



ContentMatterz

COUNTDOWN TO **Consistency**

Your guide to achieving content
marketing that works.

As marketers, we all know and understand the importance of being consistent with content creation. Whether it's for a website, email, infographic or any other marketing piece, consistency plays the lead role in helping you reach your clients and prospects. Unfortunately, we all are sometimes guilty of not giving our content the proper attention or budget to achieve our consistency goals.

The feeling of being behind (time and budget) on the content calendar is real.

Not anymore. It's time to get serious about consistent content creation. And we have just what you need to go from feeling behind to being ahead of the calendar.

In this guide, we'll cover

- ✓ Why consistency in content marketing is so hard!
- ✓ A tactical timeline to start and stay consistent with content marketing
- ✓ Building a budget that works for you (and your content)
- ✓ How to know when it's time to enlist professional help

Let's go!

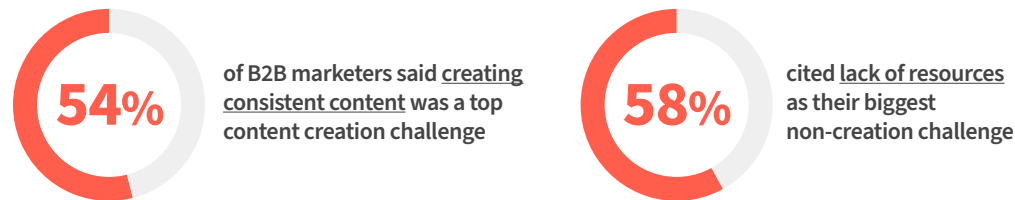


Why is it so hard to get traction with marketing content?

Consumers — both B2B and B2C — crave information. Successful content doesn't always have to be funny or flashy; it's often about producing and disseminating a consistent message. But even with an internal content marketing team, marketers find it difficult to keep up with the fast pace of the AI-powered internet.

THE TRUTH: Marketers are just plain busy

If you and your team are struggling to create enough content to rise consistently above the noise, you are not alone. Recent surveys have shown that:



The consistency struggle is real, but there is hope

Content consistency starts with well-laid plans that allocate time and money to create more than one-off campaign content. Read on to learn how.





A tactical timeline for consistent content creation:

This timeline will take you from three months prior to the start of your fiscal year (or whatever your chosen launch date is), through the stages of planning, budgeting, stakeholder signoff and, finally, content creation. Use it as a guide to creating a consistent content marketing plan that drives results.

WEEKS 1-2	WEEKS 3-4	WEEKS 5-6	WEEKS 7-8	START OF YEAR
Identify key initiatives, create a content list and rough due dates	Make a plan for execution	Build your budget with content consistency in mind	Get stakeholder buy-in	Engage your agency, load up your project management system and kick off your projects

Identify key initiatives, create a content list and rough due dates

Get comfortable with key initiatives

The first step toward making a consistent, achievable content plan is to identify the most important goals your company has for the coming year. We call these “key initiatives.” Every company has them, and there can be anywhere from one to ten or more per year depending on the size of the company.

Free tool: Use this [content planner](#) to create a comprehensive content plan for the year.

Build out a list of the content needed to support each key initiative. For example, a product launch content list might look something like this >>>

Q1 Key Initiatives	Content	Goal	Stakeholders
Product Launch	Webinar	To introduce how our new software solution solves a problem and engages prospects to move them closer to a sale.	Product Manager
	Webinar slides		Director of Marketing
	Landing page for event registration		Director of Operations
	4 emails (invitation, followup, final deadline, thank you)		
	Announcement Email Series	To help prospects understand the key problem our product solves and announce the release.	
	4 emails teasing the product launch		
	Blogs	To elaborate on information in the emails.	
	Blog #1		
	Blog #2		
	Product Sheet	To give detailed product information and specs.	
	Copy for product sheet		
	Product web page	To assist in launching the product page on our website.	
	Copy for product website page		
Social media	To promote the webinar and infographic.		
10 posts for 3 platforms			

The point of this exercise is not to have every single detail ironed out.

It gives you a 10,000-foot view of what content you’ll want to create and which stakeholders you will need to gain approval from. Repeat this exercise for every key initiative that will be a point of focus for your company in the coming year.

Consider core content

Don't forget to plan for core brand content. It's important to have a well of content that is high level enough to appeal to most of your prospects and existing clients. Identify how much core content you will need to consistently show up in the inboxes and feeds of your clients and prospects throughout the entire year aside from campaigns and key initiatives and add these items to your list. It could look something like this:

Core Content	Goal	Stakeholders
12 monthly newsletters	Maintain 90% retention and drive attendees to monthly events	Chief Customer Officer
52 weekly social posts	Increase brand awareness and drive traffic to the website	Director of Brand
12 monthly blog posts	Publish 4 posts per month, increase blog traffic by 6% month-over-month	Director of Demand Gen

Make and mark your calendars

Now it's time to establish timelines and completion dates for content. As mentioned above, frequency is a key part of maintaining content consistency.

Start with your core content and set timelines and deadlines for monthly items such as blogs, social posts and newsletters. Then, move on to your key initiatives and add high-level start and due dates. You will work your way into the more granular timelines after you have budget approval. Remember to leave some float time in your calendar for last-minute requests. If you engage with an agency, ask them their standard turnaround times for the content they are producing.



Make a plan for execution

Start by assessing your team's capacity and skill level

Identify pieces of content that can be easily tackled by your team and mark them as internal. Anything that puts you over capacity or needs specialized skills should be marked for outsourcing. Remember to account for employee vacation time and project management time when calculating your team's capacity. If your calendar has your team at full capacity or you need specialized skills, prepare to engage an agency. The most successful marketers realize they can't do it all internally.



The benefits of bringing in outside help far outweigh the need to keep it all in-house. With the use of marketing agencies or freelancers, you will:



Save time and money. It often takes months to get a new team member up and running. Why not engage with experts who can hit the ground running?



Free up your team to focus on things that can only be done internally. Added help alleviates workloads, stress and burnout.



Leverage an entire team of specialized experts. Hiring an employee often means you have to pick the area of marketing specialty you need the most. With an agency, you get a team of professionals with years of knowledge in many areas.

Make a note of which key initiatives or pieces of content will be done internally and which will require external resources. There is no right way. The answer for you will depend on the types of resources you have in-house and the strengths and abilities of your team versus the variety of specialized knowledge you can access through an agency.

A recent study by the [Content Marketing Institute](#) found that 57% of the most successful marketers outsource content marketing activities.

Build your budget with content consistency in mind

Doing a lot with not a lot of money is a soft skill for many seasoned marketers. The better you can plan early, and sell stakeholders on your plans, the less you'll have to pinch later in the year to hit your goals.

Right-size your budget

It's time to grab your content list and dive in. Most companies have fluctuating marketing budgets every year that reflect the needs and financial constraints of the organization. This is where it helps to do a little homework before pulling together and proposing numbers for approval.

To give you an idea of where to start, according to [Hubspot](#), marketing budgets will comprise roughly 7.8% of revenue for B2B product industries and 5.9% of revenue for B2B service industries in 2023.



The age of your organization is also a factor, and for those who are less than five years old, plan on spending a more significant percentage (typically 12–20%) of your revenue on digital marketing to build brand recognition and equity.



Budgeting does raise questions and uncertainties, such as:



How do I budget for a marketing agency? Here are a [few tips](#) for optimizing outsourced resources.



Is there any easy way to create a budget from scratch? Try [this content marketing template](#) from HubSpot to ensure you capture all of your costs, from software to services.

Involve outside resources early on to help with budgeting

Take your list of content that needs external help and start conversations with agencies and/or freelancers early to get cost estimates. For help with this step, check out these resources:

- [The pros and cons of different agency pricing models](#)
- [Copywriter or Agency? Finding the right fit for your content strategy](#)
- [Choosing an agency checklist](#)

Optimally, you will want to work with an agency that offers transparent pricing. Why? By knowing up front how much their services will cost, you can more efficiently build your budget and get to work.

Not to mention, you eliminate a bunch of back-and-forth. At Content Matterz, we moved to a [transparent pricing model in early 2023](#).



Our Founder and CEO believes that

“If putting our pricing out there allows a content marketing manager to plan their budgets and be more prepared for a conversation with us, it’s a win-win for everyone.” –**Cara McDonald, Content Matterz**



Get stakeholder buy-in

Stakeholder buy-in is vital to achieving your content marketing goals

Have your stakeholders review your initial content plans and budget prior to the final due date. Explain to them how important these plans are to the success of their key initiatives. Take their feedback into account and try to get their approval early so you'll have more people backing your plans come budget decision day.

This is also a great time to get approval from leadership to outsource any work that will distract you from your plans, in the interest of making them as successful as possible.

Hopefully all of this hard work leads to your ultimate goal: budget approval!



Engage your agency, load up your project management system and kick off your projects

You did it!

You're on the path to consistent content creation and success! Now's the time to set up all of your projects in your project management systems, assign out tasks and responsibilities and start having kickoff meetings for all the amazing content you'll create this year.

If you're working with an agency, reach out as soon as your budget is approved to get the wheels in motion and sign an agreement for the work. Make your agency partners aware of deadlines and any high-level project information as soon as you can. The agency will set up kickoff meetings to get project specifics.

Congratulations, you're ready to start (and continue) making stellar content!



Tips for staying consistent all year

One of the biggest challenges for marketers happens when they establish a stellar plan, but then get pulled away from executing it by last-minute requests that inevitably happen throughout the year. Pushing back isn't always easy. Here are some key questions and phrases to keep in your pocket when your consistency is threatened throughout the year.

When you're asked to add a project that's not in the plan, try these:

- ✓ **Will this new project help us achieve one of the company's key initiatives for the year?**

- ✓ **Which key initiative does this new project support?**

- ✓ **Have our key initiatives changed since the start of the year? i.e. Is this new priority now a key initiative?**
If so, which key initiative is the new priority replacing?

- ✓ **Let's take a look at the original plan and collaborate on where this new project fits within our overall objectives.**

By drawing attention back to the high-level objectives, you both help keep your team focused on what's most important and protect your goal for consistency.

Don't be afraid to pull in help mid-year, either. Sometimes, things come up, priorities shift and opportunities arise. Just because you made an amazing plan doesn't mean you can't pivot if needed. It's common to lose a team member, gain an initiative or just realize you've overcommitted mid-way through the year. Having a great agency in your back pocket is worth its weight in gold during those tough moments.



Work with an agency that knows content matterz

At Content Matterz, our expertise is in content marketing. We understand the importance of a clear, consistent message across all channels, and help clients on the daily to achieve their content goals.

Working with our team, you can expect:

- High-quality projects consistently delivered on time and on budget
- A whole crew of folks ready to jump in to help you succeed
- True, creative marketing partners who are easy to work with

We offer a variety of content subscriptions and packages to fit different budgets and needs. All our services are backed by a team of experienced and knowledgeable writers, strategists, designers and project managers.

What's not to like?

Tired of crunching numbers and want to get some content started?
Reach out today to find which option best suits your budget.

Let's go!



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