

Momentum

Playbook 14

The Art of Seduction

By Maria Rass

Here's What's Inside!

Don't Be Creepy	3
The First-Date Proposal	3
Content Marketing is Old News.	4
What Content Should I Create?	4
Choose Your Formats	6
Create an Editorial Calendar	6
It's Not Just About Creation	6
Round 'em Up!	7
Five Tips to Seduce Your Audience	8
Your Assignment: Plan Your Seduction Moves	9
One Last Thing...	10
Goodies and Inspirations	11

Playbook 14:

The Art of Seduction

Don't Be Creepy

One of my favorite movies of all time is the John Hughes' 80's teen classic, [Sixteen Candles](#). The story follows Samantha as her family completely forgets her 16th birthday amidst the chaos of her sister's wedding. Instead of enjoying this milestone birthday, our forlorn Samantha experiences every embarrassment possible. She is kicked out of her room and relegated to the couch to accommodate visiting grandparents; the foreign exchange student staying with her family manages to find a girlfriend at his first-ever American high school party, while Samantha's own crush, popular athlete Jake Ryan, doesn't even know she exists. And the kicker...

A school geek (played brilliantly by Anthony Michael Hall) sets Samantha in his sights and won't let go. She's disgusted and completely turned off by his direct and persistent advances.

It's not until he lets his guard down and they have a heart to heart that she realizes he's not such a bad guy. While they don't get together in the end, once he stops trying so hard, he does end up getting his own beautiful girl.

Constantly selling to your audience before they get to know you is anything but charming and will leave them running for the hills.

Like our sweet little geek, you need to relax. Your audience needs to get to know you first before they will know, like, trust...and buy...from you.

To turn fans or browsers into clients or buyers, you can't annoy them to death. You need to seduce them. And there's nothing more seductive than sexy content.

The First-Date Proposal

It's all well and good to build an email list or attract attention. But remember that people are just getting to know you and your brand. Hitting them over the head with blatant sales messages from the get-go is like proposing marriage on the first date. How would that make you feel?

Good marketing is like dating. Your people want to be wooed.

A smart suitor may buy you a drink first, chat you up, and ask you out to dinner to get to know you better. Perhaps you go to a movie or enjoy a picnic. Flowers and gifts are always a nice surprise. And spending months or years with this person enables you to get to know them well and see what they have to offer.

Same holds true for your business. And when it comes to brand seduction, forget flowers and diamonds....nothing is sexier than good, consistent content.

Content Marketing is Old News

It didn't all just start with blogs, vlogs or podcasts. Content marketing has been around forever. If you see free trials, information kits, downloads or videos, then that is content marketing. Don't get scared by all the hype around this very trendy buzzword!

Providing valuable free content enables people to get a taste of what you offer and prove your expertise before they are ready to act.

We have definitely created a culture that expects good content without paying for it, but we can debate this another time. We can thank blogs, content piracy and YouTube for that. But the reality is that it's the way successful brands connect with their audience. And it's a very useful way to build a strong relationship with your audience and help your brand shine.

What Content Should I Create?

The short answer is "anything" as long as it achieves your goals.

For the moment, forget format and focus on content topics. You can create content in any form that is enjoyable for you, combined with what may work best for your audience. Remember our lesson on this valuable intersection in Playbook 8?

To determine what content to create, start by documenting every question you've ever been asked about your subject area. Your list will reveal many potential content topic areas.

Don't assume that a "basic" question won't make a good piece of content or that "everyone knows that already." They don't. It's why you have a job! Remember, not everyone lives, eats and breathes your work as well as you do. If people have this question, then it's a good piece of content.

For example, it took me a few years to finally realize I never even wrote a blog post defining a brand strategy! I always assumed people knew what I meant. They didn't. So I [wrote a blog post](#) to address this question. Now I document all the questions that people send me and slate those in for new blog posts or free guides.

Here are some helpful examples:

If you're a financial planner:

- How do I save for retirement?
- Should I pay off my home loan if I can?
- What are some useful budgeting apps or tools?
- What is the difference between stocks, bonds, REITs and mutual funds?
- When is it the right time to start saving for my kids' education?

If you're a website designer:

- How do I decide which hosting platform to use?
- What should go on my Home Page?
- How important is SEO?
- When should I refresh my website?
- What does a "mobile-responsive" website mean?

Next, come up with a list of relevant keywords or related topic areas and develop content ideas around each of those.

Another great technique: Start typing in questions in the Google search bar and see what the pre-fill function offers up to you. These are based on actual searches so you can create content that directly speaks to what your audience is seeking. In my work, for example, when I type in "How do I create a brand..." it auto-completes with some popular search options, such as "How do I create a brand for my company?" "How do I create a brand page on Facebook?" "How do I create a brand name?" and on and on. Lots of good ideas for me to write content about topics for which people are actually searching right now!

Still another way: Do a Mind Map exercise or simply brainstorm a list of topics related to your core industry, subject matter or work.

For example, in my own work, these topics could be:

- Social Media
- Design
- PR
- Advertising
- Copywriting
- Networking
- Facebook ads
- Blogging
- Targeting
- Community building
- Messaging

Oh, and most importantly: Remember those ideal client interviews you conducted? What did they say they wanted to hear more about?!

The point is, there's no shortage of content ideas out there. There are lots of ways to pivot your core expertise to speak to many topics that your audience will love.

Choose Your Formats

Now, you'll want to determine which formats you want this content to take. Again, go back to what you love to do from Playbook 8 and how you like to communicate, intersected with what would best reach your target audience.

If they are rabid video viewers and you just happen to love being on-camera, I see a video series in your future. Your episodes could include a weekly tip or interesting interviews with other experts.

If you like writing, perhaps blog posts, short eBooks or solution guides are the way to go.

Is illustration or photography your jam? What about a picture book or a featured image of the week?

Don't go crazy here! Keep things doable. The beauty of content creation is that you can create something once and reuse it in various forms.

Create an Editorial Calendar

If this helps you, you can map out your content plan in an Editorial Calendar. This is simply a planning calendar that lists out which topics you'll cover on which dates - and in what format or vehicle.

For example, if you know you want a weekly blog, a monthly video series or even your daily/weekly social media posts, plan out your dates and topics in your Editorial Calendar.

Many people swear by these. They can be of great help when you're not feeling creative on a given day. You can just look at your calendar and start working, rather than thinking too much about it. You can start by planning out three months ahead of time and see where it takes you.

It's Not Just About Creation

The great news is that content marketing is not just about *inventing* brand-new content. You can also add value for your audience through *curation*. Take existing content and add your own opinion, spin or perspective on it. You can share meaningful stories from other sources and tell your audience how it applies to them, as it relates to your industry or message.

Your audience follows you because of your unique perspective, or vibe, as we've discussed. Now that you know who are and what you're about, this can also help you **curate** the right content for your audience that aligns with your own message.

When I wrote about the [Lance Armstrong brand fail](#) a few years ago, I took existing news and shared my unique perspective on it, in my own voice. I didn't invent this story. I even linked to Oprah's interview and a CNN article. But I framed the story in a way that helped my readers.

You don't have to create everything from scratch! It's perfectly fine to take existing articles, current events, blog posts or videos and present them to your audience, with your unique spin and value layered on top of them.

Curated content is just as valuable to your audience as created content.

You've probably seen this technique from experts you know and love. Here are some practical examples:

A wellness expert can comment on this recent Harvard Business Review article, ["Resilience is About How You Recharge, Not How You Endure"](#) and give her audience ten tips on how her readers can put this practice into action.

A self-publishing coach could comment on this [Fast Company interview](#) with Guy Kawasaki's success tips—and layer in her own sage advice.

An HR consulting firm could write a post with their reactions and insights to [this Forbes article on the future of work](#).

Round 'em Up!

Want to know what can be the simplest content to create – and yet is often the best performing content on the web?

That's right: Lists.

There's a reason people love a good weekly [Top 40 countdown](#), [25 best 80's films](#) or25 best 80's films, 8 apps to get more done, or even a [Hot List with 12 fabulous finds for your business, brand + soul](#). And search engines are so very kind to a good listicle. It means someone else has taken the time to gather and curate useful information for us, all in one place.

Whatever your field of expertise, I bet there are valuable lists you can create to benefit your audience: You can curate relevant roundup lists of:

- Helpful articles
- Books
- Music (Build a playlist for your audience)
- Tools/Apps
- Quotes
- Blogs
- Experts
- Equipment
- Videos

In case it needs to be said, try to keep these relevant to your topic area. But don't be afraid to have some fun every now and then and mix it up, if your audience likes that sort of thing!

Five Tips to Seduce Your Audience

The role of content marketing is to woo your audience over time, not bash them over the head with your sales pitch and drag them back to your cave. Such marketing approaches really are prehistoric!

They are on a sales journey and they have to know, like and trust you before taking the final steps to purchase.

A while back, Betsy Talbot—author, community builder and content creation guru—did [a great video interview](#) with me about ways to create content that seduces and excites your audience. Please watch it for a great conversation on the following five content tips to fan the flames of love:

- **Know what you are really selling:** You're not just selling your products or services. As we discussed in the Messaging Module, you are fulfilling a need and offering benefits. It's the benefit that the customer is buying, not just the thing you are selling. Focus your content around that need to really woo them.
- **Grab their attention:** Make it interesting, fun, on-brand, and don't forget to speak in their language. By showcasing your unique vibe and style, your content stands out.
- **Provide consistently compelling content:** Show up regularly and make a promise you can deliver on every time to build credibility and trust. That's why committing to a doable schedule is so important. Create consistently great quality, don't just be a one-hit wonder.
- **Reward loyal fans:** Make your most committed tribe members feel special. For example, special offers or exclusive content for email list subscribers versus what you offer in social media or to the general public. Create your own VIP lounge!
- **Promote new talent:** As with curation, you don't have to create all the content yourself. Feature related experts who will benefit your audience and give you exposure to their fan base as well. Win-win.

Your Assignment: Plan Your Seduction Moves

What topics or keywords will charm and seduce your audience? List everything that comes to mind from your own brainstorming, questions you receive, the Google search technique or what your ideal clients have shared with you:

How would you enjoy wooing them the most? What vehicles or formats will be your secret love potions?

How often do you want to offer new content to your audience? Daily, weekly, monthly newsletter, weekly podcast, etc.? What timing seems doable and manageable?

Start an idea file! Create it on your phone, in Evernote, or wherever you like and start jotting down inspirations for topics, titles or interview subjects wherever you are. Inspiration can strike while you're walking, watching TV...or in the shower!

But wait, you're not quite done....

Now: We'd love to see your wickedly seductive content ideas posted on the Facebook page by Friday. And perhaps we can help you brainstorm as well! As you know, I'll be rewarding your all year long.

Remember, we are here to encourage you and provide any feedback. If you're like me, often it's fellow collaborators that help me polish my ideas to a glossy sheen.

Again, I'm going to reward you all year long, so don't lose your MOMENTUM: Post it now and keep that train moving!

One Last Thing...

Content creation might initially seem like a waste of time. After all, there may not be any direct ROI associated with it as you try to make weekly sales. But you need to build an audience before they are ready to buy, and the best way to do this is to consistently provide valuable content.

Don't underestimate your own expertise! As mentioned, what may seem simply to you can be life-changing for someone else. It 's why you have a job! So never take your own knowledge for granted and assume "everyone know that already." Trust me. They don't.

The goal here is not to give you mountains of work. Create a plan that's doable, manageable and most of all FUN for you execute.

As I've said before, if you're not the most excited person in the room to talk about what you do and what you know, why should anyone else care? Your content enables you to have a conversation....not beat prospects over the head with constant sales messages.

Do content marketing right...and you'll never need to make a "sales pitch" ever again!

Write on....

Maria

Goodies and Inspirations

Convince and Convert has some excellent advice about [how to do content curation RIGHT](#).

[New Rules for Content and Marketing to Attract the Best Customers](#). Love the point here about not being afraid to “give away” secrets – most likely, they are not so secret!

A fantastic read about creating seductive content, in all its forms: [Content Rules: How to Create Killer Blogs, Podcasts, Videos, Ebooks, Webinars \(and More\) That Engage Customers and Ignite Your Business](#) by Ann Handley. I devoured this book!

[The best seduction song.....ever.](#)