

Module 17, Lesson 2 Handout:

Creating a Successful Content Plan

You're armed and ready with answers for all the questions that might come up while creating a content plan. All that's left to do, is get to it. Fortunately, there are many content plan templates out there that others have already spent the time and effort to create. So, if you don't want to start from scratch, you don't have to. Plus, you've already analyzed your audience with regard to their preferences for content types, formats, and topics. And, you've defined your capacity for content creation. Let's get started.

Building an Editorial Calendar

One of the best ways to organize your content is to create an editorial calendar. Your editorial calendar will serve as your core database for all things content-related. You may choose to put everything into one calendar, or to create different calendars for different platforms, such as for your blog vs. social media, vs. website content.

If you want a place where you can access everything at once, we recommend creating one calendar where you can store everything, such as content topics, types, formats, deadlines, authors, publications, platforms, etc. It may sound overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. Again, there are tons of templates out there that you can grab and tailor to your specific needs and preferences.

[Hubspot](#) offers a really great and simple template to get you started. There are also some fancier applications you can use to create your calendar, if you want to go that route, like [CoSchedule](#) or [Airtable](#).

On the other end of the spectrum, one of the simplest and most common ways to create an editorial calendar is to use a spreadsheet format., where the main headers in your editorial calendar might look something like this:

- **Content Theme** (Tips, Holidays, Seasons, Months, etc.)
- **Content Topics** (Specific topic for content, such as, “Recipes” or “Exercise Plans”)
- **Content Format** (Blog, social media post, press release, case study, email, etc.)
- **Content Details** (Summary of what the content will include, the goal of the content, the audience, length, etc.)
- **Content Keywords**
- **Content Target Persona**
- **Content CTA**
- **Due Date**
- **Publish Date**
- **Author**
- **Approved? (Y/N)**

Organizing Your Editorial Calendar

You can add as many columns and tabs to the spreadsheet as you see fit, but keep it mind that the simpler, the better. Your editorial calendar is meant to be easy to access, understand, and use for everyone involved in the content creation and distribution process.

You may also want to create tabs within your editorial calendar strictly for brainstorming themes, calls-to-actions, and topics that you want to create content around. This way, when you are trying to plan out your calendar for a particular month or season, you’ll have a list of themes and topics available to choose from, along with calls-to-action to add to your content.

Questions to Ask When Creating Your Editorial Calendar

- How many different types of content am I creating?
- How many platforms am I using? Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Blog, Website, Other online publications, etc.
- How many contributors will be using the calendar?
- What are some themes I want to include?
- What are the main topics I want to cover?
- What are some relevant keywords related to these topics and themes?
- What are my main calls-to-action?

EDITORIAL CALENDAR WORKSHEET	
My favorite editorial calendar templates are: (include links/screenshots of a few to choose from)	
I will plan content X months/weeks at a time.	
Themes I want to include:	
Topics I want to cover:	
Personas I want to target:	
Keywords to focus on/research:	
CTA's to include:	
Platforms I am using to publish content:	

Contributors needing access:	
Content types to include:	

Once you've filled out this worksheet, you should be ready to create the skeleton of your editorial calendar/content plan. Due dates and publishing deadlines will likely be the last things you enter into your calendar, as these will depend upon when your content can realistically be ready to be reviewed and published.