evidence needed to convince this persona group on the topic**

This defines the content strategy (ex: white papers, case studies, product profiles)
- ▶ **Compelling/unique messaging (what must be understood to differentiate us?)**

Important to demonstrate differentiation from competition at this stage of the buyer's journey
- ▶ **Specific call to action**

Only for middle- and late-stage content (if introduced earlier, can be interpreted as selfish intent)
- ▶ **Topics that need covered in each theme to change persona group's perceptions**
- ▶ **Amount of content needed to educate and win share of voice over competition**
- ▶ **Reliable, available sources of information on the themes**

Ex: internal SMEs, customers, analysts, market research
- ▶ **Product/service content needed to support these efforts**

CREATE CONTENT



Content Creation

Outline the development of each piece of content. Stay close to the identified positioning themes and don't lose sight of persona needs and the buyer's journey.

COMPLETE FOR EACH CONTENT THEME

- ▶ **Subjects to be covered**
- ▶ **Buyer's journey stage (ex: early, middle, late)**
- ▶ **Timeline (start and complete dates)**
Add to editorial calendar and publication schedule
- ▶ **Working title**
- ▶ **Description**
- ▶ **Desired key takeaways for reader**
- ▶ **Desired reader response**
Ex: think differently, question approach, visit website, share content, engage with similar content
- ▶ **List questions for SME(s) to answer (to be asked by writer)**
Should be relevant to persona's needs, challenges, and role
- ▶ **SME(s) and responsibilities; how they will be prepared**
- ▶ **Tone**
Ex: business, technical, invoking concern, educational, visionary
- ▶ **Most appropriate formats**
Ex: first-person article, whitepaper, press release, case study, ad, brochure, social media or blog post, presentation, demo
- ▶ **Are you confident this content, as designed, is a fit for the target persona group?**
- ▶ **Can content be used as-is or with modifications for other segments or themes?**
- ▶ **Can content topic be rewritten to serve other persona groups?**
- ▶ **List keywords to optimize content for search**

PLAN MEDIA



Determine appropriate content delivery formats.

COMPLETE FOR EACH PIECE OF CONTENT

- ▶ **Goal of content**

Ex: awareness, education, prompt action. Content may have multiple goals and primary goal may vary based on format/delivery method.

- ▶ **Potential formats for effective content delivery**

Match formats to persona's role in buying process and content preferences (ex: print, digital, audio). Multiple formats ensure broad influence.

- ▶ **Off-limits formats for content delivery with explanation**

- ▶ **Other content that can be bundled with this piece and potential delivery formats**

Ex: print, custom digital newsletter, eBook, webinar

- ▶ **Opportunities to present content in different format**

Ex: breaking into "quick views," transcribing webinar into written content, creating short audio from Q&A session

- ▶ **Where should the content be distributed?**

DEFINE ANALYTICS



Define the key performance indicators of your content marketing program. Understand how to interpret engagement data and use the information to improve outcomes.

COMPLETE FOR EACH PERSONA GROUP

- ▶ **KPIs that determine campaign effectiveness**
- ▶ **Data needed to measure KPIs**
- ▶ **Data sets and views that will be valuable to our outcomes**
- ▶ **Needs for data formats and collection frequencies**
- ▶ **Data report needs by internal stakeholders (ex: marketing, sales, leadership)**
- ▶ **Ideas for using data to advance outcomes**
Ex: nurturing, ABM, content creation
- ▶ **Ways to use data from suppliers to broaden our view**
- ▶ **Responsible party for data collection and analysis**
- ▶ **Tools needed for data analysis**
- ▶ **Data cleansing and accuracy issues that may arise; responsible party for managing**
- ▶ **What data would we like to have that we did not think we could get?**

follow your buyer

First Steps To Follow Your Buyer

Most B2B marketers know more about their own products and services than they do about their prospects and active customers. The reverse needs to be true in order to follow your buyers. The authors of *Selling To The C-Suite* state, "To truly focus on solutions means to solve problems. To talk about problems is to abandon the self-indulgence of promoting our products. This is not a comfortable place for most marketers."

A good way to get out of your comfort zone is to start by mapping out your markets, the target companies within those markets, and personas/roles within those companies that are involved in purchasing solutions like yours. You may think you already know enough information about your buyer, but chances are that information only exists within the context of your products and services.

Do you know how each persona is evaluated in their role? What does success look like for that persona? Can you provide details around what attitudes and beliefs guide each persona's buying decisions? Do you know what their biggest challenges are? Answer those questions and you'll be on your way to following your buyer.

Follow Your Buyer is an approach that brings clarity to all the factors involved in the recommendation and purchase of your products and services. The interconnected stages are designed to help you truly know the people involved in the buying journey – what challenges they face and the approach you should take to begin helping them. This understanding becomes your guide for attracting, nurturing, engaging, converting, and keeping your customers for life.

Contact Us

5340 Fryling Road, Suite 300
Erie, PA 16510
Tel. 814-897-7700
Email. help@followyourbuyer.com