

# DO YOU REALLY NEED A CONTENT STRATEGY?



As content marketing becomes an increasingly common discipline in the tourism industry, a content strategy is often referred to as the first step in the content marketing process, much like for an advertising campaign.

Having a content strategy is indeed an essential starting point before creating content can even be considered. However, this priority should not lead you to assume that a content strategy is simply one of the many elements that make up a content marketing project. Not only should a content strategy precede content marketing, a content strategy is not limited to content marketing either. It goes beyond this, and is largely independent of any marketing activities which may follow from its implementation.

In fact, all travel and tourism organizations have or should have a content strategy, even if they do not—or do not yet—do content marketing.

Content marketing is, obviously, a subset of marketing. A "content marketing strategy" must therefore be part of an organization's overall marketing strategy.

On the other hand, a content strategy can very well exist independently of a marketing strategy—even though, in most cases, these two approaches are used and embodied jointly within a content marketing program.

What then differentiates a content strategy from content marketing? It's simple really:

- content marketing is the use of content to achieve marketing objectives
- a content strategy is what guides the use of content to achieve business objectives

As the overall marketing strategy must contribute to the global business objectives, these two elements must necessarily meet each other and are partly overlapping, but only partly, because business objectives of any tourism business can include many other elements than those pursued by a marketing strategy.

This is particularly true of tourism organizations whose business objectives do not translate into sales as well as policy makers who have been exposed to their content:

- tourist board, tourism authorities and public administrations that inform stakeholders, raise awareness of travel destinations, and encourage public spirit
- travel and hospitality associations and unions seeking to change perceptions and looking for common goals
- tourism educational institutions that showcase their research and spread their knowledge
- travel media that attract an audience in order to monetize their access to advertisers or in order to convince consumers to subscribe to their services

The inclusion of the media in this list reflects its key role: the media remains an inspirational model for organizations of all types seeking to take the plunge into the world of content marketing. Whether or not these tourism bodies and organizations make specific marketing efforts, they will still require a content strategy that covers a much broader scope than a conventional marketing

strategy.

Without excessively emphasizing this dichotomy, a distinction can be made, at several levels, between a content strategy and content marketing, based on the respective focus of each.

#### Targeted audiences

- Content marketing: potential and prospective clients, leads, new website visitors
- Content strategy: current clients and users, occasional or current visitors to the website, subscribers (newsletter, social account, publication)

#### Organizations primarily concerned

- Content marketing: travel and hospitality companies
- Content strategy: all tourism organizations, but primarily those for which content delivery is closer to their core mission

#### Most common objectives

- Content marketing: influencing travel brand image and perception; identifying, qualifying and convincing prospective travellers
- Content strategy: disseminating information; influencing personal, family and social perceptions and behaviors

#### Major media

- Content marketing: social media; native advertising spaces; sponsored content and the content of "partners" outside of the organization; media and sites whose content is generated by users; events organized by third parties
- Content strategy: website, newsletter, publications, social accounts and events sponsored by the organization

Content marketing and strategy must be closely linked.

However, content strategy is of primary importance since it is not possible to implement content marketing without having a content strategy. Conversely, a content strategy and the content that it generates can sometime exist and achieve its goals in the absence of any content marketing.

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