



USING AN EDITORIAL CALENDAR

HOW TO GET YOUR CONTENT ON TRACK FOR SUCCESS

CONTENTFAC.COM

USING AN EDITORIAL CALENDAR

As an FYI, this document is designed to go along with our video by the same name. If you haven't checked that out yet, you can view it on our private YouTube channel for members [here](#).

For a direct link to the spreadsheet referenced here and in the video, click [here](#).

WHY A CALENDAR?

If you've ever spent some time reading content marketing / writing blogs, you've probably read some variation of "if you write it, they will come (and buy your product)" a few thousand times. The assumption is, of course, that if you go out there and write a piece of killer content, you'll suddenly find your business being showered with all kinds of impressive traffic numbers.

And that's true – but only if you've done your homework.

So, at this point, you've been introduced to keyword research. That's all we mean, right? While you might be setting yourself up for success by writing content for certain keywords, there's still one more thing you have to do before you get to writing: you've got to map out your content.

A successful marketing effort isn't a one-shot shop. If you want results, you need consistency, and that means you need to plan your moves in advance. That's where an editorial calendar comes in.

Consistency isn't just about getting content out on time, however. It's also about getting the timeliest content out on time. That means writing content that aligns well with what's currently going on in the world when you publish a post. For a baker, that might mean getting out a bunch of content about baking gingerbread cookies during the winter. For a software or IT services company, it might mean aligning your content with industry conferences or yearly events.

WHAT TO DESIGN YOUR CALENDAR AROUND

If you're reading this guide, then you already have access to the content calendar that we use with all of our clients. Our calendar tracks a handful of things, but the most important things to pay attention to are the title, keyword, word count, the status of the blog post, and when it is due. Below, all of these are explained in detail (as well as why they are important).

1. **Title.** Here's a secret: before becoming TCF's editor, I used to teach college students how to write essays. Often, they would come to me, asking me where to start their papers. I'd tell them that's simple: the title! Coming up with a title can help drive the direction of a blog post, and if as you're writing you end up changing direction... well, the title isn't set in stone. Even if you don't have a fleshed out "pitch," sometimes a good title is the only real pitch you need.
2. **Keyword.** By this point, you know how important keyword research is. The keyword is here so that you can see, at a glance, what keywords you're targeting. This can help prevent you from going too hard on one keyword (or from forgetting to target a keyword you know is important to your brand).
3. **Word Count.** The best posts are long posts (over 2,500 words), but if your "content writing department" is really just whoever has an extra few hours on staff, not everyone is going to have the time to write that much. By planning things out in advance, you can come up with bite-sized topics that busier employees can scratch off the calendar.
4. **Blog Status.** Even if you only have one person writing your content, things often get lost – that, and people naturally tend to jump around between multiple projects, especially at smaller companies. By marking the status of each of your blog posts, you can always be sure of your progress. In our calendar, we use a simple system:

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- **In Progress (Orange Text):** Someone is writing that post. Often, they will tag their name in the “notes” section.
 - **Written (Yellow Background):** The post is completed, but it is awaiting editing.
 - **Edited (Red Background):** The post is edited, but it is awaiting publication.
 - **Published / Approved (Green Background):** The post has been published, or if it’s a guest post for an outside site, it has been approved to be published.
5. **Due Date.** Self-explanatory – when you want the post to be due. These are hugely important, even if you’re the only one writing content. Once again, consistency over the long-term is key to dominating SEO – so hit your due dates!

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So now that you understand the moving parts behind the calendar itself, how do you use it to plan out content? Here are the steps we suggest taking:

1. **Figure Out How Many Posts You Want to Write.** How many people are writing your content? Is it just you? Likewise, how many posts per month do you want to write? Be realistic. If you go too hard, you’ll burn yourself out (and then, chances are, you won’t have any content at all!). Try to come up with a number for at least three months of content (we suggest aiming for six, though).
2. **Find Your Keyword Targets.** Look through your keyword research spreadsheet for the juiciest targets.
3. **Spread Out Your Targets.** It’s okay to target a keyword more than once, but you should try to give your content some breathing room – don’t hit the same keyword more than once or twice in a month. It’s okay to hit

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variations of a keyword, though (though you should spread these out, too). The calendar can help you easily spot over-saturation in your content before you write it.

4. **Write Some Titles.** Look at the keyword you've picked – what jumps to mind immediately? While we'll get into "pitching" and coming up with blog ideas later, for now, just write down some rough ideas. You can change them later.
5. **Assign Target Word Counts.** Once again, we always aim for at least 2,500 words, but be realistic with what you think you can produce.
6. **Keep Going!** Revisit your calendar after three months. What worked? What didn't? We'll get to breaking down this data in a later lesson, but it's worth mentioning that the editorial calendar doubles as a great place to keep track of what's hitting and what's landing with a thud.

CONTENT CALENDAR CHECKLIST

Now it's your turn. Take our content calendar template and plan out your own editorial calendar. When you're just starting out, just try to plan out the first three months. Once you've finished, take a look at this checklist to make sure you're all set to move on to the next step:

- Step 1 – Have you picked the keywords you want to target for the next three months?

- Step 2 – Are you oversaturating any one keyword? Do you have good target diversity?

- Step 3 – Have you come up with working titles for your individual pieces of content?

- Step 4 – Are your due dates reasonable for you or your team?

- Step 5 – Are you making sure to use your calendar to target certain holidays, or periods in the year that are important to you?

- Step 6 – Finally, are you checking your calendar daily and making sure you are updating the status of your posts?