

For Association &  
Chamber Pros

# Content Strategies That Will Increase Member Engagement

Live Webinar with Hilary Marsh

*May 19, 2022 | 11:00 AM Central*



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smarter association software



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with  
**BUILT-IN MARKETING AUTOMATION  
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## After the webinar, you'll receive

- Recording of today's webinar
- CAE credit certificate

## What we'll cover today

1. How to think more strategically about your content
2. How to use content to reach and engage current and prospective members
3. What content to repurpose, and how

# Takeaways

1. Your content IS your value
2. Make sure your content connects
3. Do more, not create more

Photo by [Lucie Dawson](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# 1. Content is our value



Photo by [Maja Petric](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# What is content?

- Committee report
- Association initiative
- Advocacy call for action
- Code of Ethics
- Original research
- Clinical practice guideline
- Position statement
- Industry trend analysis
- Thought leadership
- Job posting
- Scholarship announcement
- Topic of interest

# Content takes different forms and formats

- Magazine article
- Talking points
- Research report
- Course
- Webinar
- Conference session
- Press release
- Newsletter
- Web pages
- Blog posts
- Infographics
- Images
- PDFs
- Video
- Audio



# Content strategy

The planning and judgment for the creation, publication, dissemination, and governance of useful, usable, effective content across departments and functional areas.

Source:

“Content Strategies for a Changing World” report

ASAE Foundation, 2019

Carrie Hane, Dina Lewis, CAE, Hilary Marsh

<http://bit.ly/assn-content-strategy-report>

**Content is the way  
our work  
is manifested  
in the world**



SAN ANTONIO CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE

MEMBERSHIP

EVENTS

ADVOCACY

INITIATIVES

NEWS

RESOURCES

ABOUT

Member Directory

Contact Us

Site Search



Member Login



# Join a Council or Committee

Add your voice to the growing business community in San Antonio

Learn More



*About*

## San Antonio Chamber of Commerce

With more than 1,650 members, the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce is the largest and most influential pro-business organization in the region. As the primary voice of

[ABOUT](#)

[MEMBERSHIP](#)

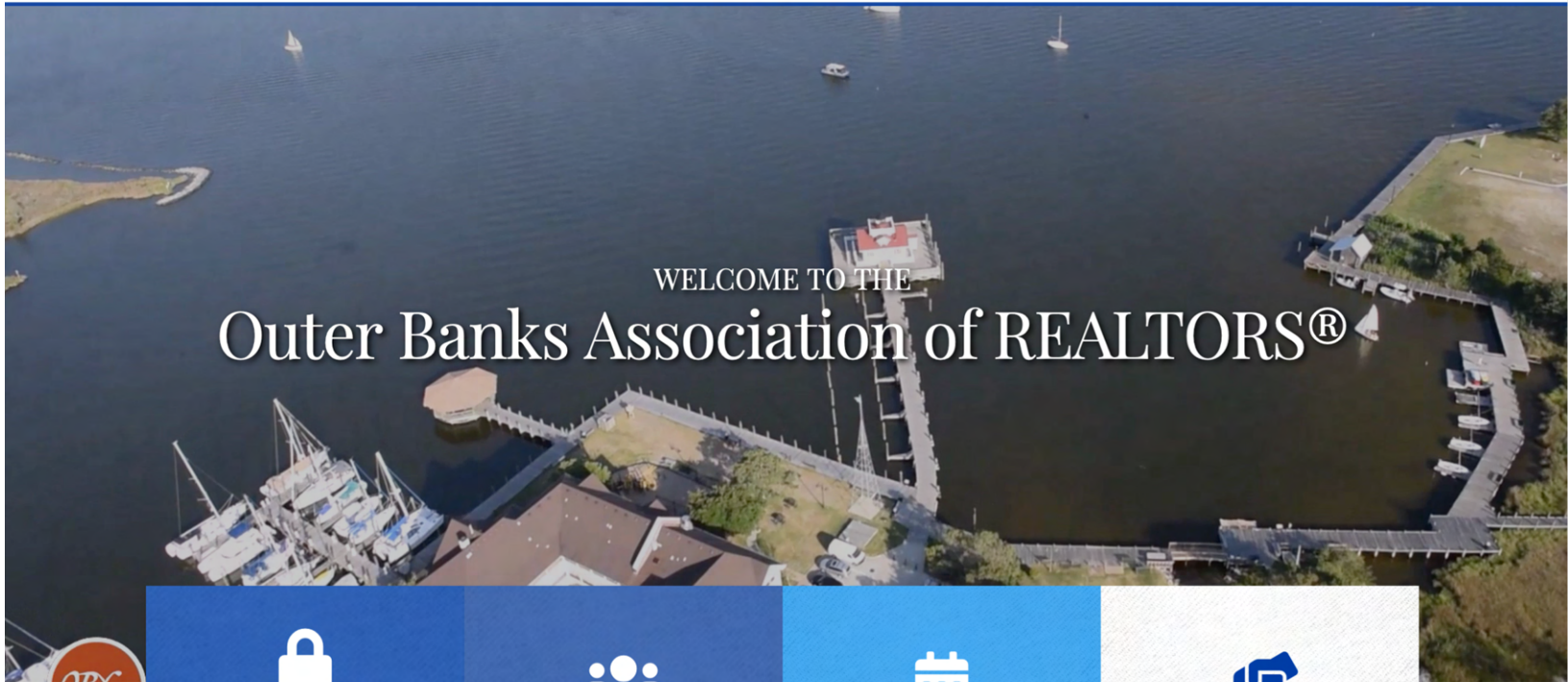
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# Content is a valuable investment

## ***1. Content is important***

Association members ranked dissemination of knowledge or content as one of an association's most important functions

*(Decision to Join)*

## ***2. It constitutes a significant portion of revenues and expenses***

Periodicals & publications: 8.82% revenue/8.11% expense

Educational programming: 9.96% revenue/8.17% expense

*(2016 Operating Ratio Report)*

A close-up photograph of a woman's face, partially obscured by a fan of US dollar bills. She has light-colored eyes and is looking directly at the camera. Her hands, with metallic nail polish, are holding the bills. The bills include one, five, ten, and twenty-dollar denominations. The text "How much are you investing?" is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

**How much are you investing?**

# Time to create a web page

	Hours per content item
Plan the content (define goals and audience, identify pages needed, determine due dates)	2
Research the content	2
Write the content	2
Review the content for business purposes, ensure that all related SMEs have weighed in	3
Edit/fact-check the content	1
Optimize the content for search (adding user-focused keywords, etc.)	1
Find/add/create images, graphics, etc.	2
Test the content with users, make any necessary adjustments	1
Enter content into the CMS, including tagging	1
Preview the content in the CMS, make any necessary adjustments	1
Promote the content on the website (home page, landing pages, etc.)	1
Promote the content in the e-newsletters	1
Promote the content on social media	1
Update/expire the content at the refresh time, or when the need is surfaced	1
	<b>20 hours</b>

# How much are you investing?

One page of web content: about \$2,000

- \$560/day for each person (writer, manager, IT support, analytics, etc.) based on \$75,000/year salary + benefits
- Average time of 3.5 days to plan, research, write, review, and publish, assuming more time to create and less time to maintain



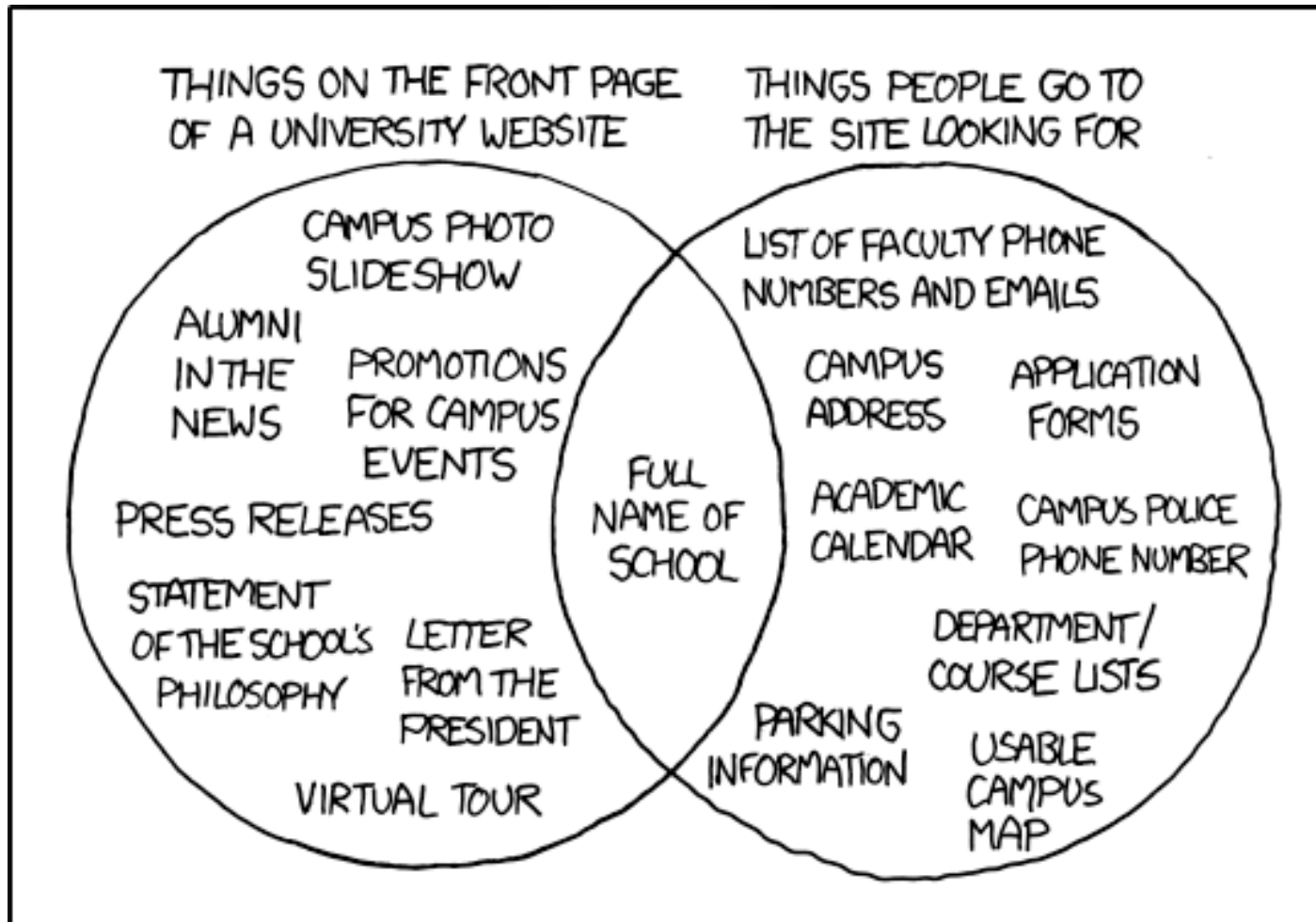
A black and white photograph of a large crowd of people, likely at a stadium or arena, seen from behind. The crowd is dense and fills the frame. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text "2. Make sure your content connects with your audience" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

## 2. Make sure your content connects with your audience

*We do not see things*  
AS THEY ARE.

*We see things*  
AS WE ARE.

ANAÏS NIN  
*Seduction of the Minotaur*



# Know your audience

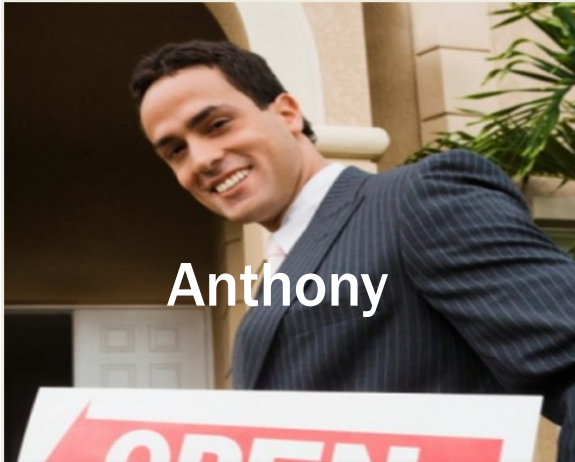
- Their context – how your content solves a need or pain point
- Their level of expertise/familiarity with the topic
- The language they use to name the topic

## What do you know about them?

- What are they already experts in?
- What don't they know now?
- What keeps them up at night?
- How tech-savvy are they?
- What do they read?
- What do they do outside of work?



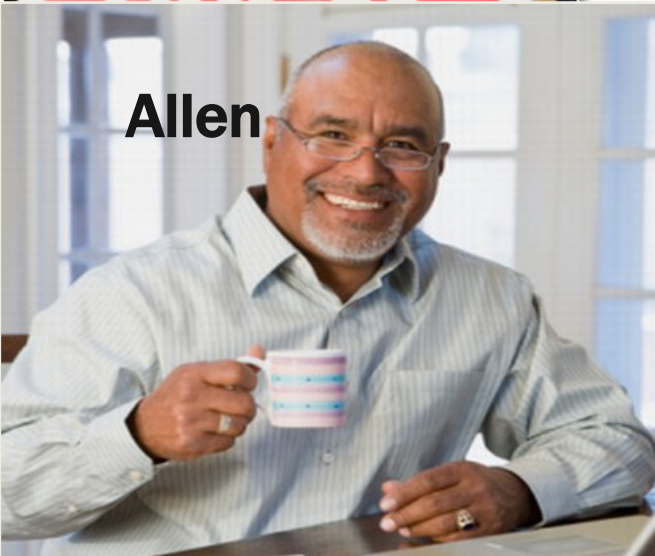
<http://www.slideshare.net/est3ban/empathybased-personas-gaining-a-deeper-understanding> esen



**Anthony**



**Susan**



**Allen**



**Maggie**





# What audiences want

1. Give me benefits, not just information  
(What's in it for me?)
2. Approach me as a person, understanding my life stage and struggles
3. Give me the freedom to use the site as I want
4. Make it peer-centric
5. Simplify! Shorten! Avoid jargon!
6. Don't waste my time when I'm trying to find what I need

Source: American Medical Association member study



**“So what?”**

**WIIFM?**





**“Mom  
test”**

<https://bellegardens.wordpress.com/2011/03/24/a-love-note-to-my-mom-concerning-aprons/>

# Write it to them

Connect with the reason for the member's visit to your website:

- What problem are they having?
- How does your organization solve their problem?
- What benefits can you offer?
- What results can they expect to achieve?

To do this

- Focus more on the visitors than on your business.
- Talk about them and their needs.
- Visitors don't care about your organization until they know your org cares about them and their experience.

<https://www.customerfocuscalculator.com/>



MEMBERSHIP

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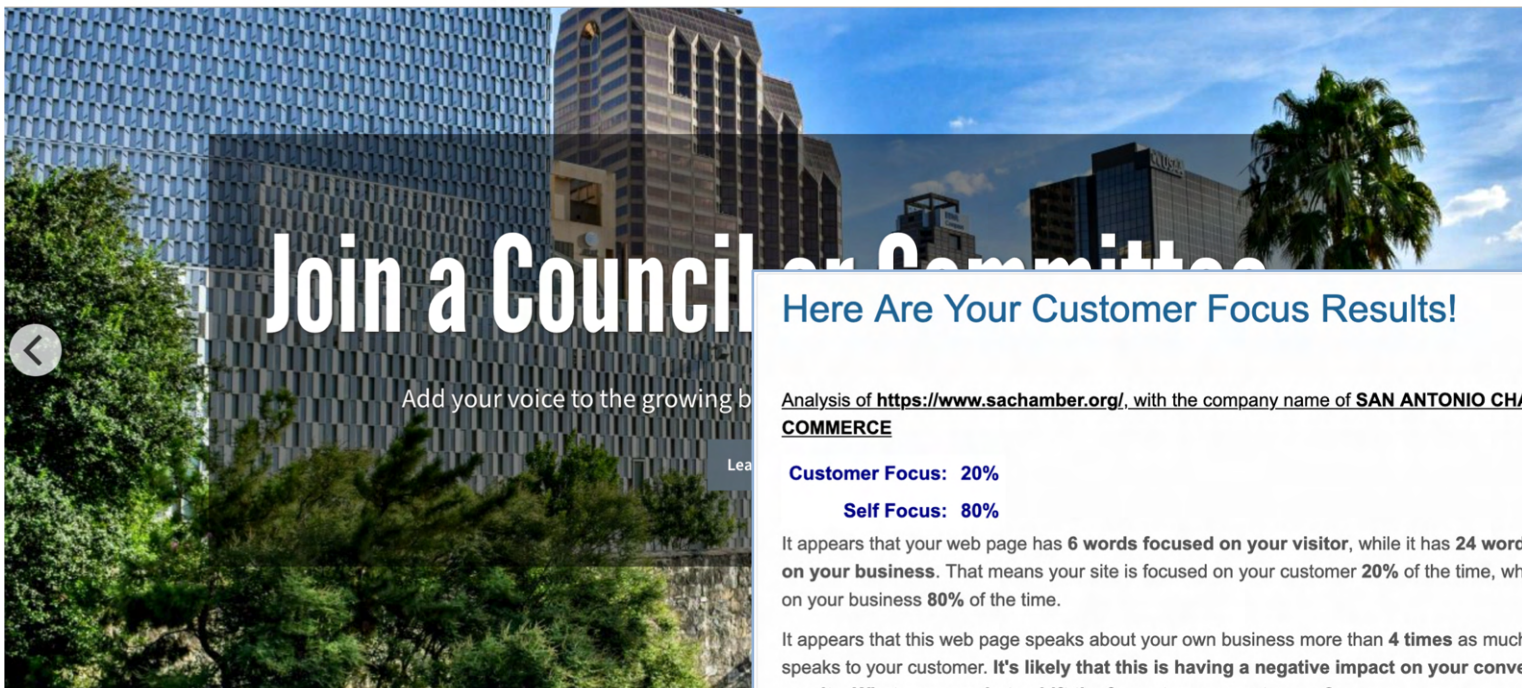
Member Directory

Contact Us

Site Search



Member Login



# Join a Council or Committee

Add your voice to the growing b

Lea

## Here Are Your Customer Focus Results!

Analysis of <https://www.sachamber.org/>, with the company name of **SAN ANTONIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**Customer Focus: 20%**

**Self Focus: 80%**

It appears that your web page has **6 words focused on your visitor**, while it has **24 words focused on your business**. That means your site is focused on your customer **20%** of the time, while focused on your business **80%** of the time.

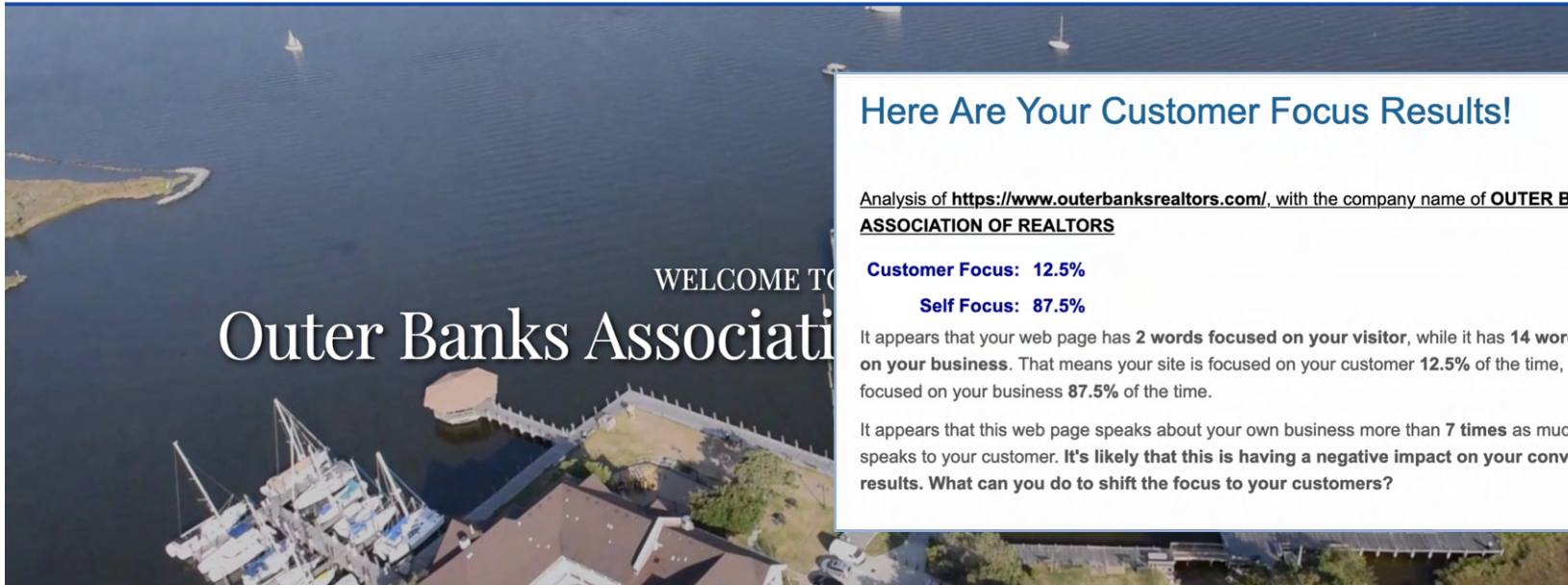
It appears that this web page speaks about your own business more than **4 times** as much as it speaks to your customer. **It's likely that this is having a negative impact on your conversion results. What can you do to shift the focus to your customers?**

TIOWW

## San Antonio Chamber of Commerce

With more than 1,650 members, the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce is the largest and most influential pro-business organization in the region. As the primary voice of





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### Here Are Your Customer Focus Results!

Analysis of <https://www.outerbanksrealtors.com/>, with the company name of **OUTER BANKS ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS**


**Customer Focus: 12.5%**  
**Self Focus: 87.5%**

It appears that your web page has **2 words focused on your visitor**, while it has **14 words focused on your business**. That means your site is focused on your customer **12.5%** of the time, while focused on your business **87.5%** of the time.

It appears that this web page speaks about your own business more than **7 times** as much as it speaks to your customer. **It's likely that this is having a negative impact on your conversion results. What can you do to shift the focus to your customers?**




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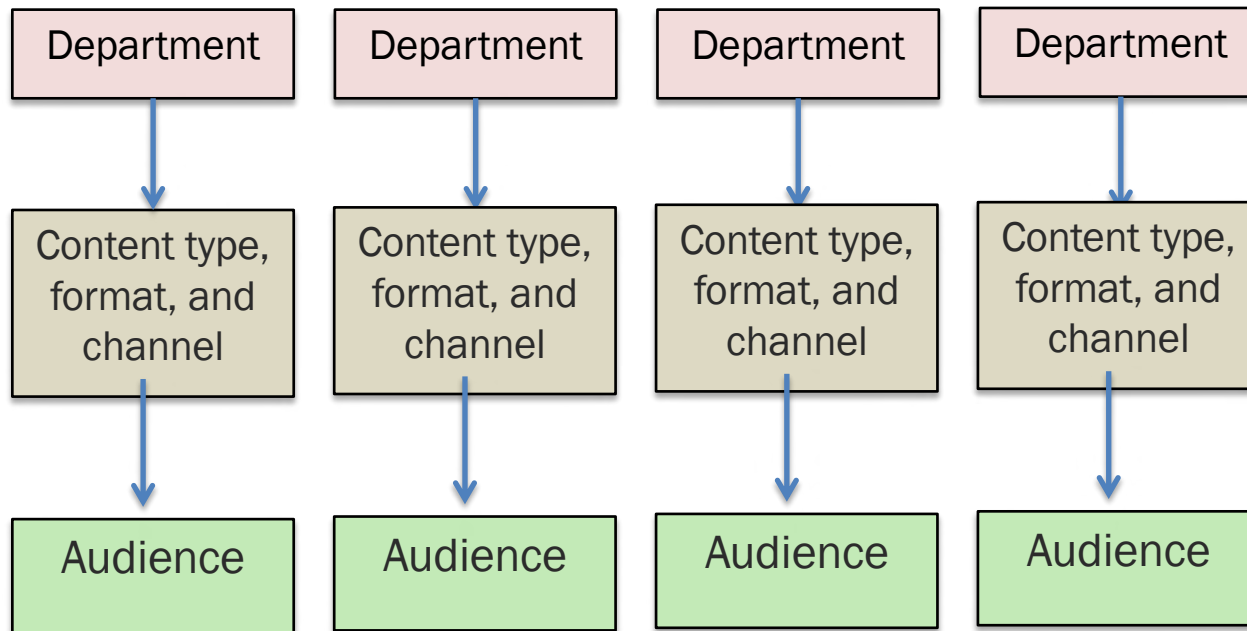
Partners

We often create content in silos

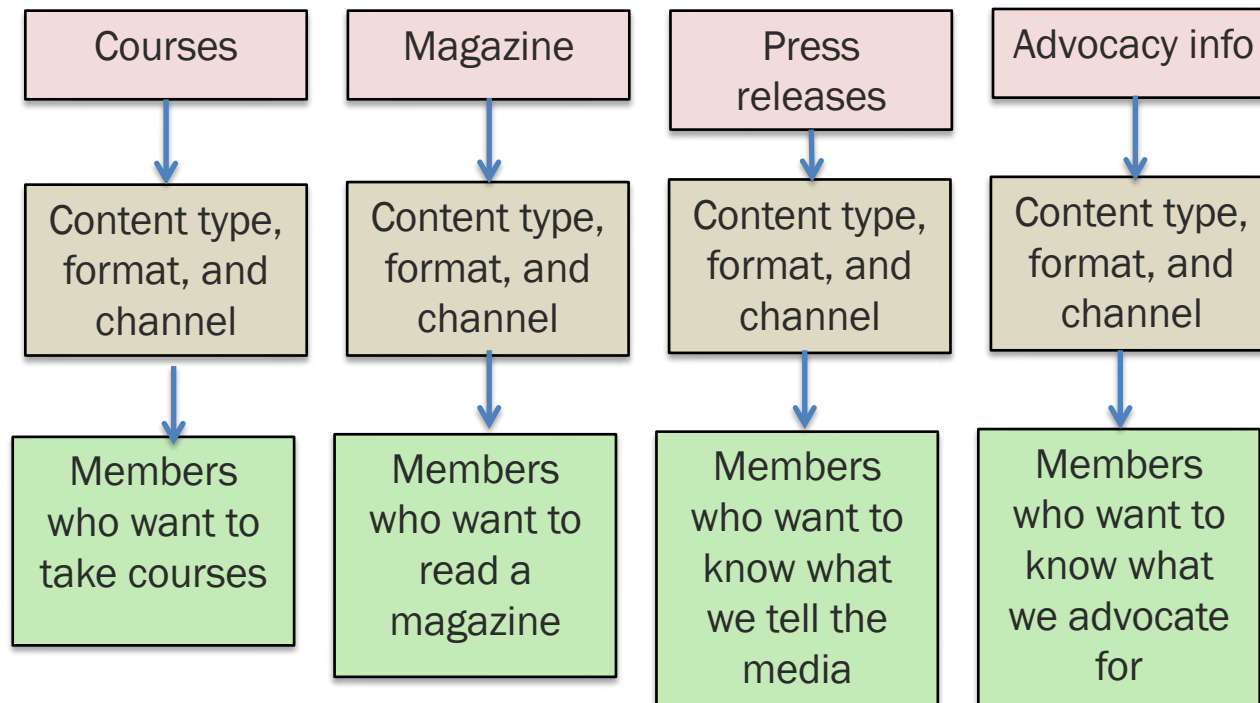




# Old thinking



# Old thinking

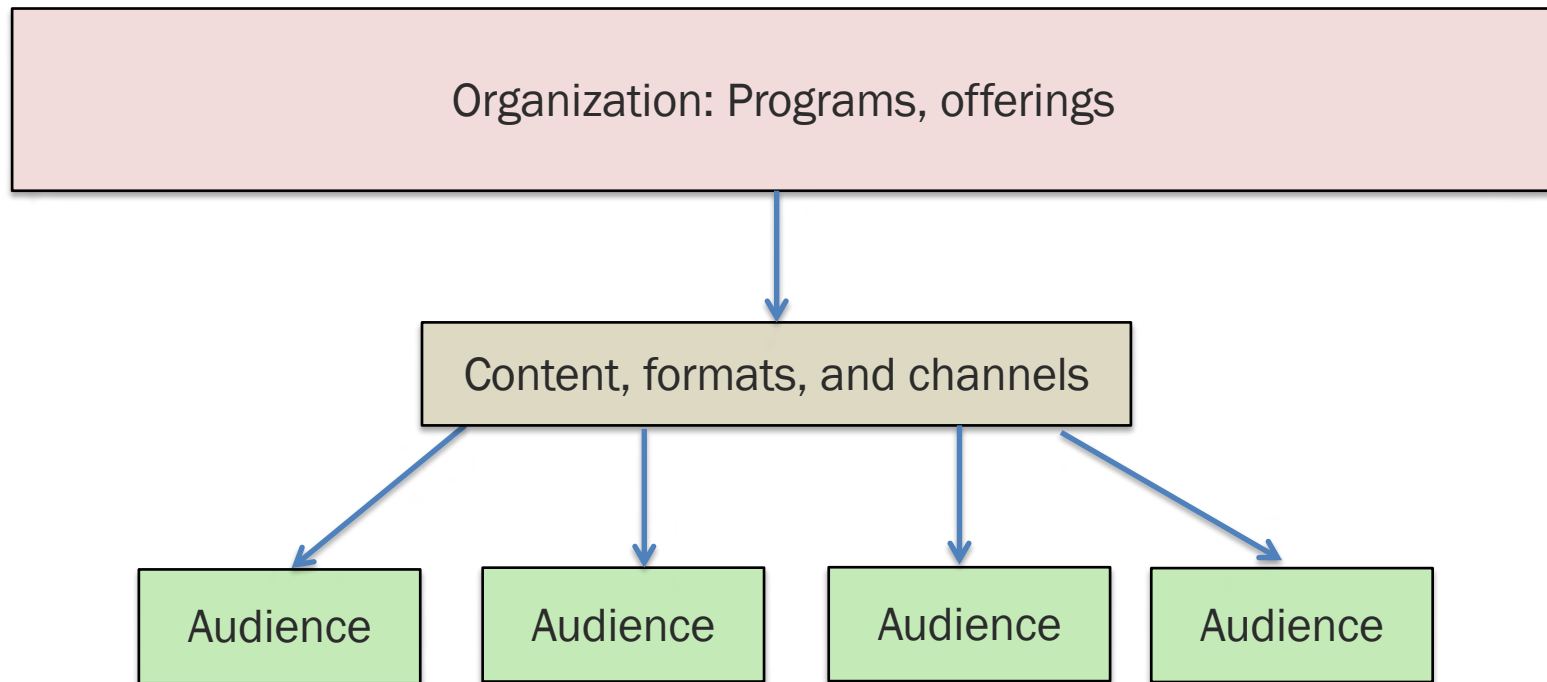


**“Users don’t care about  
your org chart.”**

—Lou Rosenfeld

Author, *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web*

# New thinking



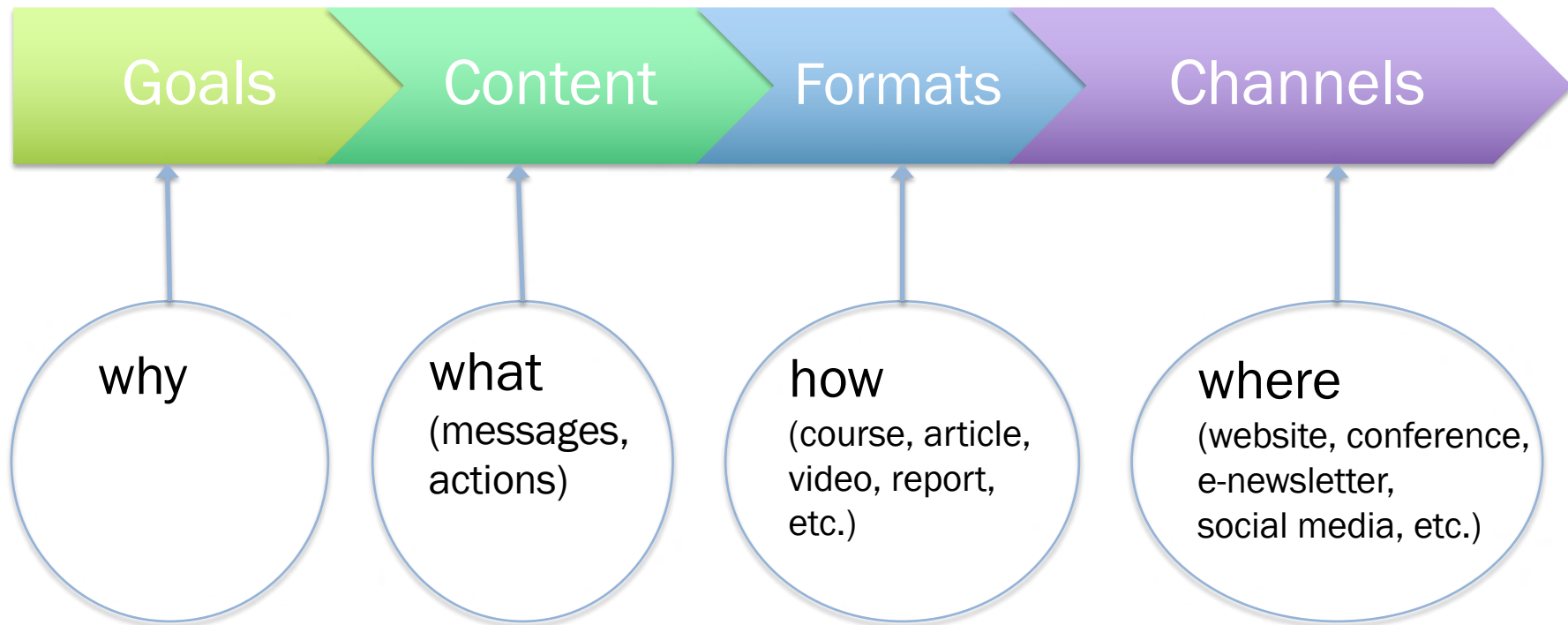
A photograph of four business professionals (two women and two men) sitting at a conference table, clapping their hands. They are dressed in professional attire. In the background, a large window shows a scenic view of a lake and mountains. The text 'Working together for member satisfaction' is overlaid on the left side of the image in a blue, sans-serif font.

**Working  
together  
for member  
satisfaction**

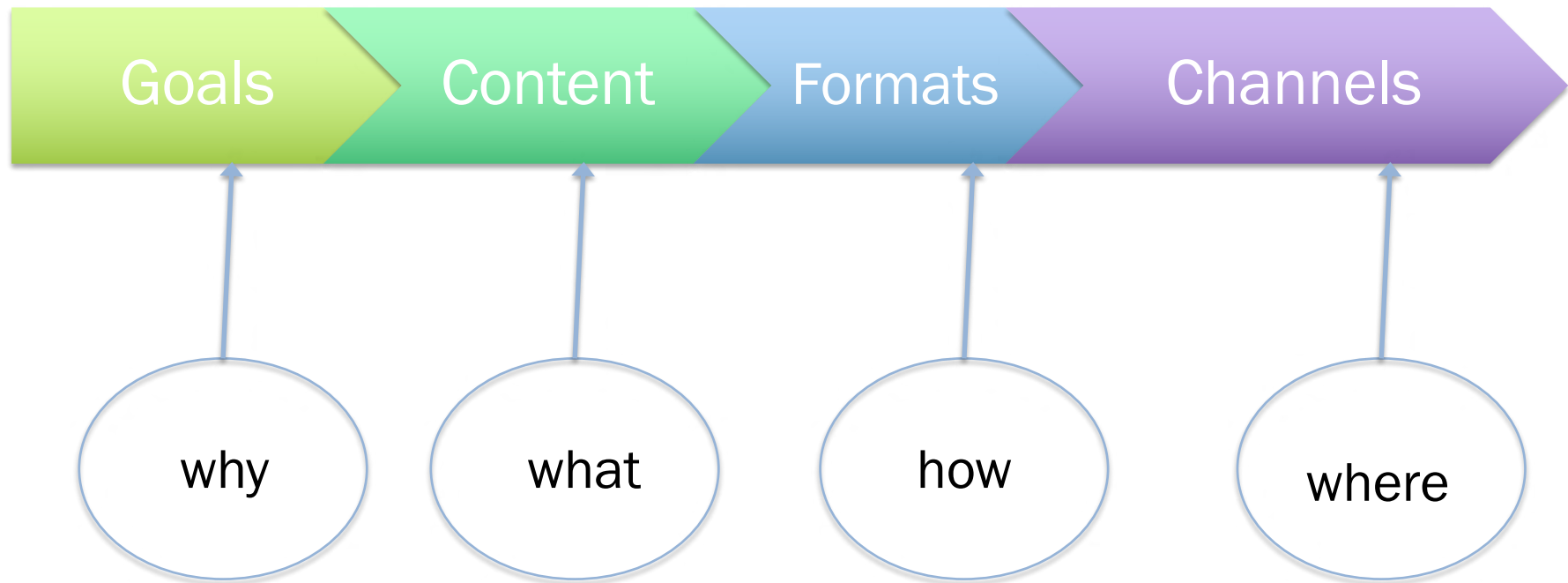
### 3. Curate and repurpose



# How content should happen



# Example: Code of Ethics



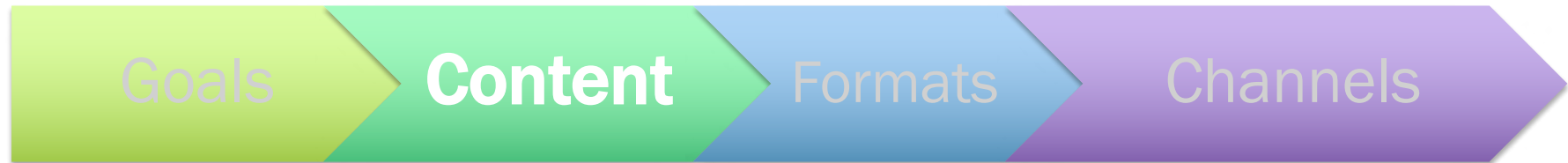


# Code of Ethics: Goals



- Ensure that members are ethical
- Increase the reputation of the profession
- Help members avoid problems

# Code of Ethics: Content



- Formalize ethical behavior into a code: Principles of ethical behavior
- Rewards for following, penalties for not following

# Code of Ethics: Formats



- Brochure
- Book
- Course
- Poster
- Conference session
- Video series
- Webinar
- Success story
- Press release
- Presentation
- Podcast episode
- Magazine article

# Code of Ethics: Channels



- Magazine
- Website home page
- Association  
“university”
- Conference
- E-newsletter
- Social media

# Code of Ethics

Goals

- Ensure that members are ethical
- Formalize ethical behavior into a code

why

Content

- Principles of ethical behavior
- Rewards for following, penalties for not following

what

Formats

- Course
- Poster
- Test
- Success story
- Webinar
- Book
- Video series








how

Channels

- Website home page
- Conference
- E-newsletter
- Social media
- Partner website
- Association “university”

where

### Association Content Curation Maturity Model

<p><b>7</b> Add Analysis</p>	<p>help your members make sense of their world, by helping them understand <i>why</i> what you've selected for them matters and <i>how</i> it's going to impact them</p>	
<p><b>6</b> Add Personality</p>	<p>develop an organizational voice and perspective</p>	
<p><b>5</b> Provide Context</p>	<p>group industry news and association resources topically</p>	
<p><b>4</b> Leverage artificial intelligence</p>	<p>deliver smart content based on both members' self-reporting and on observing their behavior and interaction with content</p>	
<p><b>3</b> Self-curation</p>	<p>allow members to select what information they'll receive based on their expressed interests</p>	
<p><b>2</b> Share quality information</p>	<p>choose from among all available pieces of content through a formal editorial process</p>	
<p><b>1</b> Share quantity information</p>	<p>provide industry news and association resources gleaned from news feeds or aggregated by a third-party vendor</p>	

<https://contentcompany.biz/blog/content-curation-maturity/>

# Takeaways

1. Your content IS your value
2. Make sure your content connects
3. Do more, not create more

Photo by [Lucie Dawson](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# Content strategy tactics

## Strategy

- **Content strategy statement:** Serves as an organization-wide mission statement for content.
- **Stakeholder interviews** with staff or volunteers to better understand business and content needs and objectives.

## Operations

- **Content governance:** policies, processes, roles, and standards for content creation and management.
- **Job descriptions** for content authors or managers that includes accountability for content work.
- Training for content authors on **how to create digital content**.
- Collect, analyze, and use **digital analytics** to measure content effectiveness and make decisions.



# Content strategy tactics

## Content quality

- **Content audits** catalog and evaluate content.
- **Editorial style guide** or **content writing guidelines**.

## Audience understanding

- **Personas:** Prototype profiles that describe audience needs and motivations.
- **Customer journey maps:** Show what top-priority audiences want, and how to deliver that through our offerings (programs, products, services, tools, resources, etc.).
- **Usability testing** or **audience surveys** measure satisfaction with content.

# Content strategy tactics

## Content planning and marketing

- Central content calendar that all content creators contribute to.
- Search engine optimization strategy.

## Taxonomy/metadata

- Single controlled vocabulary (i.e., taxonomy) to categorize content in all databases and repositories.
- **Metadata strategy** that describes content so that it can be reused across platforms and systems.

# Content strategy tactics

## Content structure

- **Content models** to plan for and document definitions of the elements of each content type.
- **Structured content** approach ensures that content is planned, developed, and able to be connected or referenced in any print or digital interface.

# What we found in the study

- Associations of all sizes and types are doing at least some content strategy activities
- The tactics helped us create a model of maturity for content strategy work
- There are common pain points, with pathways out of each one



## Beginning

- Feel excitement
- Have permission

*I'm planning*

### Content Strategy Focus

- Tactics
- Mindset
- Aspirations



## Intermediate

- Feel uncertainty
- Have responsibility

*I'm executing*

### Content Strategy Focus

- Risk: Bust silos → Build bridges
- Fear: New models needed
- Growth: Small → Big wins



## Advanced

- Feel confident & accomplished
- Have collaboration

*I'm iterating*

### Content Strategy Focus

- Less about how
- Tactics are part of processes
- Creating/sustaining culture

# Where are you now?

- Do this assessment with your colleagues
- Map where you are now
- Choose which areas to address first

<http://bit.ly/contentstrategy-maturity-assessment>

Content strategy maturity assessment tool						
<p><b>Instructions for the online version of this tool:</b> On each colored row, enter a 1 in the column that most closely describes where your organization falls. (Numbers in the dark green column equal 5 points, in the light green column equal 4 points, in the peach column equal 3 points, in the light red column equal 2 points, and in the dark red column 1 point. Exception: the content governance and content planning calendar rows are worth double, because those activities are especially valuable.)</p> <p><b>Instructions for the print version of this tool:</b> On each colored row, enter a number in the column that most closely describes where your organization falls. Enter a 5 in the dark green column, a 4 in the light green column, a 3 in the peach column, a 2 in the light red column, or a 1 in the dark red column. <b>Exception: the content governance and content planning calendar rows are worth double, because those activities are especially valuable.</b></p>						
		Yes, and all content owners use it	Yes, but only some content owners use it	We're working on that (e.g. did it once but not regularly)	Maybe—I'm not sure	No
<b>Strategy</b>						
We have a <b>content strategy statement</b> that serves as an organization-wide mission statement for content.						
We conduct regular <b>stakeholder interviews</b> with staff or volunteers to better understand business and content needs and objectives.						
<b>Operations</b>						
We have established <b>content governance policies</b> including processes, roles, and standards for content creation and management.						
If someone is responsible for creating or managing content, their <b>job description</b> includes accountability standards for content responsibilities.						
We provide training on a regular basis to authors/subject-matter experts on how to create <b>digital content</b> .						
We collect, analyze, and regularly refer to <b>digital analytics</b> to measure our content effectiveness and usage and to make decisions about future content creation.						
<b>Content quality</b>						
We conduct regular <b>content audits</b> to catalog and evaluate the content we produce.						
We have an <b>editorial style guide</b> or <b>content writing guidelines</b> for the content we produce.						
<b>Audience understanding</b>						
We have <b>personas</b> , or profiles, that describe our top-priority audiences' needs and motivations.						
We have created <b>customer journey maps</b> to help us understand what our top-priority audiences want from our organization, and how to deliver that through our offerings (programs, products, services, tools, resources, etc.).						
We conduct regular <b>usability testing</b> or <b>audience surveys</b> to measure satisfaction with the content we produce.						
<b>Content planning and marketing</b>						
We have a <b>central content planning calendar</b> that all content creators contribute to.						
We have a <b>search engine optimization</b> strategy.						
<b>Taxonomy/metadata</b>						
We have established a <b>single controlled vocabulary</b> (i.e., taxonomy) to categorize content in all databases.						
We have a <b>metadata strategy</b> that describes our content so that it can be reused across platforms and systems.						
<b>Content structure</b>						
We use <b>content models</b> to plan for and document definitions of the elements of each content type we produce.						
We have adopted a <b>structured content</b> approach to ensure our content is planned, developed, and able to be connected or referenced in any interface, print or digital.						
0 0 0 0 0						
<b>Scoring</b>					<b>Total:</b>	<b>0</b>
Advanced: 80-110		Beginner: 40-59				
Intermediate: 60-79		Not yet started: 39 or less				

# Resources for you

- Audience understanding article and workbook:  
<https://contentcompany.biz/blog/know-what-your-audience-really-wants/>
- Empathy-based personas: Shifting your view from inside-out to outside-in:  
<https://contentcompany.biz/blog/empathy-based-personas/>
- Maximize content value with rapid reuse:  
<https://contentcompany.biz/blog/maximize-content-value-with-rapid-reuse/>
- “Content Strategies for a Changing World” report, ASAE Foundation:  
<http://bit.ly/assn-content-strategy-report>
- Climb the ladder of content curation:  
<https://contentcompany.biz/blog/content-curation-maturity/>
- How to adopt content strategy? Crawl, walk, then run:  
<https://contentcompany.biz/blog/how-to-adopt-content-strategy-crawl-walk-then-run/>



# Thank you!

Hilary Marsh

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<https://contentcompany.biz>

@hilarymarsh on Twitter

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