FY 2020 Proposed CLIENT
Seller Content Strategic Plan: "Crawl"

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Contents
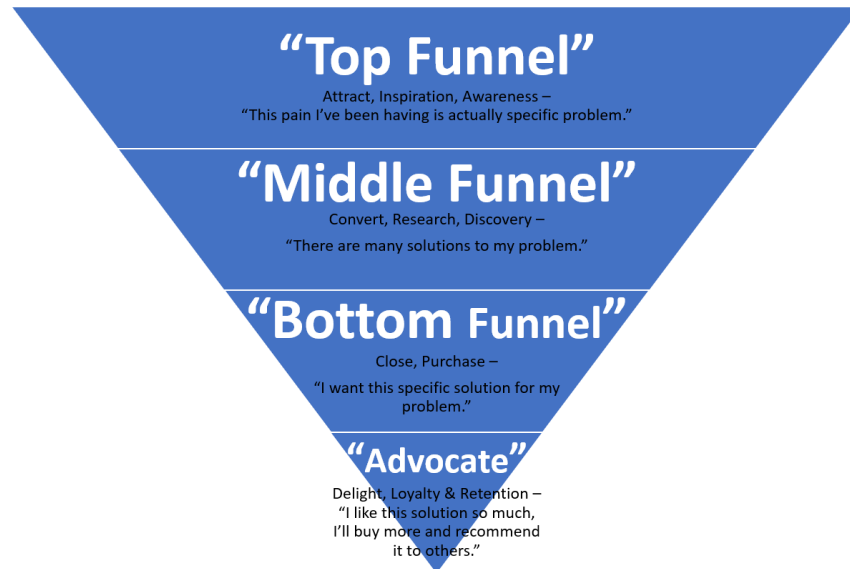
Summary Overview

This document is designed to outline not only *what* our team will create during FY 2020 to support seller acquisition and broader CLIENT goals, but *why* and *how* these pieces will support each other and the goals involved*.*

At its core, the content marketing strategy revolves around an inbound marketing funnel through which we build brand awareness and trust with prospects before any "heavy" sales messaging:

"Top Funnel"
Attract, Inspiration, Awareness –
"This pain I've been having is actually specific problem."

"Middle Funnel"
Convert, Research, Discovery –
"There are many solutions to my problem."

"Bottom Funnel"
Close, Purchase –
"I want this specific solution for my problem."

"Advocate"
Delight, Loyalty & Retention –
"I like this solution so much,
I'll buy more and recommend
it to others."

Different types of content are useful at different stages of the funnel, though pieces can be hard to categorize depending on the topic and approach taken. However, we can broadly assign certain content pieces to each funnel stage:

"Top Funnel"
Industry-based & timely blogs, Social media posts, Infographics, Videos

"Middle Funnel"
Guides, eBooks, Whitepapers, Research, eNewsletters,
Email courses, Webinar series

"Bottom Funnel"
Sales collateral, brochures, case
studies, demos, product comparisons,
quarterly reports, employee
interviews

"Advocate"
Curated content based on
previous recommendations,
requests for case
studies/reviews

Our content strategy must include all aspects of the funnel, with a greater emphasis on the filling the current content gap in the Top- and Middle-Funnel to attract new prospects.

Therefore, by the end of FY 2020, we will have:

- **Published new whitepapers in primary industry verticals**, along with accompanying content funnels to support lead acquisition
- **Revamped key sales collateral** – including new case studies, brochures, one-pagers, and presentation slides
- **Revived the CLIENT social media profiles**
- **Revised user paths** on the CLIENT corporate website to facilitate ease of use
- **Increased website traffic** through organic methods
- **Developed seller email campaigns** that generate conversations and content consumption

We also hope to establish baseline metrics for all our content initiatives for FY 2021, with positive movement on all metrics seen as the year progresses.

Ultimately, FY 2020 represents the "Crawl" phase of our content strategy to provide the foundation for the "Walk" (FY 2021) and "Run" (FY 2022) phases. Content marketing campaigns take months – years – before they are properly established and "working," and so we must be patient as we rebuild our content engine to drive seller acquisition.

The Current Baseline

In brief, current seller content marketing is sporadic at best.

Current Materials

With the dissolution of the previous team, CLIENT was left with a catalog of materials that the present sales team finds unhelpful and woefully out of date. (For example, one case study discusses the building of two facilities in Canada "planned for the end of 2015.")

Per an initial content audit performed in September 2019 and according to several conversations with sales stakeholders, certain of these materials can – and should – be repurposed for current sales use to save time, but need to be overhauled accordingly.

Current Communications

As for the current seller marketing efforts, these are mostly Bottom-Funnel focused sales pieces. They are sporadically requested by individual sales team members on too fast turnarounds, leading to disjointed communications and inconsistent results.

Absent a centralized seller marketing team, certain sales verticals have begun to create content on their own, leading to miscommunications and potential conflicts with broader business goals. (See: The CLIENT Partnership whitepaper.)

Current Performance

Overall, statistics on the previous performance of seller marketing content are unable to be found. FY 2020 seller content marketing plan is starting from scratch regarding relevant KPIs and performance metrics.

However, initial research and conversations has produced some interesting observations from the wider marketing team:

- **Organic search performance** for the main CLIENT corporate website indicates that prospects need to know about CLIENT before searching for it. That is, they include CLIENT's name in the search before landing on the site – they aren't searching for information on random topics and finding out about us organically.
    - This search behavior demonstrates a content gap which CLIENT can fill, allowing for new prospects to find us through ongoing education rather than direct contact, which can be expensive in the long run.
- **Previous seller email campaigns** from 2018 show:
    - Segmenting email messaging by industry produces better results than general service/product focused messaging.
    - Click through rates dramatically improve given direct calls to action to view website content, rather than vague "email me" or "let's meet" messaging.

- o Baseline stats are around 6% open rates and less than 1% unique click through rates.
- **Some sales stakeholders in the retail group** have expressed frustration that clients seem to be putting reverse logistics on the backburner in favor of other, seemingly unrelated business needs, like last-mile, eCommerce and high levels of leadership turnover.
  - o Linking these more top of mind business needs with CLIENT could be an effective content topic strategy to pursue, helping sales to generate interest and close conversations.
- **Industry language may differ from internal jargon**, particularly across segments and/or verticals. For example, "reverse logistics" is accepted terminology for the Retail segment, but otherwise unknown in CAG or Government verticals – despite its constant use internally. Materials account for these differences across industries and internal versus external use.

"Quick Wins"

In the short term, there are a few "quick wins" we can turn around to support immediate company needs while still laying the groundwork for future strategic creation and distribution.

- **Blogs are already being drafted and published**, based on previous materials and needs. The first went live on Sept. 19, with others waiting for internal approval. Other immediate topics for drafting include:
  - o "Industry 4.0" trends (General)
  - o Resurging home construction increases demand for equipment, which brings up supply chain management concerns (Heavy Equipment)
- **A trade show email** was drafted as an ad hoc request and will be used as part of an upcoming templated email series, depending on performance.
- **A biopharma whitepaper** has already been rewritten with a complete distribution campaign planned and drafted. It should be ready to deploy at the end of September/beginning of October 2019.
- All content is created with **social media posts for all three corporate accounts**, which will quickly populate the schedule once enough content has been created for a regular cadence.

Whitepapers

Why whitepapers?

These will be the foundation of our seller content strategy, providing material for content pieces throughout the acquisition funnel. With proper planning, whitepapers can:

- **Position CLIENT as a conscientious thought leader** within the industry, helping our prospects before they ever commission our services or products with original research and strategies driven by our decades of experience
- **Divide into awareness-level pieces** like blogs and social media posts, driving prospect awareness and brand development
- **Provide opportunities for third-party media outreach** through press releases and articles in relevant trade publications, driving validation and brand awareness
- **Drive direct sales contact**, both inbound and outbound
- **Offer content topic opportunities** for future expansion
- **Anchor evergreen lead generation opportunities**, long after the active "campaign" is complete

Whitepapers will be crafted per industry vertical, spanning the three major "umbrella" vertical categories* [REDACTED].

How will we develop and distribute each whitepaper?

Whitepaper topics will be informed by business goals, current industry trends and news, as well as performance of previous content. Research will be done by the team in South Africa, with insights by SMEs also influencing topic selection.

Each whitepaper will have its own distribution plan, based on the relevant vertical and subject matter discussed. These will be **miniature three-month marketing campaigns** run specifically to promote each content path within the given vertical. (After all, we may create the world's best content, but without a proper distribution plan, no one will know about it.)

Each whitepaper's distribution plan should contain:

- **"Gated" landing page** using Hubspot smart forms for download, requiring new prospects to input their contact info (and current contacts to answer qualifying questions)
  - Accompanying drip campaign to make sure they read it/get the info after downloading
- At least **3 industry-relevant blogs**
- **Social media posts** supporting both derived blogs and the whitepaper directly
- **Press release and individualized outreach** to relevant media entities and journalists/influencers
- **Quarter-long email drip campaign** to internal audience list
- **Ad hoc sales use** as appropriate

- **Inclusion on CLIENT site** through various sections, including a centralized resource "library" and featured on relevant industry pages

Due to the complexity of each whitepaper and their associated content funnels, as well as the required input from internal subject matter experts and stakeholders, **whitepapers will usually take around three months** to fully complete before deployment can begin. That means whitepapers and their campaigns will be developed and finalized the quarter before they deploy.

Development will commence immediately to have our first whitepapers and their associated campaigns available for distribution in January through March 2020.

The exception to this schedule will be **a whitepaper written as part of the CLIENT Partnership**, which was recently revised for legal and strategic reasons.

We plan to initiate this "mini campaign" as soon as Partner and internal stakeholders approve the campaign materials – including press release, landing page, scheduled blogs, social media posts, and media outreach – in either late September or early October 2019.

How do we know if the whitepapers succeed? (KPIs)

Each individual component of the whitepaper's funnel/marketing campaign will have individual metrics pertinent to their place in the cycle, but overall, we should be looking for whitepapers to:

- **Increase organic website traffic** while offering relevant anchor content for paid promotions (when appropriate)
  - o Measured through Google Analytics against the previous baseline established by older content/overall site traffic.
- **Drive third-party mentions**, both industry media and individual influencer/prospect shares, to promote brand awareness within the desired marketplace
  - o Measured through online listening tools
- **Increase new leads** and re-engage cold prospects on current mailing list
  - o Measured through online Hubspot form fills, email opens/click through rates, and other specific metrics against the previously established baselines.

FY 2020 will be used to establish a "baseline" metric for whitepaper KPIs, since we rarely have performance data on older content pieces against which to measure this new initiative.

Blogs

Why blogs?

Blogs serve multiple purposes, individually and as part of a broader content marketing strategy. They:

- **Constantly update the CLIENT website**, boosting our relevancy in search
- **Grab previously unknown organic prospects** searching for answers and information online
- **Drive long-term results** – publish once, and it gains search authority forever
- **Build brand awareness** and thought leadership in bite-sized chunks
- **Link to other relevant content** to encourage readers to explore all CLIENT offerings
- **Show CLIENT products and services** to a newly interested audience
- **Test content topics** for potential future whitepapers and sales collateral

How will we develop each blog?

There will be several different types of blog "series" on the website, each designed to do different things:

- **Whitepaper articles**: Blogs developed from the whitepaper that point directly to the whitepaper for download as the "next step" for readers.
- **Industry-specific articles**: Blogs developed to appeal directly to a given industry vertical, either to support business objectives or to test potential whitepaper topics
  - Whitepaper articles will be industry specific, but these blogs will be developed outside of the whitepaper pieces.
- **"General" articles**: Blogs developed to discuss business focuses as a whole that are *not* industry specific (e.g., "What is reverse supply logistics?"). These articles can be informed by internal requests, SME observations, etc.
- **"Industry News" articles**: Listicle blogs featuring relevant summarized news in each vertical, spinning it to be relevant to CLIENT products and services (even if not directly linked in the copy).
- **"CLIENT People Feature" articles**: Blogs introducing CLIENT employees to humanize the overall corporate brand.
- **"Neat Auction" articles**: An ongoing series featuring exceptional auctions on CLIENT-owned properties. They could be biggest sale, weirdest product, difficult lot that still sold well – whatever might be of interest.

No matter what type of blog is written, blogs should first and foremost serve the audience first and CLIENT second. That is, **blogs are not (directly) advertisements for CLIENT**. In fact, our priority should be on Top-Funnel blogs first that directly inform, educate and/or entertain our prospects to gather new prospects.

All blogs should also have a primary call to action – where we want readers to go next in the content path – and a secondary call to action – alternative actions they can take that still support the broader content and business goals.

A blog's primary call to action should never be "contact CLIENT" or "schedule a demo." That is the purpose of a whitepaper and the website overall. Rather, blogs can primarily direct either to other content pieces or encourage people to sign up – "opt in" – for related content through emails, eNewsletters, and other notification strategies.

For example, a whitepaper article would direct readers to download the full whitepaper as the primary call to action. Secondary calls to action might include:

- Clicking on hyperlinks embedded throughout the story
- Viewing related content, like other blogs or related case studies
- eNewsletter signups
- Sharing the article via social media

To help keep blogs focused on the primary marketing goals, a blog template has been created that requires the following information from the drafting stage:

- Industry
- General topic
- Reader takeaways
- Funnel position
- Reason for writing
- Primary & secondary calls to action
- Related internal content links
- External content/sources

- Intended publication date
- Website tag
- Targeted keywords (if any)
- Metadata (title & description)
- Related hashtags (if any)
- Social media posts for Facebook, Twitter & LinkedIn distribution

Blog topics will be driven by a variety of sources, including:

- Keyword research
- User behavior
- Business goals
- Industry news and trends
- Internal SME suggestions

Topics will be collected and stored within a marketing Trello board, and prioritized based on their business service/product relevancy, timeliness, industry interest, and content funnel placement.

How will we distribute blogs?

Blogs are primarily to be distributed "organically" – that is, to be discovered by prospects interested in the subject matter. Therefore, keywords and social media posts will play a large role in getting these pieces discovered.

That's not to say blogs won't be getting a more direct distribution method. We plan on quarterly email newsletters (described later in this plan) distributed to specific segments to feature the industry-specific articles, recent industry news and relevant CLIENT products and services.

Finally, **CLIENT employees play a vital role in distributing blogs**. By sharing these with people they think would appreciate them, they can start a "snowball" effect of distribution – both publicly through social media posts and privately through personal emails. Marketing can learn what CLIENT stakeholders think prospects care about based on the popularity of certain articles over others.

How do we know if the blogs succeed? (KPIs)

Broadly speaking, if organic website traffic of relevant seller prospects increases – and readers who consume blogs go on to view other CLIENT website content or sales pieces – then the blogs have succeeded.

To measure this, then, we'll look at individual article performance at one, six and twelve months for the following metrics*:

- **Organic search performance**, particularly keywords
- **Time on page**, to see if the blog gives people the information they need
- **Bounce rate**, to see if people are interested in more CLIENT material
- **Referral/Direct/Social Media traffic**, to see how people are accessing the material (Email campaigns, social media posts, subsidiary sites, etc.)
- **User path,** to see what material they're interested in next and if our content funnels are working.
- **New email sign ups** to receive more/similar information, which should eventually convert to new leads for sales with the consumption of more Middle- and Bottom-Funnel content.

We also need to compare the average stats for each industry vertical to determine performance and possible weak points – again, at the one, six and twelve month points.

Anecdotally, we'll also keep an ear to the ground to see if any blogs are particularly well-loved or disliked by the sales stakeholders, and if they're used individually in sales conversations with prospects or lead generators.

We are not measuring new leads directly attributable to blog content. While a new prospect may consume several blogs before reaching out for more product or service information – thereby making blogs a fundamental part of any content lead generation strategy – the primary purpose of most blogs will not be lead generation.

Social Media

Why run seller-based social media campaigns?

Let's start by clarifying what we mean by "seller-based social media." These will be campaigns run for the CLIENT's corporate social media accounts found on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn sites – *not* for any of the subsidiary brands like Liquidiation.com, GovDeals, etc. Those accounts are primarily focused on buyer acquisition, not sellers.

Therefore, the three accounts discussed by this plan will be:

- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Facebook

From a B2B perspective, social media campaigns serve a variety of functions, depending on the platform:

- **Offer additional brand awareness opportunities** for prospects evaluating potential reverse logistics partners
- **More immediate and public customer care** for sellers, contributing overall awareness
- **Control public conversation topics**, both for industry-related subjects and regarding CLIENT directly, for better business positioning
- **Engage with potential prospects** through more subtle, indirect means (i.e., liking or sharing prospect status updates)
- **Generate traffic and backlinks** to support primary website content objectives

How do we develop and publish social media posts?

Social media posts should be developed alongside other content objectives, as well as reacting organically to industry conversations and competitor news.

Note, however, that we cannot treat social media as a personal "soap box" to only promote CLIENT-based content. Social media is first and foremost a Top-Funnel brand awareness level piece; CLIENT "ads" for specific products and services constitute a Bottom-Funnel piece and therefore should be heavily limited. Otherwise, prospects will see the accounts as spam and ignore important calls to action, rather than treating CLIENT as the industry leader that it is.

As a general rule, social media accounts should strive to **share 80% "other" content** – whether that's CLIENT-based informational content, reshares of related content, comments on others' posts, or our take on third party content – and **20% content directly related to company (CLIENT) initiatives**.

Specifically, social media posts should be tailored per platform. We'll experiment over the next year to see what posts do best, but we'll begin with what industry research suggests is the best

starting point for each site. **Internal resharing of content – both originating from employee profiles and those distributed by CLIENT – will be vital to "kickstart" any sort of traction.**

LinkedIn

See account at REDACTED

LinkedIn will be our primary B2B seller social media marketing platform. Here, we'll focus on:

- Thought leadership and industry news
- Trending hashtags on LinkedIn through posts and comments, when appropriate
- Resharing others' content and posts, when appropriate

Each post should contain images and a link back to the content being shared. Beyond that, LinkedIn posts must be:

- Fewer than 210 characters with spaces, taking up only 3 lines.
    - Optimally should be around 50-100 characters.
- Include a link in post text as well within the post itself.
- Include relevant hashtags (up to 3), if available.

To start, **LinkedIn posts will be scheduled for weekdays (Mon-Fri) at 10:30 AM and 2 PM EST**, with the best times projected to be mornings on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. From there, we will experiment with the posting schedule to see if our audience has different preferences.

Twitter

See account at REDACTED

Twitter tends to be more "in the moment" and casual, which requires a different approach. Here, we'll focus on:

- Industry news and relevant hashtag participation
- Possible customer service transparency
- Interactions with targeted prospects' company accounts

Each post should contain images, if possible. Beyond that, Twitter posts must be:

- Fewer than 280 characters with spaces without a link, and 250 with a link.
    - Optimally should be around 71-100.
- Consider relevant hashtags and possible user "tags"/mentions

To start, **Twitter posts will be scheduled for weekdays (Mon-Fri) at 11 AM and 1 PM EST**, with the best times projected to be mornings (closer to lunch hour). From there, we will experiment with the posting schedule to see if our audience has different preferences.

Facebook

See account at REDACTED

Facebook is the least formal of all the social media outlets. While our prospects may keep personal accounts here, it's best used for cultural and value-based messaging rather than direct outreach and selling – at least, to start. Here, we'll focus on:

- Images of internal events and initiatives
- Reshare select thought leadership posts that appeal to the widest possible audience
- Use as a recruitment tool to demonstrate why someone would want to work at CLIENT

Each post should contain images, if possible. Beyond that, Facebook posts must be:

- Keep text around 40-70 characters with spaces.
- Post link in text.

To start, **Facebook posts will be scheduled for weekdays (Mon-Fri) at 3 PM EST**, with the best times projected to be Thursday and Friday. From there, we will experiment with the posting schedule to see if our audience has different preferences.

How do we know if social media campaigns succeed? (KPIs)

The current social media accounts are hibernating (in a manner of speaking) and provide no solid benchmark against which we can measure future initiatives. Essentially, any movement is improvement when it comes to social media. This includes:

- **Improved engagement rates** with click throughs prioritized above comments, which are prioritized above shares, which are prioritized above likes.
- **Increased website traffic to CLIENT website,** to include analysis of bounce rates and user behavior once on the site.
    - We'll also see if signups for blogs, downloads, and sales contacts can be traced back to initial touch through social media.
- **Organic follower counts increasing** within relevant industries and locations. For FY2020, we set a goal of 20% organic growth by Oct. 1, 2020 for each of the platforms:
    - LinkedIn: 6,089 followers (as of 9/12/19), so 1,200 more for total of 7,289
    - Twitter: 1,439 followers (as of 9/12/19), so 290 more for total of 1,729
    - Facebook: 1,399 followers (as of 9/12/19), so 280 more for total of 1,679

Content-based Email Campaigns

How does email fit into a content plan?

Content is not "The Field of Dreams" with Kevin Costner. If we build it, they will *not* come – not unless we plan how we will distribute the content from the very first draft.

Email is the first line of defense in a digital content marketing distribution plan, primarily because it's an owned media platform. That is, we control email content and the email list; we don't have to "rent" attention through paid search ads, and the platform will never change its rules regarding content, like social media hubs can and do frequently. (See the recent downfall of Infowars for an excellent example of why solely relying on third party distribution is a dangerous strategy.)

Email is also content, in and of itself. How these are written, how often they're sent and to whom – all of these influence the content funnels of which they are a part.

What will be the email format?

Generally, emails can be formatted in one of two ways: Either **text-based**, as if it's coming from a personal email account, or the more polished **graphic-based email**. As of right now, we're not sure which will perform better with the current verticals and target demographic. (In fact, one vertical may prefer text while another enjoys graphic!)

Therefore, we'll be testing each format throughout the year to have a more consistent formatting strategy moving forward. In a similar fashion, we'll be **testing senders** (corporate account vs individual salespeople/marketing personnel) and **looking at subject lines** (specificity vs generalities, caps vs lowercase, length, etc.).

eNewsletter Campaign

Electronic newsletters, or eNewsletters, are an easy way to recycle relevant content per industry as a perennial touchpoint that slides CLIENT products in front of prospects to keep us top of mind.

These eNewsletters would:

- **Be industry-specific** for the most part, with a single general CLIENT eNewsletter distributed to current customers to remind them of how we're driving industry conversations.
- **Reuse blog content** and relevant sources referenced on social media posts
- **Contain a regular template** to help readers find relevant sections while facilitating fast release schedules
- **Allow readers to opt-in to a mailing list**, since we anticipate these emails being forwarded to others within their company

- **Be released on a monthly basis**, and published first for our primary "umbrella" verticals (see p.8). By the end of FY 2020, quarterly eNewsletters would also be released for all individual verticals
  - The exception to this would be a "general" CLIENT eNewsletter that uses content from all verticals as a monthly touchpoint.
- **Be hosted in HTML versions as part of a website archive,** along with a landing page to allow new users to sign up.

In addition to these external eNewsletters, we propose instituting an "internal" eNewsletter for the company to show our coworkers what's been published for sellers and what to expect for the next month.

Whitepaper Drip Campaigns

Whitepapers, too, need distinctive drip campaigns: Both prior to download and after.

Whitepaper Distribution Email Campaign

Each whitepaper will have a quarter-long email campaign to currently known prospects to encourage them to read the whitepaper – or at least know it exists, with the implication that we're aware of current trends and are "hip" to recent changes. The length and format of these series may vary as we experiment and learn more about our seller user behavior.

This campaign will end after three months, though the emails can be stored to be reused if we decide to redistribute particularly relevant whitepapers in the future. The campaign will also **automatically terminate once a reader requests the whitepaper** through a tracked action, immediately onboarding them to the automated drip campaign (described below).

Automatic Whitepaper Drip Campaign

We will have people who download the whitepaper – both from the distribution campaign and organically. Readers don't always have time to read it at that exact moment, or even remember that they requested the information. Therefore, we'll develop a shorter drip campaign (2-4 weeks) that will automatically run when someone receives the whitepaper.

This email campaign will end in a call to either consume another piece of collateral further down the content funnel or directly contact a salesperson to discuss the subject of the whitepaper. It **can also "skip ahead" to the final email** once a reader interacts further with the campaign through a link click, indicating continued interest and relevancy.

This drip campaign will last as long as the landing page is up and the whitepaper remains available for public download. Once it's implemented, it becomes a "set and forget" marketing tool that will provide evergreen leads long after the initial distribution push is available.

Trade Show Email Campaigns

Sales has frequently asked seller marketing to develop emails for specific trade shows. Up until now, salespeople have approached trade shows on an ad hoc basis: They see a relevant show and attend, asking for materials as needed.

To properly support the trade shows, we propose developing a proper trade show email template series that can be deployed quickly as new trade shows come up. These templates can also be used for trade shows we know about in advance, incorporated into the marketing calendar.

To implement this email series, we would need the salespeople to tell us:

- **The conference website and relevance to CLIENT** services/products, as well as to seller prospects
- If known, **who will be attending** – either as interesting speakers or potential prospects
- **What will be discussed or promoted** during the conference
- **The prospect vertical** available at the conference
- **Planned collateral** to be used
- **Any insights from previous attendance**

From there, we can deploy the following campaigns, depending on the email lists used.

Trade Show Campaigns: "Known" leads/current sellers

- **Pre-conference email:** "Will you be there? Here's the registration if you haven't heard."
- **During conference email: "**I'm here; would you like to meet up?"
- **Post-conference email:** "Would you like to leverage your new insights? Let's talk about it and enhance our current service to you."

Trade Show Campaigns: Conference email list

- **Pre-conference email:** Introduction to CLIENT and relevance to the conference
- **During conference email:** Same as above
- **Post-conference email:** "Would you like to leverage your new insights? CLIENT can help!"

Trade Show Campaigns: "New leads" email list gathered at conference

- Post-conference email: See above.

How do we know if email campaigns succeed? (KPIs)

As previously noted, we do have a few historical benchmarks set for seller email campaigns. Performance for older emails was **6% unique opens and less than 1% unique click throughs**, on average.

By the end of FY 2020, we'd like to double the email performance to **12% unique opens and 2% unique click throughs**, on average, for all content-based seller email campaigns.

We would also like to **grow our organic opt-in mailing lists**, as these should produce better engagement rates and thus warmer leads than our scraped lists.

Beyond these metrics, we'll know if we have succeeded with emails through:

- **Increased proactive contact from current and prospective sellers** before, during and after conferences and trade shows
- **Increased website traffic** to content after emails are sent
- **Increased engagement with content**, including form fills on related pages and social media interactions

Sales Materials

Why are sales materials included on a content marketing plan?

All marketing pieces and funnels should end in one ultimate business goal: The profitable acquisition of new leads. There will be many, many ways through which a prospect may arrive at sales, but arrive there they must. Ideally, these customers then become evangelists of the business's products and services, providing valuable word of mouth marketing that cannot be replicated.

In fact, one of the functions of content is to provide sales an "excuse" to reach out to help prospects, in a manner of speaking. Instead of focusing on CLIENT and our wants and needs, content empowers sales to act almost as consultants to prospects, with their best interest at heart.

Therefore, no matter how many layers a specific funnel may take, all marketing content paths must ultimately end in a solid piece of sales collateral. The call to action must be to directly request a demonstration of the product, talk more about their specific problems with a sales person, and otherwise raise their hand as a warm lead.

That requires the sales team to have collateral that flows with the rest of the content produced – new victories to tout, new stories to tell, and new reasons to justify why CLIENT is the market leader.

Corporate Website Improvements

The main CLIENT website is the primary point of conversion for digital efforts – and indeed, will be the primary research point for prospective sellers considering reaching out to CLIENT for help managing their assets.

However, **user paths and experience are currently convoluted and unclear**. There is only one conversion point on the website – the "contact us" form – that is comparatively long and can seem irrelevant, depending on how a user reaches that page.

Industry-specific landing pages, too, don't have specific calls to action, leading users to become lost in circular paths without ever having a clear, distinct roadmap of how to move from sales copy to contact.

Therefore, a priority of the sales collateral initiative will be to **revamp the industry specific landing pages** to create on-page calls to action through smart forms that do not require additional clicks or redundant information requests.

There is also the current company blog roll and the "Education Center," both of which seem to have dual purposes. We suggest **revamping the blog to be more reader-focused** – rather than CLIENT-centric – with cross-posting pieces to the Education Center as relevant. There

should also be **a sign-up form for organic readers to opt into the eNewsletter** and receive more industry-relevant information.

Finally, we propose **implementing a basic chatbot** onto the website to capture more users as potential leads, rather than relying solely on the contact us page. The initial version would have a basic menu of options for users to click through to help them navigate the site, with an option to directly email CLIENT with any of their comments, questions or concerns. Depending on the success of this bot, we would petition for the bot to be "live," like the call center, to allow for a more personalized experience.

Sales Collateral Update

Guided by immediate needs of sales and incoming requests, we **would update the current sales collateral**, including:

- Case studies from the last year
- Featured auctions from the last year
- Presentation slides
- Industry one-pagers and brochures

The success of this initiative would be determined by whether the sales team uses the developed collateral, along with prospects' responses and follow up.

Miscellaneous Content Initiatives

There are both internal and external content initiatives which should be completed during FY 2020, including:

- Marketing and sales collateral for REDACTED product launches
- **A Voice of the Seller study** to determine current seller prospect demographics, preferences, and content demand
- **Internal documentation** for editorial review, general processes, abbreviations/industry language, etc.

These each deserve separate plans as we progress during the year.

Proposed Content Topics for FY 2020

Content topics for the next year come from current collateral that need to be updated, conversations with internal stakeholders and SME, industry news, and business goals. How these topics will be explored – and exactly which content pieces we'll create for each – will be determined as we go throughout the year.

This is not an exhaustive list, and will grow and change as the year progresses. Topics will be collected and suggested on a group Trello board, which can be discussed and assigned accordingly.

Possible Content Rewrites & Updates

REDACTED FOR CLIENT PRIVACY

New Content Ideas/Topics

REDACTED FOR CLIENT PRIVACY

Proposed Content Schedule: "Crawl" in FY 2020

Q1: October 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019

By the end of Q1 (three months), the following content pieces should be regularly produced:

- **7 total blog posts per month**, including:
  - 1 "general"/cross-industry article
  - 6 primary "umbrella" industry-based articles
- **CLIENT LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook pages** up and running with 100% CLIENT-based content
- **4 finalized whitepapers** with associated distribution campaigns ready for distribution throughout Q2 in the following industries:
  - REDACTED
- **Industry-specific landing pages** finished for Q1 whitepaper industry verticals
- **2 monthly eNewsletters sent**
  - General CLIENT & internal
- **Trade show email campaign templates** finalized and ready to use
- **Revamp of CLIENT "Solutions" section** to prepare for REDACTED products, as well as to match the new go-to-market sales strategy

Q2: January 1, 2020 through March 31, 2020

By the end of Q2 (six months), the following content pieces should be regularly produced:

- **10 total blog posts** per month:
  - Same as Q1 plus **3 "industry news" articles** for primary "umbrella" verticals
- CLIENT social media continues, with **content ratio shifting to 50:50** third-party content:CLIENT
- **3 finalized whitepapers** with associated distribution campaigns ready for distribution throughout Q3 in the following industries:
  - REDACTED
- **Industry-specific landing pages** finished for Q2 whitepaper industry verticals
- **Q1 Whitepaper Campaigns** implemented
- **5 monthly eNewsletters sent**
  - Q1 eNewsletters, plus 3 "umbrella" industry-based eNewsletters

Q3: April 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020

By the end of Q3 (nine months), the following content pieces should be regularly produced:

- **11** total blog posts per month
  - Same as Q2 plus **1 "CLIENT person of the company" feature**
- CLIENT social media continues, with content ratio **shifting to 80:20** third-party content:CLIENT

- o Begin experimentation with **social media support of trade shows**
- **3 finalized whitepapers** with associated distribution campaigns ready for distribution throughout Q4 in the following industries:
  - o REDACTED
- **Industry-specific landing pages** finished for Q3 whitepaper industry verticals
- **Q2 Whitepaper Campaigns** implemented
- 5 monthly eNewsletters sent (same as Q2)

Q4: July 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020

By the end of Q4 (one year), the following content pieces should be regularly produced:

- **12** total blog posts per month
  - o Same as Q3 plus **1 "cool REDACTED event" feature**
- CLIENT social media continues (same as Q3)
- **3 finalized whitepapers** with associated distribution campaigns ready for distribution throughout FY 2021 Q1 in the following industries:
  - o REDACTED
- **Industry-specific landing pages** finished for Q4 whitepaper industry verticals
  - o Note: All industry-specific landing pages will be revamped by end of FY 2020 as whitepaper campaigns are completed
- **Q3 Whitepaper Campaigns** implemented
- 5 monthly eNewsletters sent (same as Q2)

Future Content Goals

FY 2020 is designed to set up a foundation of content on which future initiatives can build.
These include:

- **Podcasts**, both from CLIENT directly and through facilitating influencer conversations
- **Influencer marketing**, where we sponsor influencers to create their own content on CLIENT products/services
- **Videos** for internal/product use and for public facing websites on YouTube
- **Native advertising** initiatives in third-party publications
- **Paid search & social media** promotions
- **Webinar series** where we have internal SMEs discuss niche issues for free to interested prospects
- **Social media campaigns** around hashtags and events like an "Ask the [Subject Matter Expert]" initiative or an influencer "takeover"
- **Speaking engagements** at prominent trade shows that focus on industry insights gleaned from our decades of experience, *not* solely on CLIENT products and services
- **Mobile app built** for sellers to engage with CLIENT marketplaces and feature learning centers – particularly important for smaller or one-off sellers who will use the self-directed service
- **Ultimate seller guide** written with input from buyer influencers – "What they wish sellers knew" sort of inside information – to be distributed by CLIENT and even formatted for Amazon/etc self-publishing
- **Biannual print magazine** recycling some of our best content from the last six months, to be "snail mailed" to prospects and current clients in addition to use during trade shows, etc.
- **A quiz** pitting user knowledge and judgment against CLIENT's abilities and products. ("Can you beat CLIENT in DIY?")
- Producing enough quality content to justify **weekly touches per vertical**