

THIS IS HOW TO

# Plan and Execute An Effective Content Strategy

*That Will Quadruple Your Results*



## How To Boost Your Efficiency With A Content Strategy That Will Quadruple Your Results

Read on to learn the complete 14-step process to create your own strategy to:

1. Set aspirational goals based on your own data and actually measure them with Google Analytics.
2. Use your time super effectively by analyzing your best- and worst-performing content to boost your results.
3. Organize your entire creation process to create content super efficiently.
4. Improve your content strategy by analyzing your success and failure.

If you want to try a data-driven, agile marketing process to get massive results from your content marketing, this post is for you. This is the exact process we've followed at CoSchedule to generate 434% more page views, 1,222% more email subscribers, and 9,360% more trial signups from our new blog posts.

## Define And Track Aspirational Goals That Focus On 10x Growth

You're doing content marketing for a reason. Let's find the best way to define your goal and track it.

### 1. Answer: Why Are You Creating Content? (Nope, I'm Not Kidding)

What is the #1 reason you're creating content?

## 2. Know How You'll Measure That Goal

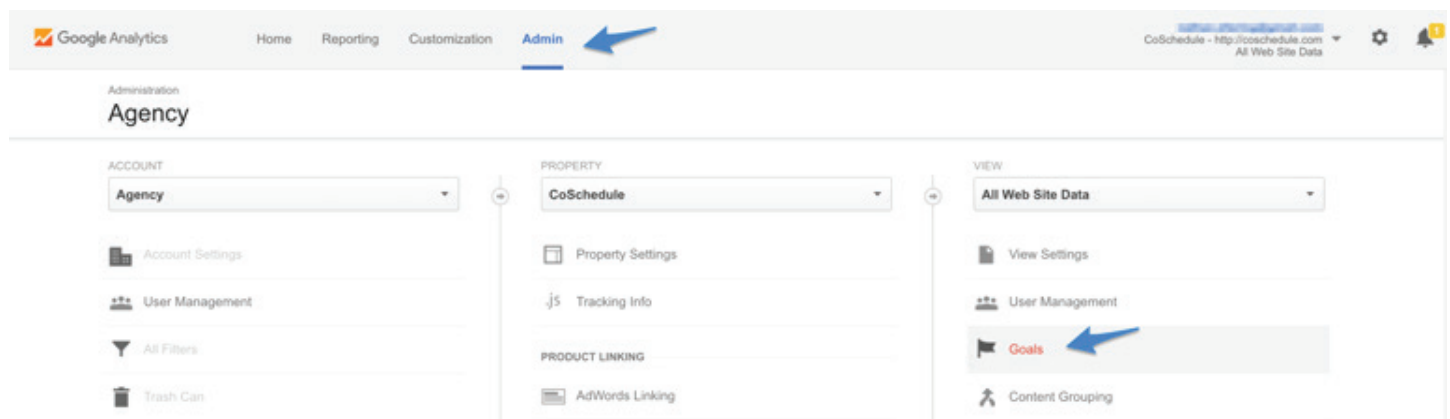
What one specific metric will you use to measure your success?

## 3. Find The Tool Where You'll Track Your Goal

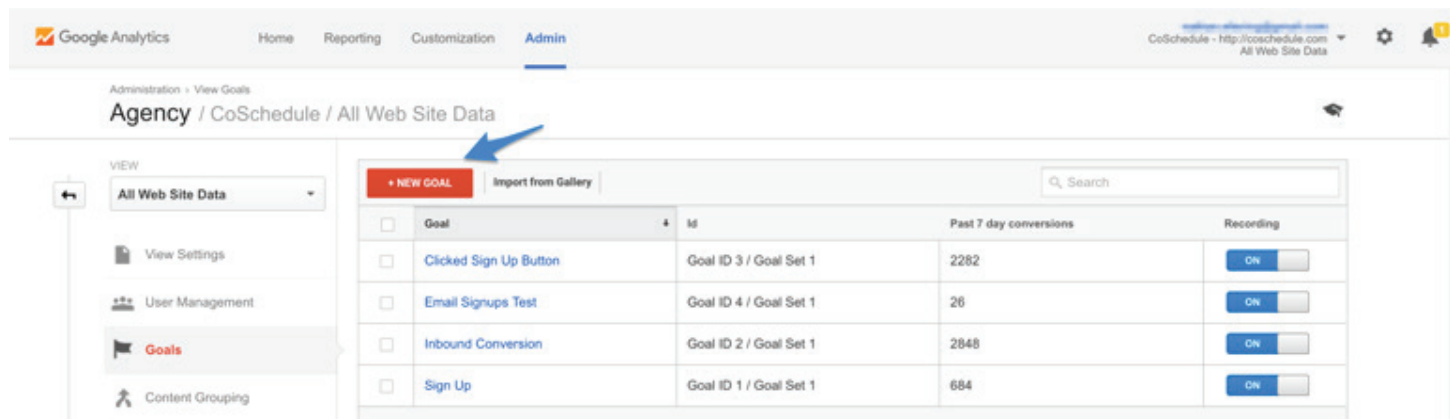
Let's set up goal tracking for your metric in Google Analytics. You can use this same process to set up goals to track traffic to any specific page—which works especially well for email subscribers (directing to a "thank you" page), trial signups (directing to the first page in your app), and other similar use cases.

*Here we go:*

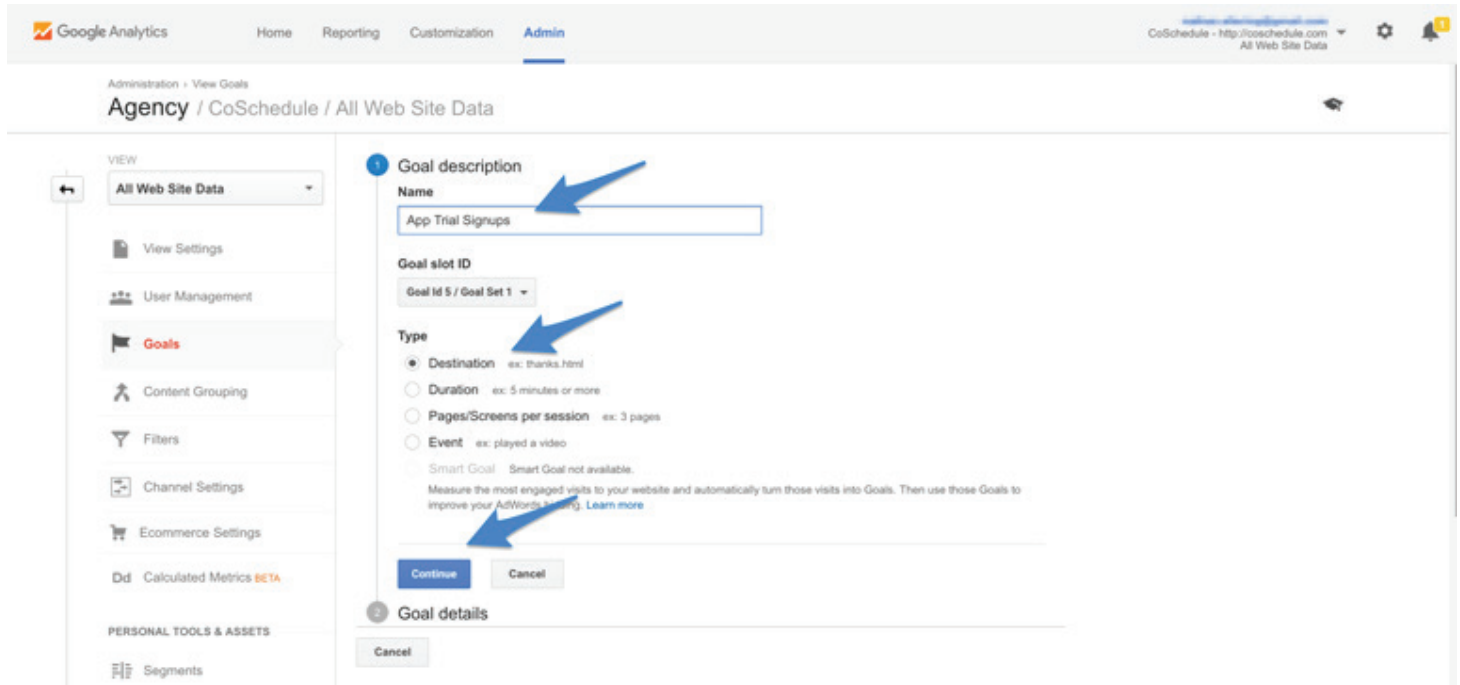
Log in to Google Analytics, then click on **Admin** and then **Goals**.



Start a + **New Goal**.



**Name** the goal the #1 reason why you're publishing content, then **Continue**.



The screenshot shows the Google Analytics Admin interface. The left sidebar has a 'Goals' section highlighted. The main content area is titled 'Goal description' and contains the following fields:

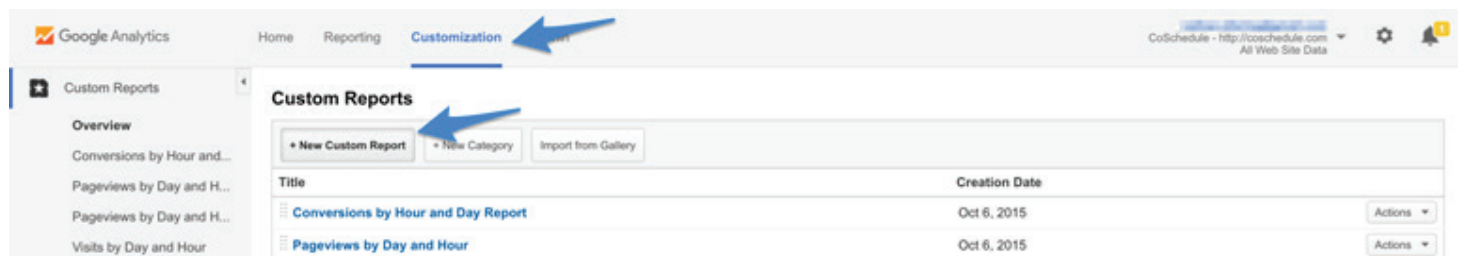
- Name:** A text input field containing 'App Trial Signups'.
- Goal slot ID:** A dropdown menu showing 'Goal Id 5 / Goal Set 1'.
- Type:** A radio button selection area with options: 'Destination' (selected), 'Duration', 'Pages/Screens per session', and 'Event'. Below these is a 'Smart Goal' section with a note: 'Smart Goal not available. Measure the most engaged visits to your website and automatically turn those visits into Goals. Then use those Goals to improve your AdWords bidding. [Learn more](#)'.
- Buttons:** 'Continue' and 'Cancel' buttons at the bottom.

Below the 'Goal description' section is a 'Goal details' section with a 'Cancel' button.

Flesh out your goal details with the **Destination** as the slug of your URL your users see immediately after they convert. Alternatively, you can include the app page name your users see immediately following a conversion. Select **Begins with** and hit **Save** to start tracking.

#### 4. Understand How To Analyze Your Data

Set up a custom report in Google Analytics. Get started by cruising to the **Customization** tab and selecting **+ New Custom Report**.

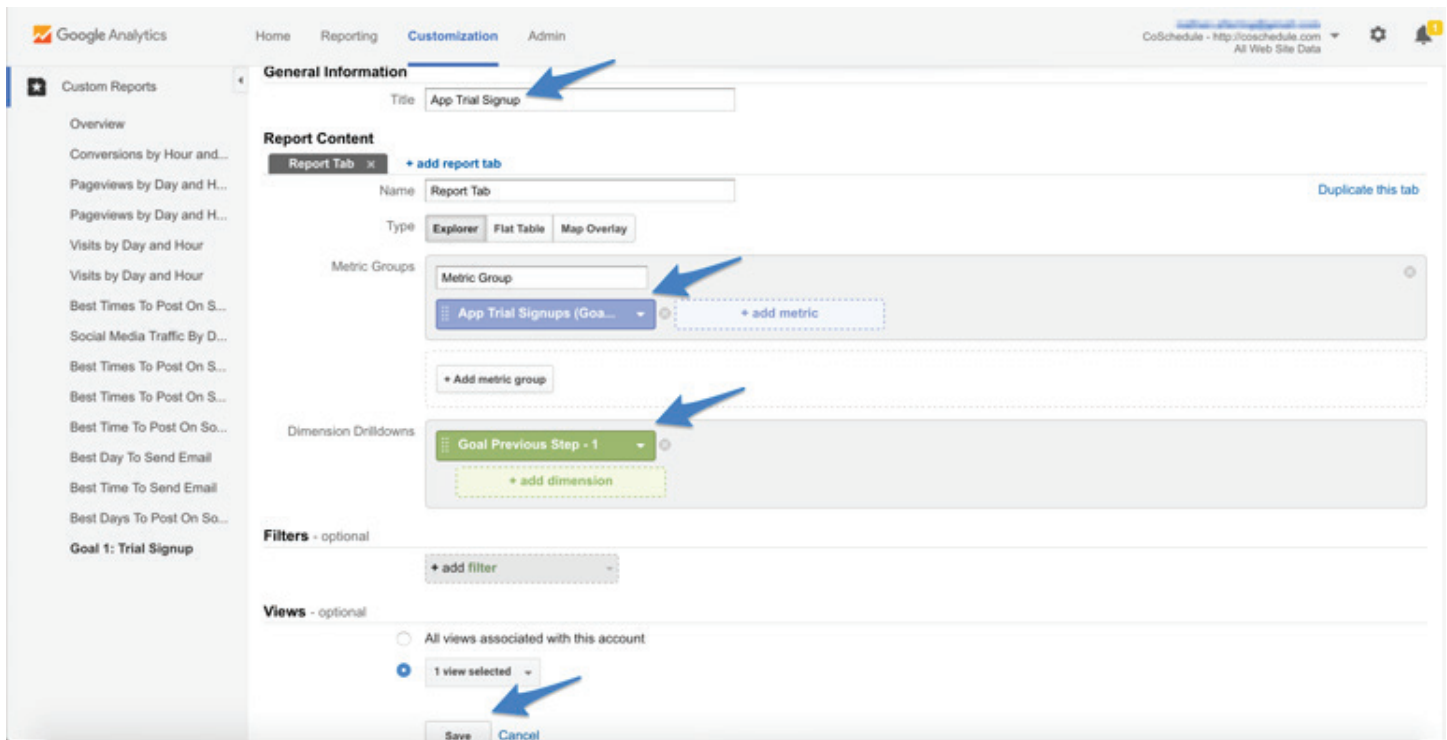


The screenshot shows the Google Analytics Customization interface. The left sidebar has a 'Custom Reports' section highlighted. The main content area is titled 'Custom Reports' and contains the following elements:

- Buttons:** '+ New Custom Report', '+ New Category', and 'Import from Gallery'.
- Table:** A table with two columns: 'Title' and 'Creation Date'. It lists two reports: 'Conversions by Hour and Day Report' and 'Pageviews by Day and Hour', both created on 'Oct 6, 2015'. Each row has an 'Actions' dropdown menu.

Fill in the **Title**, then in **Metric Groups**, select the name of your goal followed by **(Goal # Completions)**. In **Dimension Drilldowns**, select **Goal Previous Step - 1**. Then hit **Save**.

*Continued on next page.*



## Create The Plan To Achieve Your Goal

### 5. Grade Your Content According To Your Gut

Make a list of the URLs from the last 30 pieces of content you published. There's a companion spreadsheet for this guide to get you started in your content strategy template kit.

- ☐ Enter the list of Content URLs into column A in your spreadsheet.

Now brainstorm the top four traits that are present in your top-performing content.

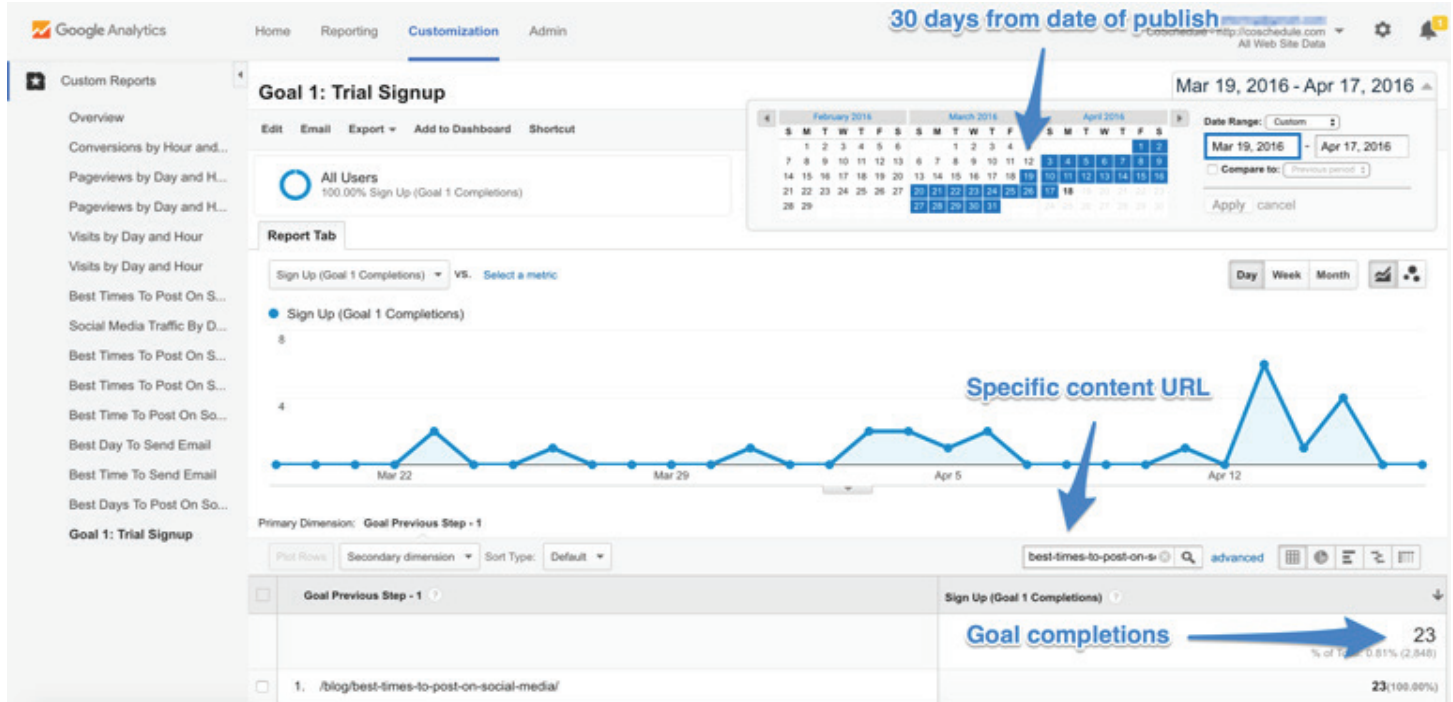
For example, at CoSchedule, we grade our content based on questions for four traits: topic, research, comprehensiveness, keyword-driven.

- ☐ Enter your four traits into row one of columns B, C, D, and E in your spreadsheet.
- ☐ Grade each piece according to your gut on how well you think it performed from 1–3 with 1 being not so good and a 3 being awesome. Enter your scores into the appropriate columns in B, C, D, and E in your spreadsheet.

### 6. Discover Your Content's Average Contribution Toward Your Goal

Analyze the data from your Google Analytics custom report for your goal according to each piece of content you've published. And to make sure every piece has a similar opportunity to be successful, you're going to measure the results for the first 30 days after you published them.

Begin by opening your Google Analytics custom report. Search for each individual URL from the list you started in your grading process, and set the dates to the first 30 days after you published it.



- ☐ Then enter the data for each of your URLs into column G in your spreadsheet.
- ☐ Sort your data from your best performers to the duds by going to Data in Microsoft Excel and sorting by column G.

From here, you can scrutinize which types of content to replicate in the future and which to avoid. For each piece, ask yourself:

1. Who wrote the content?
2. What type of content was it?
3. What was the tone of the content?
4. What additional media was in the content?

- ☐ Enter your noteworthy comments into column H in your spreadsheet.

## 7. Define The Goal For Each Piece Of Content You'll Publish

If you haven't done it already, sort your data from best to worst. Then, find the overall average for all of your content, then the average top 15, 13, 11, 9, 7, and 5 pieces of content. Your spreadsheet will use a formula to automatically do this for you:

- Your average piece of content generates the metric in cell G35.
- Your average top five are in cell G36.
- Your average top seven are in cell G37.
- Your average top nine are in cell G38.
- Your average top 11 are in cell G39.
- Your average top 13 are in cell G40.
- Your average top 15 are in cell G41.

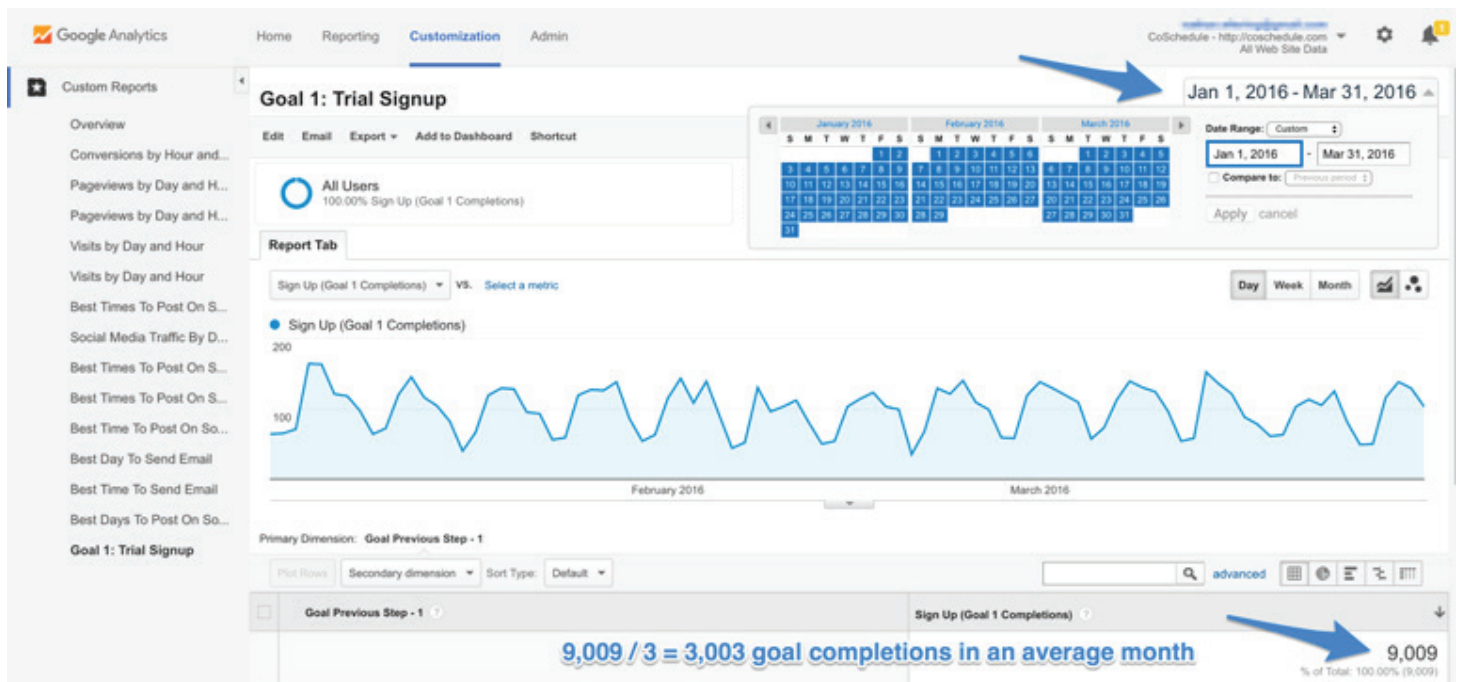
Plan to make all of the future content you publish replicate the success from your most successful content:

1. **Next month:** Publish content that's on par with your *top 15 pieces of content*.
2. **Month 2:** Publish content that results in similar success to your *top 13 pieces of content*.
3. **Month 3:** Publish content that reaches similar results to your *top 11 pieces of content*.
4. **Month 4:** Publish content that results in the same success as your *top 9 pieces of content*.
5. **Month 5:** Publish content that reaches similar results to your *top 7 pieces of content*.
6. **Month 6:** Publish content that stands among your best-performers—your *top 5 pieces of content*.

This plan gives you the **opportunity to build up the stamina** needed to produce better content every time you publish. It's realistically achievable yet still focused on huge growth.

## 8. Define Your Monthly Goals For The Next Six Months

Open your Google Analytics custom report for your goal, and find the data from an average month's performance. An easy way to do this is by adding together the data from the last three months then dividing it by three to find your monthly average performance.



- ☐ Enter your last three month's worth of data into cells L3, L4, and L5 accordingly in your spreadsheet, and a formula will automatically calculate your average to show in cell L7.
- ☐ Next, determine how many times you'll publish your improved content every month. This is how publishing consistent content will help you boost your results.

*Hint: You can count up how much content you published in the last three months and enter it respectively into cells K3, K4, and K5, and your average amount will show automatically in cell K7. If you don't want to do this, just enter in the amount of content you'd like to publish in an average month in cell K7.*



- ☐ From here, use your average top 15, 13, 11, 9, 7, and 5 data to understand how much higher to make your goals. When you use the spreadsheet, these will automatically populate for your next six months in cells L11-L16.

## Execute Your Plan With A Solid Content Development Process

### 9. Determine Who'll Be Involved In Your Editorial Process

There are a ton of roles you could include in your process. Keep in mind, these are roles and not titles—one person or even just a couple—could fulfill all of these. Check the ones you think make the most sense for your business:

- ☐ **Content marketing strategists** set the stage with the entire marketing strategy, helping your team understand your audience, the topics you'll cover, and the goals you're shooting for.
- ☐ **Content strategists** turn the strategy into a game plan complete with understanding what content and channels your team will use to reach your audience. These people fill up your editorial calendar with the content your team will develop.
- ☐ **Idea contributors** are exactly what you'd expect: These are the folks who are listening to your audience and can help with unique angles. They have the stories you want to tell and your audience cares about. These people could be anyone within your company or even your customers and subscribers.
- ☐ **Content creators** are the linch pins responsible for executing the content strategist's game plan. They are your designers, writers, videographers, and podcasters (among possible others). They are making your content.
- ☐ **Content editors** make sure your creators fulfill your content strategist's expectations. They focus on the story of your content, and also on the nitty-gritty grammar stuff. Editors are the ones using your editorial calendar every day, keeping your creators on task and content publishing as you expect.
- ☐ **Content promoters** are the magical creatures who amplify what you created to inspire interest in your content. If your content is the party, these folks send the invitations to attend. They use social media, email, forums, and tons of other content promotion tactics to increase your traffic.
- ☐ **Community managers** monitor the ensuing conversation your content creates. They respond to social media mentions and comments, and help build a strong network of brand followers.

- ☐ **Content analysts** check out the stats behind the scenes to know how your content contributes to your goals. They'll check out Google Analytics and Kissmetrics (or whatever analytics tools you use) to help your content strategist plan even better content. This is where that iterative approach—the secret ingredient to content development—really comes into play.

Now think about who among your team is perfect for each role:

**Team Member Name**

**Role**

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Content marketing strategist  
Content strategist  
Idea contributor  
Content creator  
Content editor  
Content promoter  
Community manager  
Content analyst

- ☐ Set up a time to chat with these folks about what you envision their role and responsibility would be in your content development process.
- ☐ If necessary, estimate how much of their time you'd need for the content they'll create in their role.
- ☐ Meet with your team's supervisors/managers/bosses to approve of their role and time commitment in your content development process.

*“Once you get your yes, go away and build your project, thrash-free. Ship on time, because that’s what a linchpin does.”*

—SETH GODIN

 CoSchedule

- ☐ Do not leave the meeting until you receive a yes to move forward with your content development process, empowering your editor to lead with publishing authority.



## 10. Host A Content Planning Meeting To Discover 10x Content Ideas

- ☐ Invite your pod to a content planning meeting to teach them what you learned from your data analysis and come up with new ideas that are similar to your most successful content.

Here is your meeting itinerary:

- ☐ **10 minutes:** Individual brainstorm frenzy. Ask each person on your team to type out a list of their ideas.
- ☐ **10 minutes:** Group grading. Create one list of everyone's ideas, then ask your team to grade the ideas on a 1–3 scale. Explain to them that a 3 grade means the content idea will definitely help you achieve your goals and is in line with your top content—the kind you want to replicate to produce bigger results. A 1 grade means the idea won't likely help you achieve your goals. Then simply recite each idea to your team, and have them instant message you their grades. The lowest grade you get from your team is the score the idea will receive because at least one person doubts the idea will be successful (you need skepticism to eliminate sub-par ideas from your workload).
- ☐ **10 minutes:** Narrow your best ideas. As a team, review all of your 3 grade ideas for uniqueness, your audience's interests, your expertise, and similarity to your top-performing content. The goal is to find the absolute best ways to create that content to be the best source of information on a particular topic on the entire interwebs.

## 11. Define Your Editorial Workflow Checklist

Status-based workflows look like this:

- Draft
- Pending Review
- Publish

The problem is that people aren't responsible for these statuses, there is no due date, and there is no description of what they mean.

Task-based workflows help you dissect all the work that goes into creating a piece of content—whatever it is (blog posts, e-books, webinars, you name it)—to help you choose a specific person accountable for each task, along with deadlines for every task.

- ☐ **Begin every task with a verb** that demands action. Make your tasks super clear by highlighting exactly what the task entails, while also being brief.
- ☐ **Assign each task to a specific person** who clearly knows they are responsible for helping you create some part of your content.
- ☐ **Set clear deadlines** for when you expect each task to be complete.
- ☐ **Understand the difference between deadlines and your publish dates.** Help your team understand the date on your marketing calendar is the publish date for when your content

will be 100% complete, while assigning tasks with deadlines for tasks days or even weeks before the content is set to publish.

- ☐ **Remind your team before their tasks are due.** Subtle reminders of task due dates help those busybodies know when their tasks are due so they don't forget and accidentally cause your project to miss its deadline.

What are some tasks you'll need in your content development process? Brainstorm a ton here, and we'll narrow them down next:

Look at that list and determine their actual priority—think of this as a step-by-step process of what needs to be done first to last. Flesh out your brainstorm in a more robust way in this table:

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Team Member Name</i>

## 12. Choose The Tools You'll Use To Manage Your Content Creation Process

While everyone on your team could create content differently, it's much more efficient to have one version of the truth for the tools you use in your content development process.

Brainstorm the content development tools your team could use in your new process:

*Ex. Evernote*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

- ☐ Choose the tools that match well with your team's working styles (ex. if your team is always on the go, that means you need tools that don't require immediate Internet access and are mobile-friendly). Narrow your list above to only three or less by crossing off the tools that aren't as good for content development as others.

What are your current naming conventions for file names?

*Ex. Images are content-development-process-halloween-diagram.jpg*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Are your naming conventions working, or could you improve them? If yes, brainstorm how you could improve:

*Ex. Dates could be in ISO date standard to read "YYYY-MM-DD" to filter more easily.*

*Ex. We could remove any special characters other than hyphens, since those tend to be what search engines prefer most.*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## Improve Your Content Strategy By Analyzing Your Success And Failure

### 13. Boost Your Team's Efficiency By Reviewing Your Content Development Process

- ☐ Set up a touch point with your team to ask them three very simple questions:
  1. What went well?
  2. What went wrong?
  3. What should we improve next time?

### 14. Analyze Your Content's Data To Generate Bigger Results

- ☐ Block off time on your calendar to review each piece of content you create moving forward to make sure it fits the standards you set in step 7 of this content strategy process.

**When you're ready to take control of your content strategy, try CoSchedule for free today. It's your all-in-one marketing project management calendar.**



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*—Michael Hyatt, Award-Winning Author & Blogger*



Nathan Adler  
RiverScene



Michael Hyatt  
Author



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Convince & Convert

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