



QUARTERLY CONTENT PLANNING:

A Roadmap for Success
in B2B Marketing

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Introduction

A quarterly content roadmap can be a powerful tool for B2B content marketers. Aligning initiatives with specific quarterly goals helps organizations gain clarity and break down ambitious annual objectives into manageable segments. A quarterly approach provides flexibility, enabling marketers to swiftly adapt to industry trends, changing customer preferences, or competitive pressures. It also allows organizations to allocate resources more carefully and measure and evaluate targets better. Marketers benefit from consistent content creation while retaining the ability to explore new channels and formats. Most importantly, a quarterly roadmap offers a blueprint to face the quarter or year with confidence and an actionable plan.

Why Create a Quarterly Roadmap?

Planning content on a quarterly basis offers marketing directors a strategic compass to align their initiatives and guide their strategy. This approach also helps break down and refine ambitious annual goals into manageable segments, allowing teams to focus on achieving specific objectives within a set timeframe. It also supports greater agility, enabling marketing directors to pivot quickly in response to industry trends, evolving customer preferences, and competitive pressures.

Mapping out content in three-month intervals allows the company to use resources more effectively, allocating time, budget, and people to projects that promote the biggest impact. Smaller, quarterly targets also make it easier for marketers to stay on track and measure the effectiveness of their content strategies. It also makes it easier to experiment with new channels and align content strategies with business cycles.

Finally, advance planning enables marketers to make the best use of their content and ensure they aren't left scrambling for ideas at the last minute.

Ideation and Strategy

A quarterly content plan isn't about simply creating a list of tasks. It's about employing creative ideation and strategy to build a roadmap that aligns with the company's broader marketing goals. This ensures that every effort made during the period is purposeful and contributes to the overall marketing strategy.

- **Identify Goals:** The first step in the ideation and strategy process is establishing clear, actionable goals for the quarter. Whether the goal is to drive awareness for a new solution,

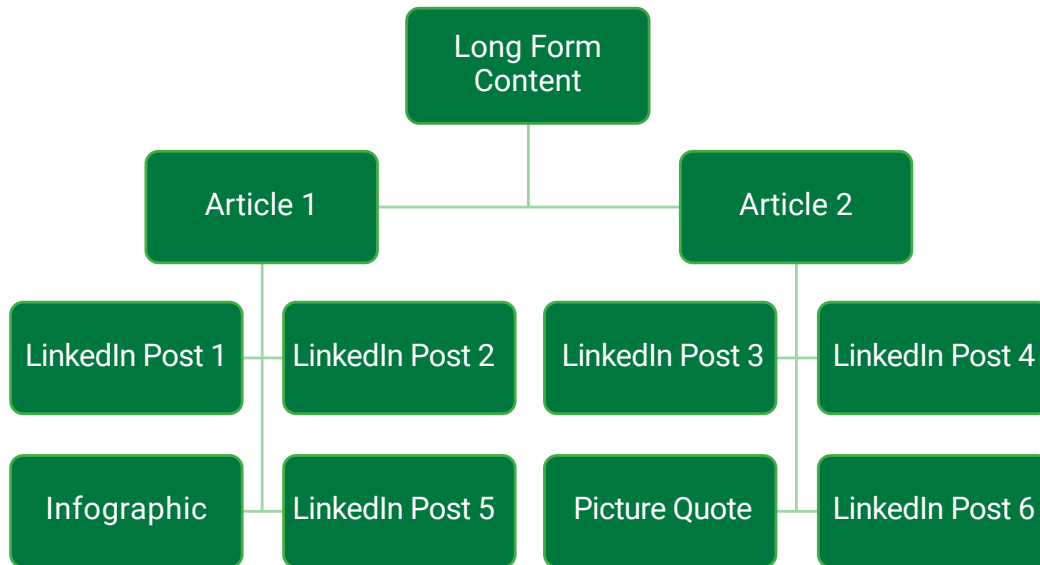
elevate the profile of a thought leader, or gain industry attention, identifying the goals is critical to mapping out a cohesive plan.

- **Create a Theme:** A theme can act as a guiding star for the quarter. It provides a narrative that resonates with the audience, reinforces the brand message, and creates consistency across all content and campaigns.
- **Align with Marketing Goals:** Every piece of content created during the quarter should serve the larger marketing goals. Remembering this in the ideation process will help create content that engages the audience and propels them down the sales funnel.

The Quarterly Content Tree

One of the most effective ways to map marketing content for the quarter is with a “content tree.” A content tree is a smart, organized way to nurture leads and build an audience while making the most of the content you create. This structure ensures every piece of content serves a purpose, supporting the next level up. Continually guiding readers up to the long-form content maximizes exposure and reinforces your authority and expertise in the subject matter. It also helps identify more content repurposing opportunities to ensure nothing goes to waste.

- **Long-form Content:** Long-form content, such as reports, white papers, and ebooks, is the cornerstone of the content tree. As the most comprehensive piece it is rich with in-depth knowledge, and is the final destination for your readers to reach.
- **Supporting Articles:** The long-form content can be supported with a series of articles, each delving into specific aspects of the long-form content. These articles serve two purposes: they provide valuable content in their own right and act as stepping stones, guiding readers toward the comprehensive resource at the top of the tree.
- **LinkedIn Posts:** LinkedIn posts are short, engaging, and designed to capture the attention of your audience on social media. Each post is linked to one of the articles, providing a snapshot that piques interest and encourages further reading. Linking a few posts back to each article ensures a consistent flow of content that keeps the audience engaged and directs them upwards through the tree.
- **Other Tidbits:** Marketers can also use infographics, short text-based video clips, and quotes on images to promote articles in unique ways.



Long-Form Content

Long-form content, such as reports, ebooks, or white papers, is the linchpin of content marketing strategies. It positions the creator as an acknowledged authority and enables the organization to dive deep into industry trends with insights that can't be communicated in shorter content.

- **Lead Generation and Nurturing:** Long-form content provides valuable information, attracts readers interested in a particular subject and, with the right call-to-action, can convert them into leads. Once captured, these leads can be nurtured through additional content, guiding them down the sales funnel.
- **Evergreen Resource:** A well-crafted report or ebook can serve as an evergreen resource, remaining relevant and valuable over time. This longevity means the content can continue to attract readers and leads long after publication.
- **Education:** The most effective long-form content educates readers with valuable information and insight.
- **Sharing:** Long-form content, especially when it is unique or offers original research or insight, is often shared and used in industry media, amplifying the value and interest.
- **SEO Benefits:** As search engines favor comprehensive content that provides substantial value to readers, strategic long-form content can improve rankings and increase inbound leads.

Articles and Blog Posts

Supporting articles are the branches of the content tree, essential for disseminating the some of the detailed information contained in long-form content. They serve two purposes: to spark interest in the comprehensive long-form content and to provide standalone value to the reader.

- **Extracting Value:** Each supporting article extracts a segment from the long-form content, focusing on an element that can stand on its own. This targeted approach allows for a deep dive into specific topics, offering readers valuable insights without overwhelming them with the entirety of the long-form content.
- **Engagement and Accessibility:** An article of 600 to 1,000 words is typically long enough to cover a topic in detail but short enough to maintain reader engagement. It's an effective way to attract readers who aren't ready to dig into a white paper.
- **Thought Leadership:** Bylined articles position the author as a thought leader in their field, building credibility and trust with the audience.
- **Driving Traffic:** Supporting articles are not only provide valuable information to the reader, they drive traffic to other content. By including calls-to-action and links to long-form content, the articles serve as pathways and encourage readers to explore the topic further.
- **Cadence:** Mapping out the content in advance enables marketers to establish a cadence, whether that's an article every two weeks or an article per month. Having topics and brief outlines early in the cycle also makes content writing easier and reduces the risk of having to scramble for ideas.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is an excellent channel for B2B content because it offers opportunities to engage targeted audiences in multiple formats. It's also a great place to host original content and to spread and share some of the lower leaves on the content tree. LinkedIn posts can leverage excerpts and pieces of content to steer readers to articles and ultimately, the long-form content.

- **Short Posts:** Consider creating a few 150-word posts for each article. Time these posts carefully throughout the campaign to pique the reader's interest then drive them to the full article for more information.
- **Repurposing Articles:** Rewrite and repackage some existing articles, then host them as full articles on LinkedIn.
- **Thought Leadership:** LinkedIn is a perfect platform for thought leadership content as it offers an opportunity to easily create, promote, and track content.

- **Sharing:** LinkedIn makes it easy to share content. You can create a campaign to produce posts and then have employees and stakeholders share their thoughts and repost. An effective campaign can drive considerable traffic to an article.

Calendar and Planning

Once you have ideas and an outline for your content tree, you can start planning a content calendar. Mapping out your content offers a fresh look at your ideas to see if they need to be refined. Establishing clear deadlines in place ensures smooth execution, whether it's finding a writer or a designer or scheduling production.

- **Consistency:** Long-form content can take a month or more to develop, and frequent articles, blog posts, or social media updates require consistency. A well-planned calendar can help support a regular flow of content.
- **Quality and Scheduling:** Knowing when each piece of content is due helps drive quality by ensuring there's enough time to produce them and to make changes along the way.
- **Optimized Workflow:** A shared calendar and agenda simplifies content creation and fosters collaboration between writers, designers, and other team members.

Ready to Collaborate?

I'm a high-performing ghostwriter who specializes in the financial services, supply chain, and retail technology industries. I've written reports, white papers, and ebooks for nearly two dozen Fortune 500 companies and have helped many companies create quarterly content plans.

Even if you're starting from scratch, I can help create a quarterly content marketing plan, complete with ideas and a plan for execution. Read more about my work at www.craigdguillot.com and contact me at craigguillot@gmail.com to discuss how I can help.