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Tips for Creating an Effective Editorial Calendar

By [Rebecca McIntyre](#) on October 15, 2014

Editorial calendars can make content marketers' lives much easier. By planning out the content you've already created and documenting ideas for the future, everyone on your team will be on the same page. It also ensures that you're not creating repetitive content and allows you to plan ahead. These suggestions can be applied to content across many channels, such as blogs, newsletters, social media, websites, microsites, and more.

Creating a schedule is a relatively easy yet important way to ensure you're setting and fulfilling a cadence. With a detailed editorial calendar, you can establish content themes and ownership, as well as how often and where you want to share your content. If you're wondering why and/or how to create an editorial calendar, check out our tips below.

Choose a format: There are different options to create an editorial calendar. You can use a specialized tool or simply a spreadsheet. Opentopic uses Google docs to host our editorial calendar, mainly because it's really easy to share with our team. The spreadsheet format also allows for easy sorting on different data.

Set up your calendar: Make sure you include some key components so that your team can effectively plan, track, document, and measure your content marketing efforts. Elements to document may include:

- Title (of the individual content piece)
- Target audience (particularly useful if you are targeting different audiences)
- Curated versus created content (this helps you track the ratio over time)
- Author (who is writing the content)
- Person ultimately responsible (owner/project manager around content)
- Drop date (when it will be published)
- Link to published content (after it's published)

You can get much more detailed—for instance, opting to include formats (such as video, article, or infographic, etc.) or content type (such as “guest blog post” or “quiz”) and even opt to specify the channels on which you'd promote the content.

Consider your company news and product roadmap: While the most effective content marketing will be informative and focused on your customers' needs versus your products and/or service offerings, it's still important to include milestones about your own company news in your calendar. This gives you the opportunity to create content that supports your company announcements and/or product releases.

Plan for seasonal content: Include key holidays and seasonal milestones in your calendar so you can plan content around them. For example, if you're a retailer that sells yard equipment like barbeque grills and patio furniture, you may want to develop content that supports such outdoor activities come Spring. Likewise, choose the holidays in which you'd like to make a content investment. (As an example, check out Opentopic's recent seasonal post, [Treating Your Audience With Content This Halloween.](#))

Plan for curated content: Realistically, when you're relying on external sources for curating content, you can't always predict what content will be available. You can, however, anticipate certain topics—for example, retailers know that summertime will inevitably bring “Back-to-School” news—and they plan to share content along that theme. So, in keeping an editorial calendar, it's important to remain flexible for curated content.



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While you may not always know the what, you can always plan for the when.

You can't always predict what content will be available. #CuratedContent #EditorialCalendars

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Consider what content you already have: Don't forget to take inventory of what content you already have created. Some of it may be worth repurposing over time. For example, you might want to share a piece of evergreen content again, or repackage an article as an infographic. (#ThrowbackThursday provides a great forum to re-share relevant content.)


Revisit your editorial calendar often: Planning ahead will help you better execute your content marketing program. But even with a carefully crafted plan, you still need to remain flexible in case a content idea or opportunity arises. Remember, your editorial calendar is not written in stone.

Document your published content: List blog posts, articles, white papers, and more, in your editorial calendar after they've been published, and don't forget to include links to your content. All of the information should already be there (as long as you're keeping it up-to-date), so it's rewarding to look back on your work to see what you've accomplished. (Personally, I like blocking out the whole row in gray on my Excel spreadsheet when a content project is completed. It's satisfying and allows you to move on to the next item on your list.)

In short, although editorial calendars may seem like a pain to maintain (no rhyme intended), once you get the hang of it, you'll see that maintaining an editorial calendar can help you better achieve your business and operational goals—driving profitable customer action—by aiding you in preparing and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content that attracts and acquires a clearly defined audience. If you'd like more examples of editorial calendars to get you started, check out these [free editorial calendar downloads](#).

Don't forget to share your tips and tricks below in the comments section. Opentopic always loves to hear your thoughts.

Struggling to find and curate high-quality, relevant content to fill out your editorial calendar? Find out how Opentopic can help you discover the content you need, when you need it. [Contact us](#) today for a free demo.

 About the Author

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About Rebecca McIntyre

Rebecca is the Marketing Manager at Opentopic. She has worked as a marketing communicator in a wide variety of fields, ranging from architecture to financial services to communications consultancies. As a passionate writer and content marketer, she decided to join the startup world--and is loving it! She enjoys connecting with people, so feel free to reach out to her on Twitter.



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