


bizink

Complete guide to content marketing for accountants

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Here at bizink~ we've worked with accountants and bookkeepers from all over the world. Our experience with websites and marketing has given us a clear idea of what works and what doesn't. We've taken the best and presented it in this guide, so that you can get the most out of your marketing.





Introduction

Welcome to Bizink's guide to content marketing for accountants. Content marketing has become an increasingly effective and efficient way to engage and attract new clients to accounting firms. By providing well-written and informed content, you establish your firm as a leader on topics important to your clients, which allows them to see your value and expertise.

This enables you to create new connections and expand awareness of your firm, making you the go-to source on matters your clients care about. That means they'll seek you out when they need your services and are more likely to recommend you to others.

To get content marketing right you need a strategy that helps you decide what topics will resonate with customers, who will write this content, how to manage the on-going creation and where to publish the final product. You'll find out more about that in the following pages of this guide.

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Understanding content marketing

Key points:

- Content marketing involves publishing valuable, relevant content to attract and engage new clients
- It can take many forms
- The goal is to build a relationship with your audience so you become their go-to for information and guidance
- Well-written, informative content differentiates your firm from competitors.

Content marketing is valuable, helpful content that appeals to the needs, motivations, and interests of your target audience, that is published where your prospective clients will see it, such as your website, social media, or emails. You provide high-quality content that your clients and prospective clients read and interact with as they need it.

Content marketing can come in the form of:

- Articles
- Blogs
- Whitepapers
- Case studies
- Video
- Infographics
- Tools
- Templates
- Calculators
- And many other types of content.

Some examples of content marketing include an article on current government small business grants and subsidies, a whitepaper that predicts future economic trends, an infographic on why exchange rates fluctuate, or a blog on three ways to raise capital in a crisis.

The objective is to get existing clients to read your material, which then triggers them to contact you for more advisory work.





Or for new prospects to be convinced you are the right accounting firm for them, because your content demonstrates your expertise.

If the content is placed on your website, content marketing should also improve your SEO (search engine optimization), making it easier for leads to find you organically in search results. One of the biggest advantages of such organic content marketing is it allows your target audience to find you at a time and place that they're specifically looking for help or information.

Here's how content marketing can function when people search for answers online:

- A business owner has an important question (are there any export subsidies?)
- They type this question into a search engine
- You have a specific article that covers this question, and your article is ranked on the first search page
- The owner links to your website and finds even more resources about relevant topics
- They reach out to you to book an appointment because they now see you as an expert in your industry and believe you can help them.

If your content marketing is shared on social media, you give your prospects an opportunity to interact with your customers and with you. You can encourage activity and discussion about the topics you share, and respond to questions from clients or prospects directly. Your social media can also promote your content, encouraging people to visit your website to learn more about you or about a specific topic. Feedback you receive through social media can also be used to drive your content.

How content marketing is used

The goal of content marketing is to differentiate you, building trust with readers so when they need your services--or if they know of someone who needs your services--they'll think of you first. It showcases your value and sets you apart from others, which in turn leads to new clients reaching out to you.

It's not about pitching and selling your services or talking about how great your firm is.

Instead, you're building a relationship with your audience through providing trusted, insightful and practical knowledge so they see your expertise. But there does need to be some relevance to what you do. No point releasing an article on the migration of Canadian geese, unless your audience is highly concerned with Canadian geese, right?

Why accountants need content marketing

Key points:

- Content marketing is a cost-effective and efficient way to target your ideal clients
- It keeps you in control of how your firm grows
- Once you've developed your process, the cycle of developing ideas, producing the content, and distributing that content is repeatable
- Your audience can find you online, any time they want and from anywhere.

Just about every business needs accounting advice at some stage, which gives accountants and advisors an advantage when it comes to content marketing. You have an existing audience and expertise in things they want to know about (tax, cash flow, profit, strategy and business advice). You're in a prime position to serve up helpful expertise in terms your audience will understand.

Accounting services are in high demand, and it is a competitive industry. You need to keep your firm visible to help you win new clients. Content marketing gives you control over your strategy by enabling you to choose the channels you use, the clients you target and the expertise you share.

Further, with digital connectivity your clients aren't restricted by geographical boundaries or time when it comes to choosing who they work with. You can therefore target and service business customers from anywhere in the country, whenever they're looking for advice.

Content marketing is perfect for the accounting industry because:

- You can create a single piece of content once, and then circulate it everywhere
- Small businesses are hungry for help and often search outside normal business hours
- It's not complicated--although it takes some time and effort, it doesn't take a lot of special know-how to get started
- Rather than focusing on talking about how great your firm is, you're sharing your knowledge, which can make it less difficult to create
- Your firm doesn't have to spend a lot of money on content marketing. It's typically less costly than traditional advertising and is more highly targeted
- When it's done well, the cycle is repeatable
- Many business owners don't like admitting they need assistance, so an anonymous search online for answers is often their first step.

Content marketing is not a set-and-forget strategy, but the good news is that content has longevity because it's accessible to customers 24/7, long after you publish.

Additionally, the value of your content marketing compounds over time. A piece of content might generate 40 hits and 1 meeting booked in the first month, but by month 12 that same piece of content could generate 400 hits and 10 meetings booked. Further, the more content you have, the more value you get from your content.

The rewards of content marketing

Key points:

- Benefits of content marketing include building your brand, establishing relationships and expanding awareness of your firm.

Every piece of content will reap different returns, but the important thing to remember is that it generally takes several touchpoints or engagements with your firm's content before someone makes a query or becomes a client

It is possible to measure the exact returns on an individual piece of content if you:

- Ask users to give you their contact details before they can access a lead magnet you've created, such as an ebook, white paper, or guide
- Set up a specific landing page with a certain offer or call to action that only comes from someone looking at that page
- Add a tracked phone number or email.

Other measurements that can help decide on ROI but are less accurate include the number of views, downloads or shares.

All of this helps understand whether the content you're creating is hitting the mark with your audience, or which kinds of content they prefer over another.

Building your brand

It's hard to put a number on the brand equity you can build through good content, and it's often a long lead-time before a loyal follower might convert to a paying client. But remember that content marketing is a long game that can continue to bring returns for years to come. And, when you consider the lifetime value of your clients, it's safe to assume that content marketing is a sound investment for your business.

Establishing relationships

Content marketing enables you to connect with your audience, show them your value and highlight that you understand them. Your relevant, informative content lets them see that you not only understand the issues they face, you have experience working with and helping clients like them. As a result, they see you as someone who can help them before they've even talked to you.

Fostering trust

When you share content that shows your expertise, you make it easier for potential clients to trust you, which is an important step for accounting clients. It makes sense that they want experts to handle their accounting matters, and when they see you as an expert in their industry they'll be more likely to reach out.

Expanding awareness of your brand

When you create meaningful content and share it, more people will become aware of your firm and of what you do. The more relevant they find your content, the more likely they are to share it themselves, with people in their network. That extends your reach even further. People who aren't yet connected to you will seek you out because people they know already trust you.

Building a successful content marketing strategy

Key points:

- Successful content is written for your target audience
- See where there are broader “pillar” topics that you can cover and then break into smaller posts to make the writing more efficient
- Use topic clusters to identify all the potential ways you can break down a general topic.

There is so much content available on the internet already, how do you ensure yours stands out? Like just about every strategy in business, it starts by understanding your ideal clients: their needs, motivations, pain points and desires.

Who is your content for?

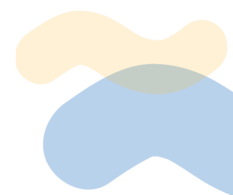
Be clear on who your content needs to reach. Who are your ideal clients? It's likely that you might have several customer 'personas' that you need to cater to (start-up, exporter, commercial, micro, complex). Map out the things that matter to them most (key pain points), what kind of challenges they face, or the main objectives they want to achieve.

Where do they hang out?

Content marketing is only as successful as your distribution strategy. Think about where content needs to be published for them to find it. A multi-channel approach is generally best (website, social media, send direct, advertise) to leverage the different channels to lead visitors back to your website from a number of touch points.

What are they asking for?

To get visitors to your site, you need to understand the kind of content they're searching for online. Identify the keywords and key search terms they use such as 'raising capital', 'small business finance', 'starting a business', 'small business accountant', 'how to pay less tax' etc. Then map out content in line with the topics that are going to provide the most value for your audience – we call these pillar pages.

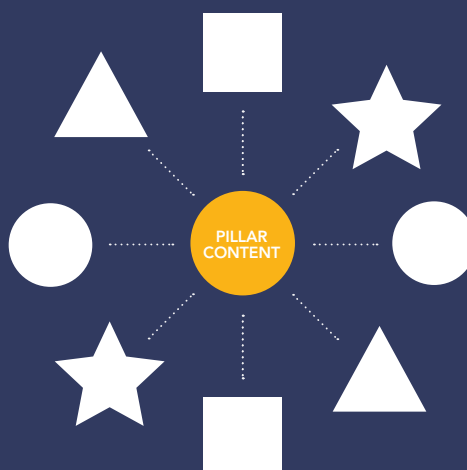
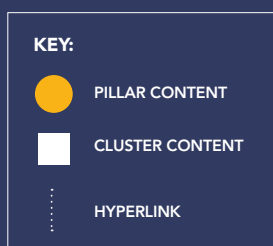


Developing content types

Pillar content strategy

A pillar content strategy works by creating two types of content: the first is a pillar page, which is a broad overview of a specific topic. The second are more in-depth pages that go specifically into certain topics mentioned on the pillar page. One pillar page can result in multiple cluster pages.

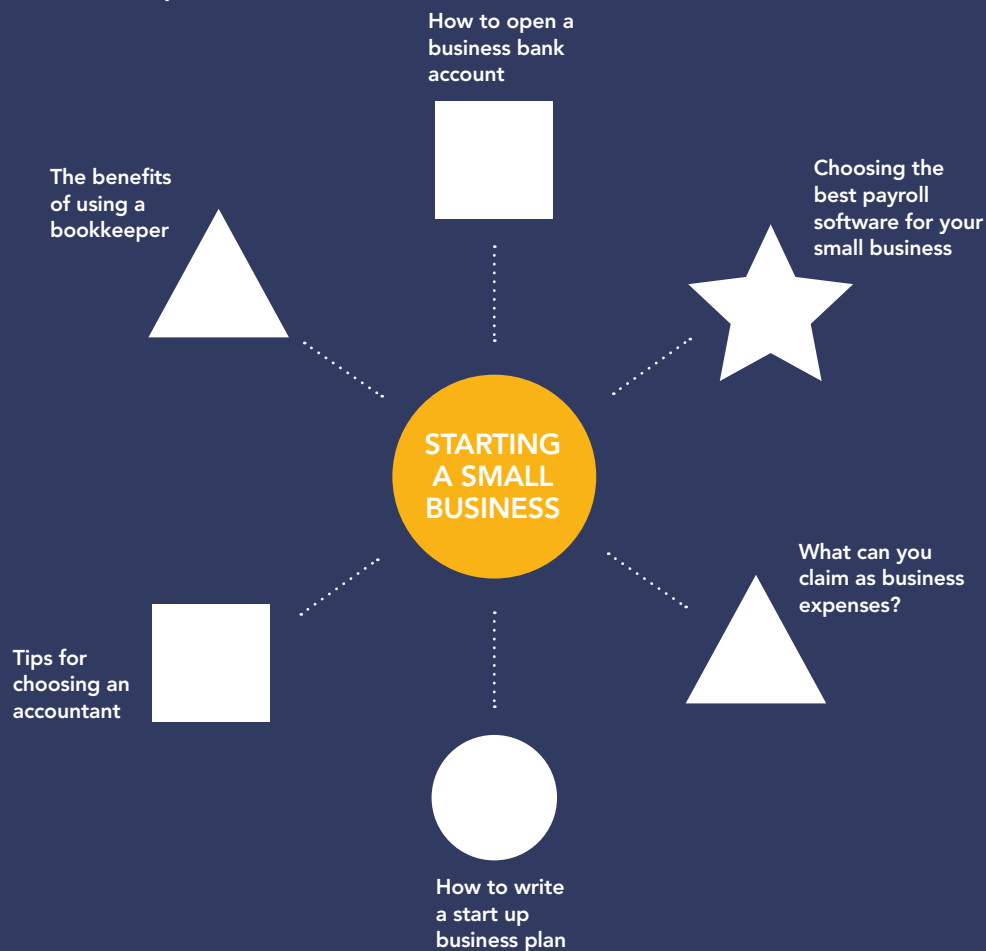
A good example from the banks is this page on [Business Resilience](#) from harborOne Bank or [Forecasting Cash flow](#) from ANZ Bank Australia.



A pillar post is usually lengthy but doesn't go into much detail. Cluster topics, on the other hand, dig into greater specifics.

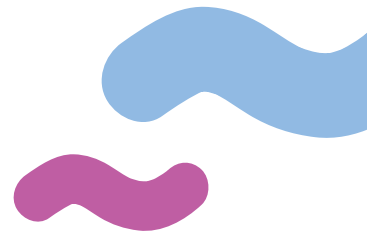
For example, you might have a pillar post about 'Starting a small business', then create a list of relevant topics that this article can link to, such as small businesses accounting software, setting up payroll, tracking your expenses, opening a bank account... you get the idea! Again, use your understanding of your audience, and your keyword research, to help guide you with what topics are going to be most relevant.

Here is an example:



You might also hear pillar topics referred to as content categories, or content buckets. Aim for 3 to 5 topics to start with, with your cluster topics branching off from there, within these 'buckets'.

Search engines are solely focused on serving up the most relevant content to searchers, and therefore they reward content that is organised by topic, not keywords.



A topic-first approach:

- Improves your SEO rankings through a site architecture that makes it easier for search engine bots to discover
- Creates a better user experience for your audience, making it easier for them to find relevant information
- Grows brand trust and credibility through a library of insightful information
- Helps you segment your audience - a pillar post might draw in your audience, but if a lead enquiry comes from a cluster post, then you have a better idea of the kind of help they need most.

Creating topic clusters

Cluster topics allow you to dive deeper into a particular topic, based around a keyword or search term. Search engines use the links between the pillar page and the cluster topic to determine that your website covers both broad information and in-depth information that is likely going to be helpful to someone searching online. Put simply, it recognises that your website is an authority, and prioritises your website ahead of another.

Content marketing essentials

Key points:

- In addition to a professional website, consider having a regularly updated blog, a lead magnet, hero content and helpful tools
- These resources work together to draw potential clients in and showcase your value
- Use the “frequently asked questions” strategy to start your regular blog posting.

In today’s digital world, your professional online presence is vital to business success. Here are some key tools that will help you build a professional online brand.

1. A well-designed and functional website

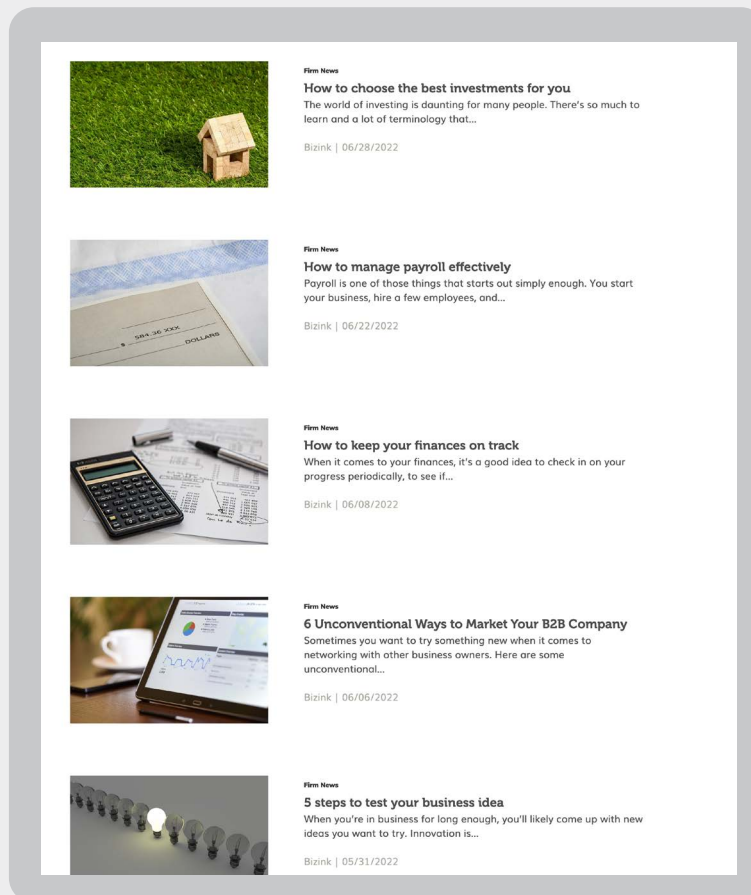
- Your website is essentially your shop front. It needs to make a good impression, connect with your audience, and sell your services on your behalf. Good design, user-friendly navigation, original photography and professionally written content are essential elements of a successful website. A copywriter can help you distill your point of difference, articulate your services in a way that helps your business stand out from the rest, and compel your visitors to take action.
 - Read our Complete Guide to Accounting Websites
 - Get your website audited for free by Bizink
-

2. An easy to use content management system (CMS)

Your content management system enables you to create, revise, and manage your website without having to code it. You can download or purchase extensions and templates to make the result more tailored to your needs. It also makes collaboration easier and enables you to create user roles and permissions, so your content writers can write and publish to your site, but not significantly alter your site otherwise. Wordpress is a widely-used CMS, which Bizink also uses.

3. A regularly updated blog

Consistent, fresh content gives your audience a reason to regularly engage with your website, and it attracts those search engine bots to improve your SEO, making you more easily found online! Although the thought of posting regularly can feel overwhelming, with a content plan you'll be surprised at how many topics you're inspired to cover. Aim for at least every two weeks or once a month.



One of Bizink's clients wanted to start blogging but was stuck for ideas. He came up with a simple plan that I recommend you replicate.

List the ten questions you get asked most by clients. Those most frequently asked questions will be the basis for your first 10 blog posts – now you have a content marketing plan!

Of course you need to get the posts written, but the point of going with the commonly asked questions is that these are topics you know about. You've answered these questions before, so the familiarity will hopefully make the writing easier. If not, consider hiring a freelance writer. If you give bullet points on the key points you'd like made, they should make short work of the blogs.

Our client wrote a post on “Can you claim sales tax on second-hand goods?” as he worked with many online sellers. For many years, his post outranked the IRD (New Zealand’s government tax department) and it still is on the first page of Google. This pushed a lot of traffic to his website.

Additional content topic strategies

- Track leads and identify which content on your site gets the most traffic or queries, provide similar content
- Constantly ask customers what their main issues are and use these topics to write blogs that solve their pain points
- Check out your competitors and other accountants to see what they’re covering
- Write about the latest news in your target clients’ industries.

The advantages of these strategies are:

- You’re creating blogs about actual pain points and challenges business owners face
- If your clients have these issues, you can assume other business owners will
- Writing about them positions you as an expert, and as someone they can trust
- Because you know the topics well, the blogs shouldn’t be too taxing to write
- Next time a client asks one of the questions, send them the relevant blog. You save time and look good because you’ve got a pre-prepared response
- The content has longevity – we call it “evergreen content” in the marketing world
- Like the GST example, your blogs could be ranked by search engines, sending traffic and potential leads your way
- You can repurpose the content to amplify it. For example, you can make videos on the same topics and then post them to social media. Or you could compile all your posts into a ebook called something like “The most common questions that business owners ask their accountants.”

If all that still sounds like too much work, here are some [free blog posts you can download](#) and use that are taken from the library of blog content that Bizink offers to our clients.

4. 'Hero' content

Hero content is all about achieving reach and brand awareness. It's a piece of content that requires a bit more investment in because it's designed to attract a wide audience and create impact. This could be a video, a guide book, an online course or a big-ticket campaign, designed to attract a larger number of viewers and leave a lasting impression.

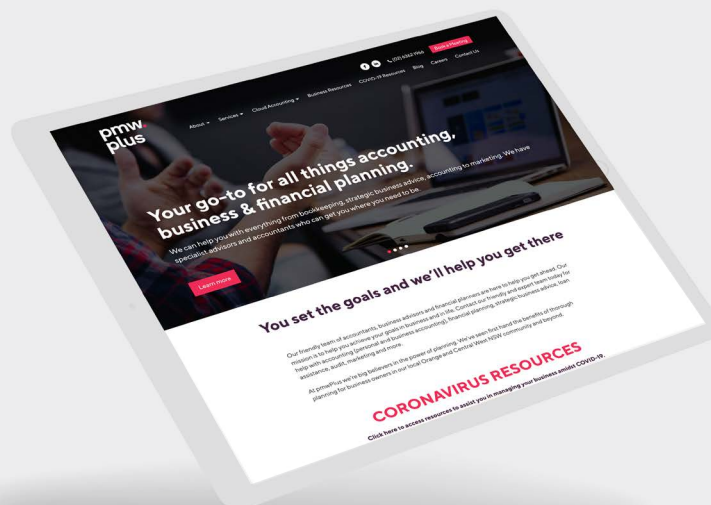
- This guide you're reading right now is one of Bizink's 'hero' content pieces.
- To come up with your 'hero' content, you should think about the things your ideal client really cares about. What is the source of their pain or stress? What keeps them up at night?

5. A downloadable takeaway

As a service-based business, you're likely not selling anything online via your website. However your new visitors have probably landed on your site while researching their options – so give them something they can take away that builds their trust in you. A simple, non-technical guide, template or resource will give website visitors extra value and it gives you an opportunity to capture their email address, so you can follow up or add them to your database for future communications.

A document that is given to website visitors in exchange for their contact information is known as a lead magnet.

Here's an example of a lead magnet from one of Bizink's clients:



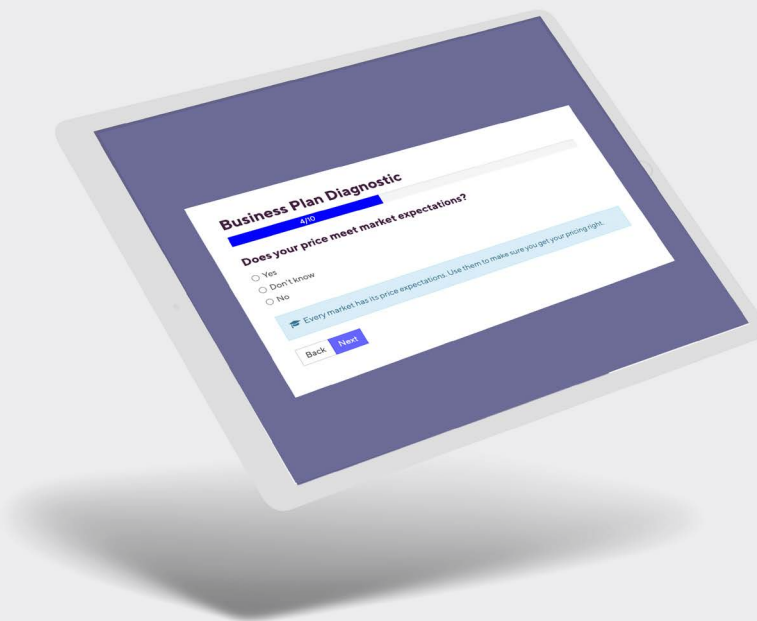
We'd like to help you use your website as a lead generator, so we've developed [this Business Plan Template](#) which you can use for free. We suggest you offer this as a free download on your website, in exchange for a visitor's email address.

6. Helpful tools

Tools such as business planning templates, cash flow or profit tracking spreadsheets or loan calculators are all resources that your customers can put to use in their own business. These kinds of tools help your visitors take action and get an immediate outcome, so they are a great resource for getting new leads and increasing engagement on your site.

By providing these tools, you become known as a valuable resource--your visitors may even recommend your website to others in their network!

We provide our clients with interactive tools, like this Business Plan Diagnostic, which acts as a conversation-starter with clients and prospects. We also have downloads such as break-even templates and cash flow forecasts.



7. Social media

Love it or hate it, social media is a necessary part of marketing. Social media boosts brand awareness, helps you build relationships with a wider audience and is an important channel for drawing new leads to your website.

You don't have to be on all social media, but it's worthwhile to be on the platform that your clients engage with. Popular social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

As with your content, consistency is key: you need to be consistent with your posting, messaging and design. We see a lot of firms who try their hand at social media for a month or two and then they get busy and it gets dropped. It works well if you commit to regular, consistent posting. Social media is a chance to not only share some value with your followers, but to also show the human side of your business - the people, the behind-the-scenes, the clients you support and the values that drive your brand.

Your social media and your blog can feed into each other. If you've got your 10 blog post topics, then you've also got topics for your social media. Use it to link to your blog posts and/or to ask questions. You can use social media to generate blog topics, too. Ask your followers what questions they have about accounting or bookkeeping.

Got all those nailed?

Then step up your content marketing game
with a few extras – we'll talk about these next.

Identifying content your audience will love

Key points:

- Continue experimenting with new forms of content, such as videos, webinars, events and surveys to see what else works with your target audience
- Remember that marketing trends are constantly evolving, so you'll need to review your strategy regularly to ensure it's still as effective as you need.

Once you've got the basics sorted, don't rest on your laurels. Content marketing is a moving and ever-evolving strategy, and keeping up with content trends is important. If budget and resources allow, here are some content extras that your audience will love.

Engaging video

Video is an engaging and memorable way for your target customers to interact with and get to know your brand. It's also highly shareable, increasing the chances that your brand will reach new audiences. Use video to showcase your brand story, team introductions, tutorials, how-to posts, case studies and more.

Webinars

Webinars are a chance to educate your audience and showcase your expertise. They aren't about giving away your knowledge, but adding value, building trust and establishing credibility. They're also a way to build your database and attract new leads! If the pandemic taught us anything, it's that finding ways to connect and stay in touch with our audience online is important. Webinars also present an opportunity to pitch an offer or sell a particular service, so are especially beneficial in the lead up to the launch of a service or campaign.



Events

There's still something to be said for in-person events! If you're not restricted by geographical inconvenience, events continue to be an effective way to market your business and showcase your skills and expertise. Invite your existing clients to a presentation, bring in an expert speaker they want to hear from, partner with other related businesses who invite their clients, so you can each leverage your networks and connections.

Surveys

Surveys give you a fantastic opportunity to reach out to current and potential clients in two ways. In the first instance, you're reaching out to them to ask them to participate in a short survey (don't make it longer than 10 minutes to complete). The survey should have questions relevant to their industry. Email an invite to participate to people on your email list, share it on social media and encourage others to share it as well.

Once you have a solid number of respondents, write up an informative report on trends you noticed in the responses and your analysis of those trends. Send that report to everyone who participated in your survey, people on your email list and even connections on social media.

Right, so you're convinced about the merits of content marketing? Let's bring it all to life.

Bringing your content marketing plan to life

Key points:

- A content marketing calendar keeps you accountable for creating content
- You can delegate content marketing tasks to your team so the bulk of responsibilities isn't on you, or you can work with an outside party to provide content
- Keep your calendar flexible, so if something important pops up that you want to write about, you can easily adjust.

Once you've brainstormed your ideas for pillar and cluster content, it's time to map them out into a calendar.

Your content calendar is important because it keeps you accountable for producing the content. In creating the calendar, you'll be considering when and how often you want to post on various platforms, what you want to post about and who is responsible for creating the content.

It takes a bit of time to set up the calendar at first, but the rewards are worth it because your topics are already planned out for you. The calendar makes implementation of your marketing plan easier. You can also schedule time ahead for seasonal posts--such as important information at tax time – so you don't forget about them. It helps you schedule your time, so you know in a given week how much time you need to spend on marketing activities.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

When How often, and when, do you want to publish your content? Consider when themes are most topical by thinking about the business calendar, seasonal influences or special events, and map these themes out over your year.

How How you are going to bring each of those themes to life – align your keyword-led topics with the themes for each month, so you know



what each piece is going to be about, and write a brief overview of what can be included.

What What kind of content – a blog, ebook, video, guidebook – and therefore what additional resources might you need (video, graphic design, a copywriter, survey results etc)?

Who Who needs to be involved? It can be helpful to spread content creation across your team, so decide who will be responsible for managing each piece, or sub-contract the writing to a freelance writer (or use Bizink’s online content).

Where Where you will publish and share your content, and therefore what else you need to do, to ensure your content reaches the right people. Think about your distribution channels – do you also need email and social media copy written?

While there are a number of online tools, a simple spreadsheet is a good place to start. In fact, [you can have this one on us!](#)

Your content calendar doesn’t have to be set in stone; it should flex to topical themes where needed. It’s worth checking in with your content plan every quarter, to ensure the content you’ve mapped out is still relevant and scheduled for a time when it can have its best impact.

[If this all seems overwhelming, start with one piece of content a month on a topic you know will resonate, place it on your website and amplify it in your channels.](#)

Let a content-led approach grow your practice

Great content has the power to grow your audience, generate loyal followers, improve your SEO presence and position your practice as a trusted industry thought leader.

- Add useful content to your website that aligns to your core business (cash flow, start up, tax, strategy, business planning, funding)
- Amplify this content by placing it in as many places as possible. A single article on cash flow could be in your website, sent to customers in an e-newsletter, printed, cut and used as social media posts, profiled inside LinkedIn, or syndicated to your own partners

Accountants also are increasingly having to position their practice and offer more than tax and financial advice. As accounting software makes it easier and easier for small businesses to manage their own accounts (and it's likely to get even easier still), being able to segment the market and focus on a niche is more likely with an expert content led strategy to differentiate you from the pack.

Finally, DIY v.s. getting help

A DIY approach to content marketing is do-able, but it is a time commitment - and time something that we know most accountants don't have a lot of.

This is why we've made it easy for accountants to source and publish quality content that they know their audience will love.

Every week we add new content to our library of relevant and relatable accounting-specific content, written by business experts. Blog posts, guides, social posts, emails, templates and more are all available at your fingertips to get your own content marketing machine cranking.

Want to know more?

Download a free sample of what's included in our content pack and see for yourself how easy it can be to get started with content marketing:

<https://bizinkonline.com/content-pack/>

We hope this guide has shown you the possibilities of marketing automation for accountants. Bizink's website and digital marketing platform has automation built in. Book some time with our team to find out more.

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