Goal Planning Worksheets

What do you want to achieve with your content?

Outside of actually hammering out a blog post every now and again, setting goals for your content is the MOST important thing you can do to ensure your own success. If you haven't set any goals, how will you even know what success looks like, or strategize on how to get there?

These worksheets will take you through the process of figuring out what's important to you, developing some goals, and laying out how you'll measure your own success.

In the appendix there's an example to help you get a feel for each task before you tackle it.

Your values

List 3-5 blogs, social media accounts, or websites that you love. Ideally these would be from other players in your industry, but they don't have to be.

What is it about these sites or profiles that appeals to you?

Are there any things here which are slightly off putting but not deal breakers?

List 3-5 blogs, social media accounts, or websites that your really don't like. Again, try and choose at least one or two from within your own industry if you can.

What is it about these sites or profiles that repels you?

Are there any things here which are you do like, but not enough to overcome other factors?

Consider the two lists of positives and write down below adjectives which represent the way you want your own site or profile to be seen.

Do the same with the negatives. Write down adjectives which explain how you don't want to be seen.

These two lists of adjectives represent your values for your online presence, and you should bear them in mind when you're working on your goals. If you want to be 'informative' for example, then you might have goals about well researched content, or increasing the number of shares on your posts. If you want to be 'approachable' you might be working on increasing comments, or enquiries through your online form.

Your time

In your hypothetical 'ideal' week, how much time would you spend working on your website, blog and social media profiles? You can divvy it up or you can put a total figure. You can also write down how much time you want your employees or contractors to spend working on it, if you don't do all the work yourself.

In a busy week where everything is going wrong and you're struggling for time, how many of your precious hours or minutes would you spend on your online content?

In a quiet week when you're in a lull between other projects and you have all the time in the world, how much would you choose to spend on your online content?

Estimate how much time you actually spent working on your online content on average, over the last few weeks.

These time figures are important for two reasons when you're setting goals.

One is to consider what is practical – you can only do so much in a day or a week, and your goals should be proportionate to the amount of time you can put to working towards them.

Secondly, you should consider the pay off. If you're spending any time at all working on content, you need to decide if it's worth whatever you get out of it. If it doesn't add up, you can decide to spend more or less time overall, or you could work on ways to make the time you are spending more effective.

We'll come back to both of these ideas in the section on brainstorming and content calendars.

Your goals

Now you know what's important to you, and how much time you have, you can put together some useful and realistic goals for your website, blog or social media profile.

And your goal can be literally anything you want – there are no rules about what the 'right' goals are. You could aim to increase traffic by 100% over a year, or you could plan to make all your tweets direct responses to customer queries, or you could arrange to blog at least once from every continent (do they have WiFi in Antarctica?!)

The only guidelines we have for your goals are about how you write them. Make sure you include three things:

- There should be a measurable target (e.g. a number or frequency of posts, a percentage increase in traffic etc)
- There should be a deadline or set point at which you'll evaluate your performance and consider changing up the goal
- It should be clear what the **purpose** of the work is, as well as the specific target.

Some examples of good goals are listed below.

- Increase website enquiries by 20% between October and December, to build list of potential clients.
- Grow average reach of Facebook post to 1,000 before end July, to improve brand recognition in our audience
- Trial an extra blog post per week below 600 words to gauge reaction from audience to shorter form content.

You can write your goals in the space below. You'll probably find it helpful to number each of them, and if they're lengthy, come up with a short-hand title to use to refer to them mentally or when sharing them with others.

Your indicators

Well done on writing goals! You're officially now a better person than x% of whatever population who just don't set goals. Most people literally just don't bother, and you've got a one up on them now.

So the next part – your indicators. These are how you hold yourself accountable to your goals. You write down now what you're going to use to assess your performance, and the target figure you're aiming for. Then you can't just pick and choose the bits that look the nicest to make it look like an excellent result even if it wasn't. That is false positivity and you don't need that! You're going to smash this.

For each of the goals you've chosen above you need to choose some actual real data that you can use to assess your performance. Actual real data often comes from analytics programmes, but that's not the only place you can find it. You might measure your own time or keep track of your own feelings about something. You could survey your customers or staff. You could create a printable voucher and see how many people bring it in to your shop.

You'll also find that some bits of data will relate more strongly to your goals than others – it's good to have both direct, strong indicators, and weaker tangential ones. The strong ones give you a great read of your performance, but the tangential ones often give you a better picture of why things are, or are not, going according to plan. Try to find some of both types to include against each goal.

Numbering will be helpful here as well. All the indicators for your goal no. 1 should be marked 1.1., 1.2., 1.3., etc.

Write them in the space below, and carry on over the page if you need to.

You're done!

Congratulations, you should now have the following 4 outputs:

- A list of positive values you want to embody, and negative values you want to avoid
- A few estimates of the time you'll likely have for creating content
- A set of goals for your content cycle
- A set of indicators for each of your goals.

Once you have these, you can move on to the next section: Planning your content.

Appendix: Example

Company profile

Derek and Margaret run a pet shop, and have an e-commerce website which lets them sell some products online. They've been in business for a few years, but fewer people are coming into the shop now than they used to be. They'd like to see footfall on the increase again, but recognise that they could also increase online sales to help make up the drop in profits.

Values

Positive: Friendly, deep care for animals, easy to use, modern, good value.

Negative: Traditional, pampering, clunky, unfocussed, hard to reach.

Time estimates

Ideal week: 2 hours on content, plus one or two 10 minute checks each day

Busy week: 10 minutes per day, just keeping up with messages.

Slow week: 3-6 hours on content planning and development, plus 30-45 minutes checking and engaging each day.

Recent history: At least one check each day, plus an hour every two weeks.

Goals

1. Create and promote an in-store discount voucher, to encourage 5% more shop visitors per month, and increase in-store sales.
2. Improve the number of people finding the site through search engines by 30%, to increase online sales.
3. Publicise an up-coming event in the shop through social media channels, to increase attendance and sales at the event by 40% each compared with a similar event 2 months ago.

Indicators

1. Voucher
    1. Number of customers using the voucher in store
    2. Volume of sales to customers using the voucher
    3. Number of downloads of the voucher from the website
    4. Percentage of downloads made by people living within 10km of the shop.
2. Search
    1. Percentage of traffic coming from organic search
    2. Google ranking of site for 3 top keywords (requires benchmark at starting point)
    3. Percentage of traffic come from paid search
    4. Cost per click of search ads
    5. Value of conversions (purchases) of organic search visitors
    6. Value of conversions (purchase) of paid search visitors
3. Event
    1. Number of people who attend the event
    2. Volume of sales made at the event
    3. Number of people who respond 'attending' or 'interested' to Facebook event
    4. Number of people who retweet event info on Twitter
    5. Reach of posts / tweets about the event