

# Before you produce any content for your brand...

 By [Tarryn Giebelmann](#)

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These days, brands seem to produce content for the sake of it. They know that, in order to be recognised by search engines, their websites should be regularly updated with fresh content.

But once the ideas on their editorial calendars dry up, they start producing content that serves neither themselves nor the people they're trying to reach. Rather than providing any real value, brands add to the ever-growing mountain of information that we're bombarded with every day.

Adding another voice to a trending conversation is only useful if the topic aligns with the brand's overall business strategy – and if the brand's target audience is actively seeking out that content. If not, they're just contributing to the noise and no one is really taking any real notice.

So how do we get content strategy right? Start by answering these questions:

## 1. What is my business strategy?

Content creators and business managers cannot operate in isolation. Any content that a brand produces must enhance its strategic goals. For a computer hardware brand, one goal could be to increase sales, so all content should help it do this.

Content must also be relevant to the target audience and align with their goals.



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But here's the catch: 70% of consumers prefer getting to know a brand through articles rather than through adverts. So it's safe to say that merely advertising its latest product is not going to help the computer brand to increase sales.

## 2. Who is my target audience?

This is the only time you're allowed to be narrow-minded. Rather than thinking of your target audience in broad terms, such as single males between 20 and 30, be more specific. Create a persona of your ideal customer.

Meet 25-year-old Jack. He recently graduated with an engineering degree and is starting his first job at an architectural firm in Johannesburg. His company has a BYOD policy but Jack's old PC just isn't up for the task of structural design. He needs to buy a new one but his choices are limited because he earns an entry-level salary.

Jack is an average media consumer. He won't actively seek out content but will read an article that appears on his Facebook feed if it catches his attention. This is most likely to be between 7am and 8am or between 5pm and 6pm, when he's commuting to and from work and browsing social media on his smartphone. This means he probably won't see something you post at 2pm.

Deeply understanding our audience – how they spend their time; where they access content; how they consume media – and then delivering content that reaches them when, where and how they want it, is crucial if we want them to listen to what we're saying.

### **3. What experiences motivate my audience?**

How does Jack feel when he engages with your content? Is he entertained? Informed? If you can create a positive experience, it's more likely that Jack will come back for more – and that he'll share your content with his networks.

Which would work better? A story that tells Jack that he can afford a high-end machine that helps him to bring his ideas to life, or an article that drones on about the machine's features, ending with the high price tag? Brands are in an enviable position in that they can influence experiences but these will fall flat if they don't understand the audience and its needs.

Stories bring topics to life and help the audience to identify with the content. The emotional angle of the former touches on Jack's desires to be successful and creative and takes him on a journey from idea to final product. It's more likely to strike a chord than an article that talks about memory space and processor speed.

### **4. How will I deliver my content?**

Your story idea will inform the media used – text, audio, video – which will in turn help you decide which platform to deliver the content on, such as smartphone, website or tablet. The way you tell the story should fit the device: a video might have a very different effect on a smartphone than on a tablet.

The design should also match the voice and tone you use to speak to Jack. Remember, you're speaking to a person, so be authentic and speak in a voice that is familiar to him.

Your audience is pressed for time, which means they're selfish with their attention. Focus your content on experiences that align with your business strategy and they just might give that attention to you.

ABOUT TARRYN GIEBELMANN

Tarryn Giebelmann is a content strategist and storyteller at WE Communications. With a background in tech journalism and PR, she has become somewhat of a nerd when it comes to gadgets and technology. Few people share this passion and so she finds an outlet helping brands reach wider audiences through smart content. When she's not obsessing about digital and content marketing, she's secretly wishing she could become a mommy blogger and live by the sea.

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