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BUILD YOUR CONTENT FACTORY: MUST-HAVE TOOLS TO GET YOUR ASSEMBLY LINE HUMMING

Contents at a Glance

INTRODUCTION

To be successful in content marketing, you need fresh, relevant, and tasty content—like, NOW. But, these days, good content is just not good enough. You need great content, and you need to churn it out.

Becoming a finely tuned content creating machine isn't too difficult: Just eat, sleep, and drink content creation. You know:

- Source, select, develop, or locate ideas and information.
- Manage all elements of the publication process.
- Distribute and promote content, keeping in mind when to distribute it over time and via which channels.
- Track effectiveness, measure ROI, and adjust your strategy as needed.
- Watch for and respond to feedback, comments, and concerns from your audience.

No problem, right?

Except when reality sets in, and you realize doing all that is easier said than done. More than likely, your days are jam-packed and your plate is full. The good news is that you don't have to single-handedly deliver on your content strategy. You can build a solid infrastructure—or content factory, if you will—to support all aspects of content creation, from brainstorming ideas, to managing writers, editors and freelancers, to producing quality content that helps you rise above the noise.

By building your own little factory (or huge one, as it may be), you can create a well-oiled machine for content creation.

And if you happen to be in the market for a new assembly line for your content factory, you're in luck: We've culled through the résumés of some of the top names and faces from the content crew that could be just the fit you've been looking for.

Let us introduce the lineup.

MEET THE FACTORY MANAGEMENT:
THE EDITORIAL ORGANIZERS

Keeping It All Together, While Churning It Out

Editorial Calendars

We know you've got big concerns as you carry out your content strategy: How can I effectively communicate with my remote writers, edit their copy, and keep them in the loop with changes? How can I measure the reach of this content and make sure everyone gets paid?

Editorial calendars allow you to stay in control of your workflow and to continuously publish content across different media platforms. From blogs to emails, newsletters to e-books, editorial calendars can help ensure the regular appearance of your content in domains that interest your readers.

Just as you shouldn't attempt a startup without a business plan, publishing without a calendar creates work that is erratic—or, worse, of little to no interest to your audience.

Just sit back and get to know some of the organizing crew vying for the head management position at your factory.

Let's choose your organizing crew

DivvyHQ

Résumé Highlights: Kiss the spreadsheet goodbye! Your assembly line just joined a new era of organization with DivvyHQ, which touts itself as the first comprehensive, spreadsheet-free, editorial calendar application. With DivvyHQ, users can create content ideas, manage editorial and writing teams, and handle production processes to smoothly meet all content deadlines.

By keeping track of all your current content production across every campaign medium on one master calendar,

your yearly content strategy just got a lot more doable. With color-coding options, a clear workflow that lets you easily move content from one step to the next and simple status changing options, this program can truly be the Excedrin of editorial organization needs.

Take any and all projects from the sourcing and brainstorming phase all the way through the publication phase. With handy tools and features like automated reminders for you and your staff and at-a-glance views of content-development status, DivvyHQ might just free you up to finally make it home for dinner.

Work Style: DivvyHQ likes things easy—for you, that is. This program features a very intuitive dashboard that allows you to view multiple content calendars on a master calendar in a simple-to-read color-coded format. Companies with many ongoing projects with lots of contributors can quickly come to appreciate all that DivvyHQ is bringing to the table.

The solution's "parking lot" allows you to quickly and easily capture content ideas that aren't necessarily ready to be moved on yet. A person can use this feature (for inspiration or brainstorming), while a team can use it, say, during an editorial or production meeting.

You can easily charge team members with projects and assign dates for drafts, and DivvyHQ automatically sends the status checks. No more playing "Mom" to your staff. It also makes updating information and routing drafts to individuals for input and review a piece of cake.

Accolades:

- Visually, this program is one of the best, with a clean, simple-to-read interface.
- If DivvyHQ doesn't have the content category you are looking for (which could happen, though it has a ton of them), it allows you to create your own categories.

- Excellent for multiple users working on projects simultaneously due to stellar team-collaboration features.
- You've got the Internet, you've got access.

Areas for Growth/Concern:

- Monthly fees are from $29.99 to $149.99, depending on number of users and calendars. But, you can check out its qualifications for free with a trial.
- If you don't have Internet access, you can't update your projects, calendars, or production process.

Kapost

Résumé Highlights: This content marketing platform helps you manage key workflows, from managing idea generation and assigning projects to editing drafts and sending payment. In fact, it likens itself to a virtual newsroom environment.

Kapost can help manage all content and provide insight into which content is working well and which is missing the mark. With its planning, production, distribution, and analysis functionality, organizing the entire publishing process just became a lot easier for you.

Though some other products out there are great for small publishing efforts, Kapost was built on the idea that publishing great content is a community affair. As a result, hundreds of people can be involved in generating ideas, entering them into Kapost, and developing drafts, but the editor has ultimate control. The editor can choose which pieces of content work best, and with a click of a button push that content into your CMS for publication in any channel.

Work Style: Kapost is all about sharing—the information, the workload and the production headway. As the status of a project changes and the content moves along in the production process, all invested parties are automatically

notified. Once content is published, editors can track the performance metrics of that content, such as unique visits, pageviews, retweets, and Facebook Likes.

Accolades:

- Anyone can contribute ideas for content, and editors can then hand those off to staffers, freelancers, guest bloggers, or others to develop.
- You can see which writers are driving the most traffic to your site and which published pieces are generating the most buzz on social media sites.
- It has strong support for collaboration, allowing editors and writers to see all revisions and to work together to get the post ready for publication. And, although collaboration is transparent, only the editor has publication control.
- Kapost users can "skin" the platform, changing colors, fonts, and logos to customize it.
- It's easy to integrate with the Eloqua marketing automation system.
- If you've got Internet, you've got access.

Areas for Growth/Concern:

- Kapost is less visual than DivvyHQ; also, although you can skin it, you can't change the major design features of the program.
- Pricing is not disclosed online.
- If you don't have Internet access, you can't update your projects, calendars, or production process, just as with DivvyHQ.

YOU'VE SEEN THE GENERALISTS, NOW MEET THE SPECIALISTS: BLOG PLATFORMS & CONTENT ASSISTANTS

We've spent some time looking at the big picture of content marketing and who can help you there, but now it's time for the nitty-gritty. Let's look at the individual content channels and think about your factory's staffing needs there.

Let's start with blogs—who'll host them for you and who'll be you'll personal assistants to keep you, and your content creation, organized.

Blog platforms at the ready to host your content

What could be more challenging than finding interesting, compelling, informative subjects to write on daily that someone might actually want to read? (Yeah, the latter part of that sentence is the kicker, isn't it?) And it isn't as simple as putting thoughts to screen. Keywords, branding, trending topics all should be in the back of your mind as you and your staff craft that all-important blog post.

But don't be discouraged. You absolutely do want to be investing time, energy, and effort into that blog; hands down, it can be one of the smartest, most efficient and effective (yes, as in, cost-effective) tools used by any business, regardless of size or type.

Fortunately, you can call in reinforcements to make it all a bit easier.

Tumblr

Résumé Highlights: Tumblr is a blogging website that allows users to post pretty much anything. Text, images, video, links, quotes, and audio can be posted to your tumblelog, or blog, and followed by others on Tumblr. Tumblr believes that your blog is more than just your

words and that it should look beautiful, shifting the focus from words only to images—from stark, drab posts to visceral, encompassing "artistic expression." And if you think images of dogs in top hats is art at its finest, well today is your lucky day!

Work Style: Creative expression and visual appeal rule Tumblr. As a micro-blogging service turned social media darling, it lets you find or create a blog about just about anything. It has a strong community component; people can reblog your blog and like and comment at will. The *ask* box lets you field questions or ask a few of your own.

Accolades:

*   Tumblr doesn't force any ads, banners, or logos into your theme, which is a big plus if you've spent hours designing it just right.
*   The submission feature lets your friends and audience contribute posts to your site.
*   Like company? You can invite an unlimited number of people to contribute to any blog.
*   It's free. Can't complain about that!

Areas for Growth/Concern:

*   With room for so much sharing of so many different mediums, you might find yourself at odds with copyright and usability laws. Oops.

WordPress

Résumé Highlights: WordPress is a free, open-source, multifunction tool that really does seem to do it all. Whether starting a blog or building a full-on website, you can use WordPress' full suite of options with countless plug-ins to make it happen. In short, WordPress is simple, and of all the blogging platforms out there it gets

NOW AND ALWAYS: SLIDES
FOR CREATING AND SHARING CONTENT

With all of the hot, new technology out there, you might start to think of slides as the 8-track of the marketing world. But you'd be wrong. Slides, when used well, are still a dynamic, important addition to your sharable content collection. Just don't, I repeat, don't let yourself fall into the "death by PowerPoint" trap (you know, bore your audience to tears with the Slide Show from Hell).

Use this section to select the best team members for amplifying your presentation, highlighting your material, and making sure you deliver snazz and not snore.

SlideShare

Résumé Highlights: When just creating a presentation is not enough, when sharing it with the world is your goal, SlideShare comes to the rescue. Just as you can use it to share your work will millions of users, you also have access to all of those users' content. Allow the SlideShare community to inspire new ideas for future projects or to find supplemental material to support your own work.

Work Style: Upload your content into SlideShare from PowerPoint, OpenOffice, or Keynote to share publicly or privately—your call. If you do choose to go public, SlideShare is the best way to get your content out there on the Web, so your ideas can be found and shared by others.

Content can then spread (virally, you hope) through blogs or social networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.

Accolades:

- In addition to presentations, SlideShare also supports documents, including PDFs, and videos and webinars.

- SlideShare can grow your professional network, cast your net for prospective clients or customers, and increase your opportunities for speaking opportunities.
- Slidecast, a plug-in from SlideShare, lets you sync MP3 audio with slides to create webinars.

Areas for Growth/Concern:

- You have four pricing options to choose from, including free. The highest, platinum service, runs you $249 a month and comes with full branding display and unlimited lead captures. But you can upgrade or downgrade at any time.
- Remember, SlideShare is not a presentation creator; you need to create your presentation elsewhere and upload it into SlideShare for storage and sharing.

Prezi

Résumé Highlights: Slides usually confine you to a linear sequence—unless you are using Prezi, that is. Prezi is presentation software that lets you zoom out to see the entirety of your presentation (or "prezi," as they call it) and then zoom into the details. Prezi encourages you to organically follow whatever path your presentation, your audience, or your spirit leads you on.

Work Style: This presentation tool lets you zoom in, out, and around your presentation landscape. It can be helpful to think of Prezi as a concept map or a visually organized mind map, allowing you to present both big-picture concepts and idea details in one coherent visual.

Accolades:

- You can choose to either work online and store your prezis in the cloud, or work offline with Prezi Desktop and store on your own computer.

VIDEO: AUDITIONS CURRENTLY BEING HELD

People are more wary than ever of being marketed to, so you have to offer more than just another sales pitch. You need to educate, engage, and by all means (and pretty please!) entertain.

Video is the perfect medium for breaking out of the mold and trying something new and different. Plus, did you know that YouTube is now a close second to Google as a search engine?

So, let's see what video options are out there.

YouTube

Résumé Highlights: YouTube isn't just a video platform; it is a full-on social network. Create something great on YouTube, and it can go viral on Facebook or Twitter faster than you can say "Make me famous." With about 400 tweets per minute containing YouTube videos, YouTube is a social marketer's darling.

You can create your own YouTube channel and brand page, adding custom images, like your logo, and featuring videos, playlists, and other elements all geared around creating buzz and keeping current with, what else, you and yours.

Work Style: Once you've set up your customized brand page, you can use Google's YouTube Analytics, which lets you track user actions on your channel page, traffic referral data, and a ton more.

You can edit and customize your channel's look with an appearance tab that lets you change color, background images, or banners. The info and settings tab lets you include your basic business information, and the feature tab lets you choose what videos, other channels, and playlists to highlight.

Accolades:

- YouTube is a great way to showcase news about your brand or products, to host contests, or to offer any other type of entertaining, useful, or inspiring content.
- Use the tools listed on YouTube.com/create to create, edit or upload videos.

Areas of Growth/Concern:

- Advertisements will appear on your YouTube channel, and you may not like some of them. Or, you could choose to advertise with YouTube yourself, and then you'd probably be a fan of the pre/mid/or post-video ads.
- To upload videos longer than 15 minutes, you'll need to take some extra steps.

Animoto

Résumé Highlights: When time is of the essence, Animoto is your new best friend. It helps you produce beautiful videos using your photos and video clips. In a matter of minutes, you could have a TV-quality video set to the soundtrack of your choice.

You can choose any music to set your video to, and Animoto will analyze it and produce a unique video using the elements you've provided (still images, photos, video, etc.), choreographed to the music. Sharing your finished product is a breeze, as well. From Facebook profiles, to your blog, to email or YouTube, upload wherever. It's your call. It's your video.

Work Style: Cinematic Artificial Intelligence technology acts as the director and editor in your Animoto production. You can upload your images and videos straight from your computer or from sites like Flickr, Facebook, or

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—*PRO member Christine Whittemore*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephanie Tilton of Ten Ton Marketing is a content marketing consultant who helps B2B companies craft content that engages prospects and customers, nurtures leads, and accelerates the buying cycle. She has produced hundreds of content assets for a range of organizations, including some of the world's leading technology companies. Stephanie contributed to *Content Rules* by Ann Handley and C.C. Chapman, and she is a founding member of and regular blogger on the *Savvy B2B Marketing* blog. Reach her via stilton@tentonmarketing.com.

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