

An Optimist's Guide To

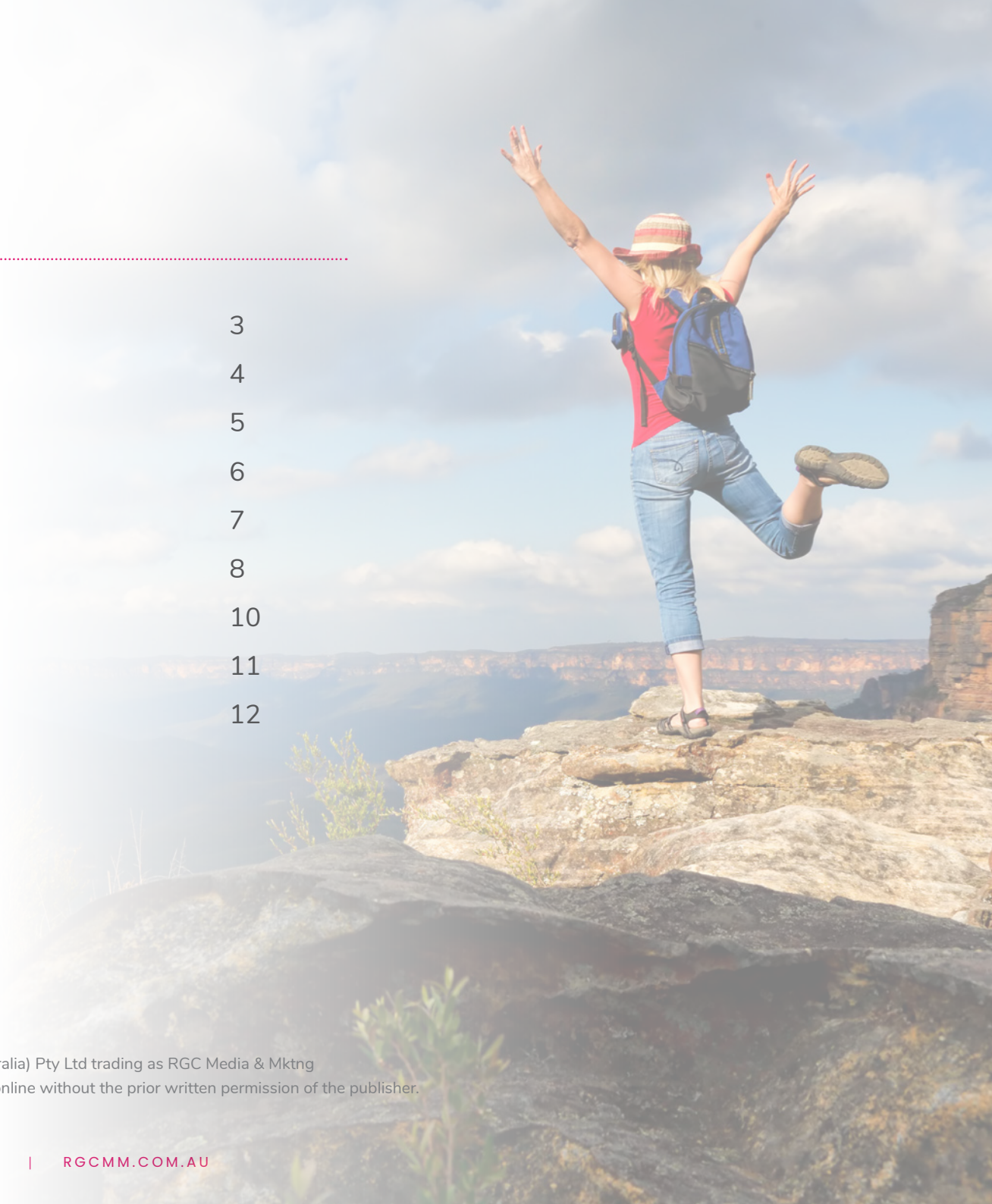
Travel Marketing

2021 - 2022



Contents

Welcome	3
Travel Industry State of Play	4
Sharpen Your Marketing	5
What is Content Marketing?	6
Fast Facts	7
The content Success Matrix	8
Traffic Generation Cycle	10
Some Easy Wins	11
RGC Capability	12



Welcome

The travel and tourism industries have taken their fair share of hits over the last two decades or so, but nothing has affected them like the COVID-19 pandemic – a disruptive force like we've never seen before outside of wartime.

With these industries and much of Australia emerging from lockdown, the collaborative effort to rebuild these industries and businesses will be ongoing. With international travel from key source markets severely limited, the opportunity is for Australian tourism businesses to pivot and re-think their audiences, operations and marketing activity.

A dedicated and consistent marketing strategy will be required now more than ever to create awareness, engage with prospective visitors and secure bookings.

Now is the time to fine tune your marketing activities and ensure that you are maximising the following:

- Website presence - include maximising SEO and SEM performance
- Generating quality content to tell your story and fuel earned media opportunities
- Re-thinking your paid media strategy
- Maximise partnerships with local and national tourism bodies

This introductory toolkit has been designed to focus your tourism marketing strategy and better understand the value of content in driving sales and success.



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Travel Industry State of Play

'It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent; it is the one most adaptable to change' – Charles Darwin

Travel will return again. People love to travel and business people need to travel. Elements will be different but the desire and need to travel won't go away.

Currently, Australian domestic tourism operators are focusing largely on the domestic market until international travel frees up again, which may not happen until 2022, and even then it will be a slow rebuild. Tourism Australia has pivoted much of its efforts to sell Australia to Australians. Domestic overnight travel is worth more than \$80 billion annually and will be the focus until Australia can start welcoming international visitors again.

Aviation is in a state of flux and much will depend on the future of Virgin Australia, and secondary airlines, to create real competition for Qantas, and importantly, serve key capital city and regional markets. Drive markets will be vitally important for operators until access improves and airline networks are rebuilt.

In 2019 according to Tourism Australia, Australians spent nearly \$65 billion on overseas holidays. Hopefully, much of that will now be spent at home.



Sharpen Your Marketing



As a tourism or travel-centred business you must hone your marketing activities to be as effective as possible.

Consider these areas of your marketing mix. Are they being maximised as much as possible?

SEO

Search Engine Optimisation is essentially a component of the larger category, SEM, and is defined by Google as “the process of maximizing the number of visitors to a particular website by ensuring that the site appears high on the list of results returned by a search engine.” This includes such activities as keyword optimisation, optimising blog posts and page copy, improving page load speeds, generating backlinks, and more.

Audience

Consider how your core audience may be changing and think about how you need to readjust your offering, language and placement.

Social media

Is your social media strategy up to date? Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest and Twitter are increasingly powerful tools for inspiring travellers, building relationships and providing experience and destination information. With paid promotion opportunities you can target your audience more than ever. A focused strategy built around the most valuable platforms will deliver strong leads.

SEM

SEM, or Search Engine Marketing, is an aspect of digital marketing which focuses on increasing a website’s visibility in search engine results through Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising. Google and Bing both have their own Search ad platforms that advertisers can use to place their ads on (and compete for) specific search terms relating to their business, product or service.

What is Content Marketing?

Despite the rapid growth and understanding of content marketing over recent years, a widely-accepted and unifying definition remains elusive. The most accepted definition has been developed by the Content Marketing Institute:

“Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.”

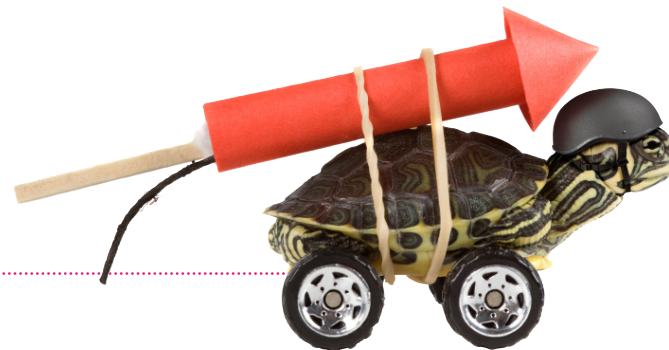
In a more practical sense content marketing is a type of marketing that involves the creation and sharing of material (such as videos, blogs, and social media posts) that does not explicitly promote a brand but is intended to stimulate interest in its products or services. It's selling when you're not SELLING.

Content marketing includes things like educational articles, e-books, videos, entertainment, and webinars that answer specific questions people have and provide them with something they can't get somewhere else. It's the best way to turn your product, no matter how common, into something that is not like everyone else's.

By becoming a credible, authoritative resource on topics that matter to potential customers, your business is more likely to get discovered by the right audience and earn their loyalty and trust – which, in turn, enables your brand to strengthen its customer relationships, grow an active and engaged subscriber base, and even increase its sales and profits.



Fast Facts



1

Content marketing is incredibly cost-effective and offers amazing ROI

Compared to traditional marketing programs, content marketing costs 62% less and generates approximately three times the volume of leads. (DemandMetric)

2

Content drives conversions

On average, conversion rates are six times higher for companies and brands using content marketing than those that aren't, at 2.9% vs. 0.5%, respectively. (Aberdeen Group)

3

The biggest brands in the world realise that content is the future

Coca-Cola, for example, spends more money on content creation than it does on television advertising. (Contently)

4

Marketers are shifting toward longer, more in-depth content

The average length of blog posts is getting longer, with the typical word count of a blog post increasing from 808 words in 2014 to 1,054 words in 2016. (Orbit Media Studios.)

5

Content can help prospective customers at every stage of their journey

Almost half – 48% – of marketers support between three and five of their customers' purchasing stages with specialized content. (LinkedIn Technology Marketing Community)

6

Many companies are turning away from traditional advertising in favor of content

Approximately 28% of marketers say they have reduced their digital advertising budgets in order to produce more content assets. (Gartner)

The Content Success Matrix

Content has the capacity to drive a range of important success metrics across your business. By understanding how content works across all aspects of your business you will be better equipped to develop a strategy that brings simplicity to areas which are becoming increasingly complex. Here are some of the ways content can drive your business.



Content Drives Engagement

When buyers see a listing of your property they are getting a small snapshot of the full picture. They often have additional questions about the listing and a desire to know and understand the granular detail.

Providing them with easy-to-find, detail-rich content is a great way to put yourself at their service, and gives you even more opportunities to both engage with them and demonstrate how you or your project are different to your competitors.



Search Engines Love Content

Content is your number one asset for generating organic search traffic. However, many brands make the mistake of using content to try win organic search results for keywords they will never be able to compete for. Major brands with strong domain authority and large SEO teams (like realestate.com.au and domain.com.au) will always dominate the most valuable keywords.

To utilise content as a strong generator of organic search traffic identify those secondary keywords and keyword strings that have a geographic or regional link to your product. Instead of trying to win the “luxury apartment” keyword, try to dominate ‘luxury apartments in South Brisbane’.



Content Creates Awareness

Most property brochures look like they were created from a template by the team at cheapagency.com. The budget for innovation is usually spent on another photoshoot of mum, dad and the 2.5 kids flying a kite in a park. This makes differentiation in a competitive market really difficult.

When you use content to steer the conversation away from talking about you and your product to talking about your customers and their experience, you separate yourself from the pack and create greater awareness. If you are helping your customers on their journey, you become more memorable and your brand more recognisable.



Improve Lead Generation

While landing pages are easily the most important pages on your website (they're where you convey value, earn trust, and convert visitors into leads), their construction is often an afterthought. Terrible landing pages that aren't able to get consumers over the line is why conversion rates often hover around 3 to 5.5%¹

Using content, without distracting from the purpose, on your landing page is a great way to give consumers the final push. The major reason consumers don't complete lead forms is the fear of being spammed and harassed by pushy sales people.

Content helps you develop trust, so your leads can get past their fear. Content that addresses questions or concerns customers may have is also a great way to overcome objections.

One of the major benefits of content is that it does not always need to be selling.



Content Improves Prospect Quality

When you take a content marketing approach and make your goal to provide helpful and useful information and case studies on past people you have helped, you are in effect 'warming up' your leads. We know that buyers and sellers would prefer not to deal with an agent until they absolutely have to.

Taking a content-led approach means potential clients find out a wealth of useful information about you and how you do business that both reassures and assists them that makes picking up the phone and setting the appointment that much easier.



Become an Expert

Selling your product's features will get you one sale today. Explaining your products benefits and highlighting your expertise will get you two sales tomorrow.

Why should people hire you as a real estate agent? Not because you'll sell their property – that's a given. They hire you because they believe that you have the skills and expertise to get the highest price based on your market knowledge and insights and the experience that will protect them from the scariest elements of selling.

So share that expertise! Sharing reports and insights about property market performance – median prices, recent sales results, rents and yields – is a great way to demonstrate your knowledge.

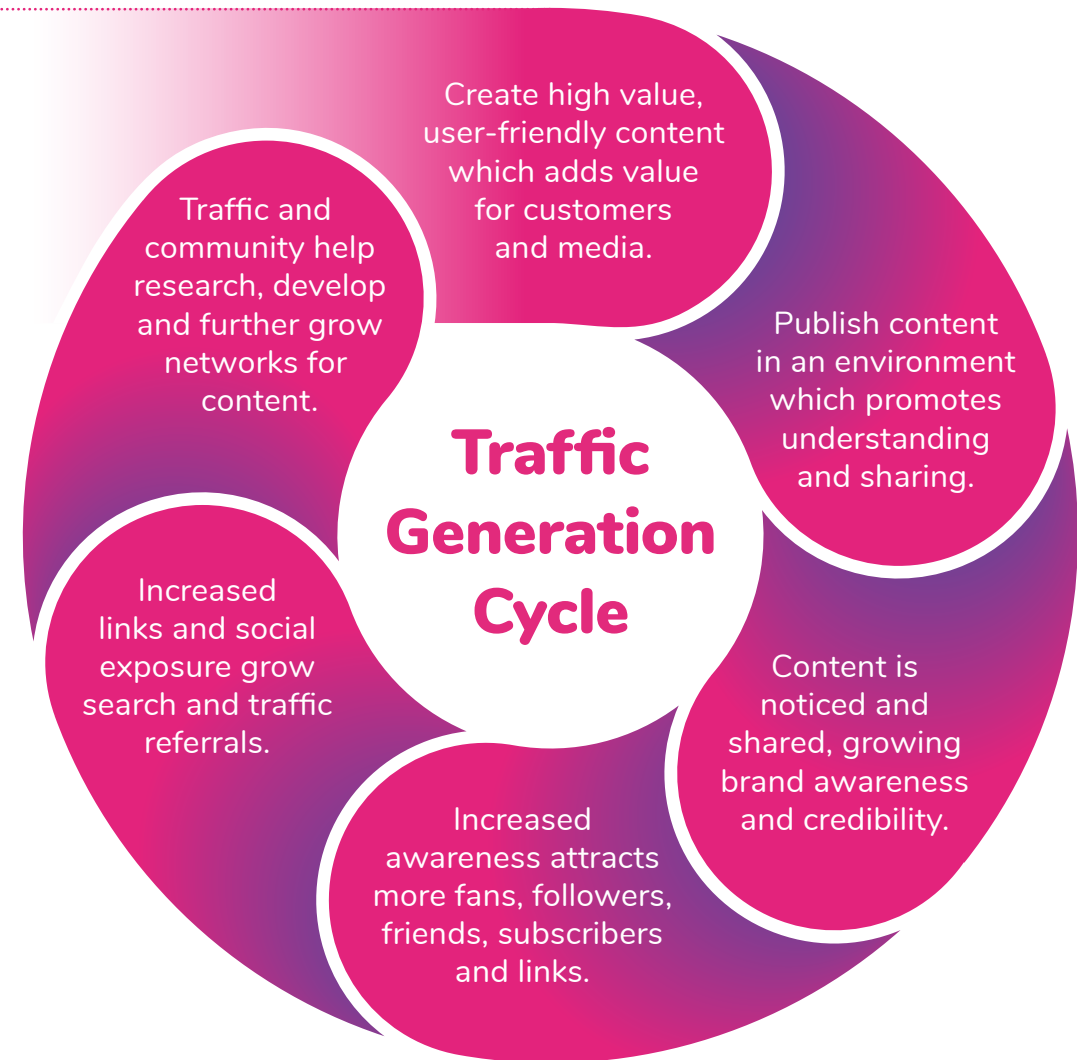
Providing advice on how you've helped past clients avoid the pitfalls of selling helps people trust you and positions you as a subject authority.

The Traffic Generation Cycle

Content — especially *good* content — can have a significant impact on a brand's ability to attract and engage new prospects and leads (traffic).

Developing a content strategy that fully promotes a variety of content across the customer lifecycle and is integrated with online and offline channels can achieve a range of brand goals, including;

- Establish credibility, authority, trust and brand affinity
- Educate prospects about the need to change and to commit to change
- Stimulate prospects to explore and evaluate a product or solution
- Speed up the sales cycle
- Empower “buy” decision-making, and support/validate that decision
- Enable customers to realise the value of their purchase and build brand-loyalty
- Stimulate brand-loyal customers to evangelise a product or service



Some Easy Wins

Ensuring that you are maximising your marketing efforts can be further augmented by focusing on some easy wins.

Partnerships

Your relationships with tourism bodies including (but not limited to) Tourism Australia, Tourism Queensland, Destination NSW, and your local/regional tourism body will never be more important. They are working extra hard to drive campaigns to support the industry. Are you across their marketing campaigns and maximising your partnership? Ensure your business listing is current and kept up to date with the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse to increase your online exposure.

Website Overview

Is your website optimised for SEO and SEM and ranking highly in search results? Does it accurately reflect the experience of your business to your core audience? It might pay to have it reviewed by a third party SEO specialist as some minor tweaks can have some powerful results.

Review Marketing Materials

Are your brochures and other brand assets up to date? Do they need updating or a refresh?

Media Contacts

You may have built up some amazing media contacts in the past. There may be an opportunity to reach out to them and see if they are looking for any updates from you or maybe there is an opportunity to visit and review for a feature they might be working on.

Content Calendar

A content calendar is a schedule of when, where and what type of content you are going to publish and share. It will ensure you are staying organised with consistent, regular updates that target the right audiences with the right content.

Databases

Make sure your customer databases are working for you. Email addresses are more important than ever considering the recent controversy with Facebook marketing. Your guest contact details are so important for future marketing efforts. Consider a regular newsletter to update them on happenings, new experiences, property updates, and regional events. It's a great way to stay in front of past guests and others wishing to hear more from you.

About Us

RGC is a communications and marketing services group with expertise in media publicity, strategic communications, content, social media, publishing and creative services. We provide a diverse range of integrated client solutions to business across a range of sectors and to government.

Our experienced team of strategists, writers, designers, developers and account managers have a proven track record of delivering superior outcomes for clients.

Our success is built on a genuine commitment to understanding the goals and aspirations of clients and developing and executing outcome-focused strategies.



MEDIA & PR

- Strategy & Planning
- Brand Activation
- Investor Relations
- Organic Social Media
- Media Publicity
- Issues Management
- Monitoring



CREATIVE

- Brand Strategy
- Website Development
- UX Design
- Visual Asset Production
- Print Management



LEAD GENERATION

- Marketing Data Aggregation
- Direct (Email) Marketing
- Facebook/Google Advertising
- Remarketing



CONTENT & SEO

- Content Strategy
- Web Content
- Social Content
- Rich Media
- Blog/Ghostwriting
- Awards & Tenders & Proposals



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