

Content Review Workshop

Day 2: Customer Focused Content Planning

Taking inventory of your existing content is the first step toward ensuring that your website content provides value to your target audience and is effective in meeting your business goals. Once you've documented the content current available, the next step is to (re)define and evaluate your target audience.

The Website Visitor

Who exactly are your target website visitors? In defining the types of visitors you'd like to attract to your website, take it a step beyond "people (with money) who need to buy widgets." Enhance your target audience definition with a solution-oriented approach.

Target Audience #1: Potential Buyers of my Widget Products

Problem	Content Related Solution
Need to determine if my company offers the Widget product	The company's product & service model should be obvious and obtainable from every page of the site.
Need to determine if my company is reputable.	Display testimonials, company history etc.
Need to determine the cost	Display pricing on all products in a standard and highly visible area.
Need to determine the shipping rates and turnaround time.	On all product pages, note the average shipping time and standard rate for that product.
Need to feel comfortable making the purchase.	Highlight the return/exchange policy, note if guarantees are offered, Offer secure (https) checkout areas, visible privacy statements regarding the company's use of customer information etc.

Target Audience #2: Existing/Former Customers

Problem	Content Related Solution
Need to quickly find the company's contact information	Dedicated contact us page, Also use of footer area to display mailing address, primary phone number, email address etc.
Can't figure out how to use the product or service	Frequently Asked Questions area, support forum, online product user guides etc.
Loyal customer would like to stay informed on the latest products, services, company news	Designate a What's New/Latest News area, Perhaps use social media tools such as blogs, twitter, rss to quickly disseminate this information to former/existing customers.

You get the picture. This exercise forces you to think like your audience. You may want to take it a step further and query your existing customers regarding their initial impression of your site and how your website could provide more value to them today.

The Content

The second part to this exercise is to answer the following questions for each item noted in your content audit. Keep in mind your ideal/target audience as you answer the following questions:

1. Is this content accurate (i.e. are there errors, typos, miscommunications that should be addressed)?
2. Is this content still relevant?
3. Which of my business goals does this support?
4. Who (exactly) would find this content useful? Be specific. (ex: my current customers, customers requiring technical support, potential customers who are making a purchasing decision, the media etc.)
5. How (exactly) does this item provide value to my target audience?
6. Can this item be enhanced further to provide additional relevant information or enhance the visitors experience while browsing my site?

NOTE: If you're using the Content Matrix provided on Day 1, you may want to add additional columns to document your answers to the questions above.

The Goal

The goal of this exercise is to:

1. Clearly define your target audience and their needs.
2. Determine the existing content that should remain and the items that should be omitted. Any content that doesn't support your business goals or serve the needs of your target audience should be omitted. You don't want to water down your message or confuse your visitors with too much or irrelevant information.
3. Determine if additional content is needed to ensure that you're providing value to your target audience.
4. Identify any content maintenance issues (ex: misspellings, grammatical errors, outdated information).
5. Strategically document your content plan. This will be valuable for future website enhancement projects.