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Content Strategy: Value and Discipline Defined

By: Stephanie Hale

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# Introduction

## Topics for Discussion

- Current digital landscape
- What is Content Strategy?
- The role of the Content Strategist
- The value of integrating a content strategy into your digital efforts
- How to communicate the value of content strategy to the masses within your company

# What We Mean When We Say “Content”

The World of Content is Much More Than Text on a Page.

Content is:

- Copy that promotes features, sales, benefits, and has an ongoing conversation with the customer throughout the site
- Engaging features that take products to the next level while pleasantly surprising their customers
- Slideshows
- Blogs
- Interactive, user generated content
- Podcasts
- Videos
- RSS Feeds
- Newsletters
- User Generated Content

A powerful Content Strategy is more than just making sure copy reads well--it's about creating an exceptional user experience.



**inexpensive wood**  
**WHAT IT IS:** Light-to medium-toned hardwoods, such as maple (shown) and birch. Oak, which has a slightly coarser grain, is also an affordable option.  
**PROS:** Thanks to their strength and uniform grains, these popular varieties take paint well. Maple and oak mellow in color as they age.  
**CONS:** Birch and maple may not

**midrange wood**  
**WHAT IT IS:** Hardwoods with a pronounced grain, such as hickory (shown).  
**PROS:** This type of wood is very dense and extremely strong and comes in a range of colors, from cream to reddish brown.  
**CONS:** Some cuts are fairly uniform in tone, while others are not; one piece may contain several variations of the

**expensive wood**  
**WHAT IT IS:** Premium hardwoods, such as cherry (shown) and walnut, known for their smooth grains.  
**PROS:** It's hard and durable.  
**CONS:** Cherry darkens as it ages, and walnut lightens over time, so consider this when coordinating the cabinetry with other finishes.  
**COST:** Cherry and walnut are among

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# Introduction

## Current State of Affairs, Digital

Unfortunately, with many online initiatives, content is an afterthought.

- Product catalogs, brochures, and corporate information are dropped online—creating a dry experience of lengthy text and segmented information.

### The Problem

With the evolution of Web 2.0 to 3.0, online content has become incredibly dynamic and engaging. Mobile. Shared. Discussed. Users will no longer accept a flat, static online experience.

Businesses are understanding the importance of not only putting their content online, but instead refining content to create a specific message--utilizing the abilities of the web to expand their brand and products in order to increase traffic, conversion, and loyalty.

# Introduction

## Current State of Affairs, Digital

For many, if not all businesses, it's about transforming and evolving flat, static material into content that is engaging, targeted, and personalized.

### **The focus is now on:**

- Putting the customers first by exceeding their needs and having a fully developed conversation with them from beginning to end of the site experience
- Elevating content such as a catalog from a dry product list to a branded shopping experience that is pleasing and supports conversion
- Surprising customers by identifying what they want before they realize it

# Why This is All Important

**“Content keeps me up at night..”**

-A reoccurring statement we hear from our clients

The business always asks the following questions:

1. What about content?
2. What existing content should we use? Is our content even good or should we scrap it?
3. Who will create all this new content?
4. How will we map our existing content to the new site?
5. Who will make sure all the content ends up in the right place?
6. Is there a person who will edit all the copy before the site goes live?
7. How will we manage the content after the site launches?

These concerns generally happen later in the (re)design when many decisions have already been made. Be proactive rather than reactive.

# In the Field

## **With a New Site Comes New Responsibility**

Influential roles (Directors/VP/IT) are concerned with the content's implementation and framework, i.e, scope and budget.

Heavily tasked roles (Brand Managers/Marketing Groups/Merchandisers and the overall "business users") are ultimately responsible for the success of the site and are concerned with how content will be developed, managed, and deployed.

## **A Need Emerges**

As digital experiences become more sophisticated and online competition increases, businesses have begun to place ardent focus on the content they place on their site.

Not only does the trends of today impact how content is used/strategized/created, but clients are asking for help to understand how the content is developed, who manages, etc.

This translates into a role = Content Strategy

# Content Strategists: Who We Are

## The Role and Contributions of a Content Strategist...at a Very High Level

### **Creative**

Brainstorm with the project team to create dynamic, engaging content features that will generate buzz, increase conversion, and make the company's site stand out from its competitors.

### **Strategists**

Create the content strategy mission for the redesign with measurable objectives of what we want the content to achieve.

### **Writers**

Create the conversation that the company will have with their customers on each page of the site.

### **Editors**

QA copy to make sure it is on brand, coherent in thought, engaging, easy to scan, and is grammatically correct.

### **Backend Content Development and Support**

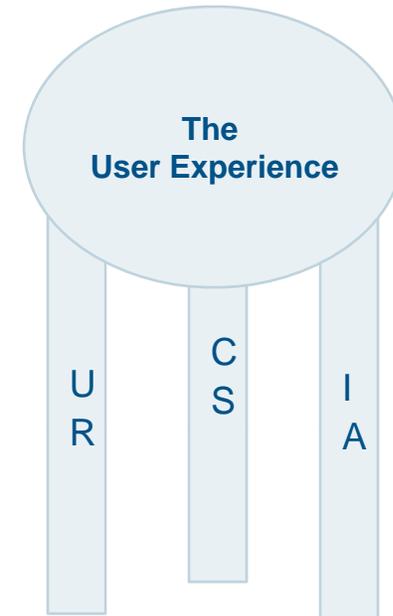
Create taxonomies, metadata schemas, and workflows, integrate SEO keywords, and help develop the content management system.

# Content Strategy and the UX Community

User Research + Content Strategy + Information Architecture = User Experience

Content Strategy is traditionally seen as a contributing leg within the User Experience practice—working closely with the Information Architects and User Researchers to create a best in class online experience.

We're brought into the picture at the beginning of every digital initiative to analyze the business and its content in order to create a content strategy and user experience that meets business needs and customer expectations.



# What is Content Strategy?

Content Strategy is not a single deliverable for digital initiative.

It's an over-arching strategy and implementation that is developed for the content that's integrated into a redesign.

Broken down into 3 stages:

1. Discover: **Analysis**
2. Define: **Strategy & Approach**
3. Design & Build: **Content Development & Authoring**
4. Launch: **Continued Creative Services and Management**

Content Strategy defines how content will create a best in class customer experience.

# The Process

## A Content Strategist's Areas of Concentration Throughout a Redesign

### **Discover: Content Analysis**

- Analyze business objectives, brand, customers, competitors, and existing content in order to understand the strengths, weakness, and opportunities as it relates to the content and the user experience.

### **Define: Content Strategy & Approach**

- Create an overall content strategy that defines: new content opportunities, types of content, brand extension and site tone of voice, taxonomy, methods for measuring content, and how all of these components create the user experience.

### **Design & Build: Content Development and Authoring**

- Act as a business and customer advocate for all content on the site
- Lead as Managing Editor of site to establish a publishing schedule / workflow and make sure all content is on-brand, engaging, targeted to the right audience, and is time-sensitive
- Is ultimately responsible for every piece of content

### **Post-Launch: Continued Creative Services & Management**

- Develop content and manage archives, current, and future content

# Content Strategist's Contributions at a Glance

## Some of Our Main Deliverables Include:

1. **Content Strategy Brief** that defines
  - New content features
  - The brand personality and tone of voice
  - Content categories from the taxonomy
2. **Content Requirements** that establish:
  - The type of content that will be positioned on each page
  - The source
  - Who is responsible for managing the content
  - How often it will get updated.
3. **Editorial Calendar** tracks content development progress and deadlines
4. **Metadata Schema** to properly define the types of content and subject matter
5. **Content Development Workflow**
  - The work plan for the Content Management System, from creation to publication

# The Content Strategy Teammates

## Who We Work With:

1. Content Strategist + Information Architect
2. Content Strategists + SEO
3. Content Strategists + Copywriters
4. Content Strategists + Developers

# Advantages of a Content Strategy

## Communicating The Value to the Masses:

By having a dedicated team member solely focused on the business case for content and using that content to create a user experience, you are focusing on each piece of content that is created and positioned so it:

- Meets the strategic objectives of the business and the customer needs
- Ensures that content is on-brand, engaging, targeted to the right audience, and has a timely publishing frequency thereby increases conversion, traffic, and brand loyalty (measurability/roi)
- Optimizes search results
- Creates a content production workflow and makes maintenance easier, which increases accuracy and completeness, while reducing costs

# In Closing

If we only focus on the visuals and the layout, we've created a beautifully engaging candy wrapper, but an unfulfilling conversation with the customer.

We should not redesign a site without considering content:

1. What it will be
2. What it looks like
3. Who will create it
4. Who will manage it
5. How often it will be updated?



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**Contact Information:**

Stephanie Hale

[stephanie.hale@rosetta.com](mailto:stephanie.hale@rosetta.com)

[seh312@nyu.edu](mailto:seh312@nyu.edu)