

## Lesson 2: Content Hubs

Your content hub is at the heart of your marketing strategy. It is usually your greatest resource to offer consistent knowledge to a receptive audience. This is where you will build your authority on your industry and the subject matter it connects and relates to. To be of worth your content hub has to give your audience value. Its single purpose is not sales although that is a thread, as it is in all the marketing strategies you employ. The content hub has multiple purposes:

- To engage
- To educate
- To inspire
- To persuade
- To entertain

Not every post will capture each of those traits but there has to be at least one in play and ideally two. If your blog is just a 'hard sell' tool then people will switch off to it because you are not giving them a reason to stay. It is in your interest to sell your service or product but you need to convince them it is in theirs by far more subtle means. As trust and respect are built through regular content delivery the audience will become far more aware and open to your industry/product and how it might benefit them.

### **How do you build a network around your content?**

You have slaved away to produce some excellent quality content and have built quite an impressive resource up of blogs, how to guides, pdfs, white papers and eBooks. Now what do you do with it all? This is generally where people/businesses fall back. They have the content created and then fail to use it to increase engagement with their brand, website, and product/service.

This is a straight forward guide to how you get that content out there and how you make it flow so that you get maximum benefit from it. You do not have to be cutting edge content creators, someone with a simple blog can benefit from a thorough approach to how their content flows.

### **So, first question – have you created a content hub?**

A hub is basically a fixed point or place that you can build a network of interested individuals around. It is a place where people can come and engage with your content and your brand, this is the key here. They are entering a zone that you can manage and they are being exposed to your brand on your terms.

The hub is very much the focal point and home of your content. You can place your hub on your website by way of a forum, a resource centre, a blog. Equally you could have a stand apart hub in one of these forms that bridges the gap between your website and your social media platforms. How you define that hub is important because this really does have to be your strongest asset within your marketing armoury.

### **Is it getting tons of engagement?**

Once you have selected a branded content resource location (hub) you need to look at engagement. Does your hub encourage conversation? There are a few ways to encourage conversation but something that needs addressing first is why many businesses do not do any!

Businesses are shy about contacting others. They are perhaps not confident enough in their material to put it out there and encourage debates around it. There is no point in writing hundreds of thousands of words if you are not going to rally behind it and get it in front of your potential customers/ clients.

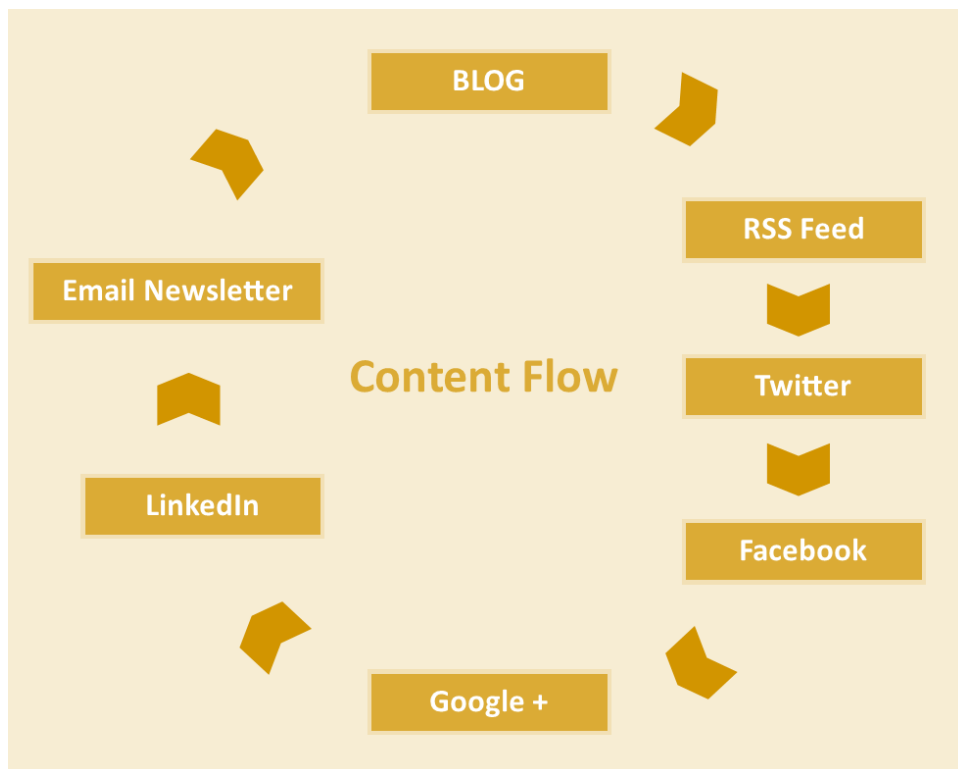
The first key to content flow is simple – be vocal about what you have produced. Be vocal about your area of expertise. Be vocal about your brand. Don't shout about it but do gently nudge, promote, ask the questions, provoke some thoughts, make people laugh, nod in approval, and try to surprise them now and again. Be bold and be brave!

Three ways to encourage conversation:

1. Ask people to join in and interact with your hub (your information packed resource)
2. Go through a sequence of sharing and interacting with others when new material is posted

### 3. Incentivise your audiences interaction by running competitions and offering prizes

The sequence is something that needs further explanation because it should be unique to your business and your strengths. Your content flow will rely on this sequence. The general idea here is that when content is published on your hub it will follow a predesigned journey in the way it is then shared and promoted. It will look something like this:



In an ideal world much of this process can be done automatically. Using tools like [Buffer](#), [Hootsuite](#), [Sprout](#). Once a blog piece goes live it should be distributed to other platforms at times when it is likely to see optimal interaction. Just as a quick aside these are those times:

Pinterest: On Saturday from 2 pm-4 pm and 8 pm-11 pm

LinkedIn: 7 am-8:30 pm and 5 pm-6 pm

Google+: 9 am-11 am

Twitter: On weekends from 1 pm-3 pm

Facebook: Weekdays 6 am- 8 am and 2 pm-5 pm

Blog: Monday, Friday and Saturday at 11 am

Blogging is perhaps the most common content hub but that does not rule out forums and resource centres. If you look at the likes of [Dove](#) and [English Heritage's](#) hub pages they are a massive resource which have made them a flagship for their brands. It is this added depth and richness of content that makes them a 'go to' resource for information on their respective fields of expertise. However, the reality for most businesses is that a solid blog is all they have the time to create and manage.

A hub enables you to manage exactly how you distribute your content and it gives you a branded landing page that is there to educate, entertain, stimulate thought and inspire. They are not about selling, they are about nurturing relationships with people. Writing human content for a human audience is imperative. Fresh, conversational, and appealing content is what people want to interact with, so give them what they want and then plan the actions you take in meticulous detail to encourage a flow of movement from one piece of content to another piece.

### **Let it flow**

Let's say you have set up a sequence so that when you post your blog, you send an automated tweet, a Facebook, Google+ and LinkedIn post, as well as a pre-written email newsletter to your subscribers. You have done the first step. When audiences click on those posts you need to have the next stepping stone in place for them to follow. You are creating a route back to your website, back to the blog, to a special offer/promotion, or in some cases, onto another social media platform that a business is trying to boost.

What might those stepping stones be?

- If you found this blog interesting then have a read of these...
- Check out our twitter page for more detailed information on this... (niche subject matter)
- Browse our new website
- Explore our downloads page for some great guides on...
- Add us on LinkedIn and engage in our group discussions on \_\_\_\_\_ it's buzzing on there at the moment!
- We blog weekly so if you want even more great pieces on \_\_\_\_\_ then check it out!

Ok, so you should have a good foundation to work from now. You need to really define your hub and view it as the heart of your content. It is where you want people to land because it is such a great resource. Once you have your flagship hub ready you can concentrate your efforts on how people interact with your content. Define what automated sequences you can put into place and how you make your content flow so that people stay interested for longer. The longer they are on your branded pages the more likely they are to remember you and to return when they want to know more.

One last crucial point – do not forget that engagement is a two way exchange. Once your content is out there you need to be ready to respond to tweets, comments, shares and any questions that it raises. Instigating debate is time consuming but this is the ultimate goal of marketing. When you reach the level of consistently engaging with your audience you know your hub is working well for you.

You task for this lesson is:

1. Create a sequence to follow every time your content goes live. This is a big task because you need to make sure you can commit to it on a regular basis and it could take some research to get right.

Here is the sequence we use at 'The Lab'.

### **Syndication Sequence**

1. Post to Facebook
2. Tweet it
3. Google+ it
4. Post to LinkedIn
5. Add to weekly email
6. Promote to three relevant Google+ communities
7. Promote to a LinkedIn group if viable to discussion
8. Outreach to two key influencers on Twitter
9. LinkedIn Mail to four connections
10. Get the whole team to share, like, +1, retweet it far and wide