iQUANTI WhitePaper

Level up your
content strategy

Content is everywhere. From blogs to vlogs, social to spatial, audio, video, long-form, short-form. As a brand, you may be confused about what to do.

What content works for your business? And how do you decide on that? This is where SEO comes in.

A well-thought-through SEO strategy helps you decide what, when, and how to create content that your customers will consume actively. Don't rely on non-quantifiable metrics such as industry trends or hasty responses to competition. A methodical SEO strategy helps drive a content production and distribution engine that is customer-centric, delivers measurable results, and addresses your customers' demands.

> *If SEO is done correctly, every page becomes an entry page*
>
> *-   Wayne Cichanski,*
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Here are **5 steps** that will help you drive SEO success in your content strategy

STEP 1:
Building a solid foundation

Understanding intent and identifying customer journeys

What are people searching for? How are they looking for your product or service online? Is it something that can be fulfilled in a more local context? Or it is a long-term involved journey?

In these questions lie the foundation of your content funnel. We can translate the user intent into different stages of the customer journey – from awareness to purchase.

Understanding 'consumer intent' helps us identify the content that best answers the users' query. Mapping customer journeys across the funnel – from awareness, consideration, comparison, purchase, and finally loyalty – is critical in developing content interventions along the way.

You decide what queries of your customer you want to address with your content.

How does the intent of your customer's questions change as they traverse the different stages of the funnel? This nuance helps you respond to search queries precisely. A 360° view of your customer's interaction with your brand helps you drive corrective content measures as you notice the customer drop-off points.

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Like any SEO strategy, it starts with keyword research.

Keywords are lead indicators that directionally inform you of what your customers' needs are and what they are looking for. Scan your whole search landscape – internal, external, competition, recommendations, etc – and build a keyword universe that captures a wide variety of consumer intent.

Categorizing keywords by intent at the beginning helps you separate them into like-minded groups or themes. Working with these similarly themed keyword groups helps you identify SEO opportunity areas.

Newer, expansive development in language models has allowed Google and other search engines to become smarter. They can now identify and categorize search intent quite accurately. This is why intent mapping becomes critical as you aim to increase your overall traffic and conversion.

Mapping keywords by intent helps build a profile of your search customer. As you investigate your keyword groups further, you realize that the persona of your customer matters as much as the query.

'Women's handbag trends for 2022' is for a different customer than '*top 10 handbags to gift women in 2022'*.

Whom you speak to changes the language of the conversation, and thus, the content. An effective content strategy recognizes the people behind the query and tailors the content accordingly.

Finally, if you want your content to rank high on search engines, it needs to be relevant and accurately answer the intent of the search query. There are no shortcuts to this procss.

You can then decide where to invest your resources. How far up the funnel do you wish to go? What makes the most business sense for you? A solid foundation for your content strategy is built through thorough keyword research that offers concrete action items and measurable metrics.

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STEP 2:
Conducting the Content-Gap Analysis

Identifying gaps and optimizing existing content to drive relevance

Your keyword landscape points to what your customers are searching for. Your current content landscape gives you a sense of the context you are working with. To identify and diagnose your content gap, you need to be clear on what you are trying to achieve with your content. Leveraging the intent maps that you have already created, then map these themes to your current content bank through your URL inventory. This will give you an overall view of your current landscape. You can now begin to visualize potential gaps in your content scheme.

Mapping user intent and content intent will help categorize the intent of a page and optimize the content accordingly. Select a hero keyword, map additional keywords with the same intent and build the page accordingly. Be strategic here. Maintain a 1:1 ratio, with one theme representing a single intent that is mapped to a single page.

A single page cannot possibly rank for a large group of keywords, because so many keywords cannot possibly have the same intent.

Competition matters – whether they are direct business rivals or search competitors. Look at what they are talking about. What can you learn from them? How are they speaking to their customers? What are they doing to improve relevancy?

The insights generated from this combined analysis will help you map your content architecture precisely and give you a top view of your content needs. By now, you should know how much to optimize and how much to build.

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STEP 3:
Prioritize and Optimize

Investing in demand pockets that will drive meaningful results

No one has unlimited resources. This is why prioritization and optimization are key to building a truly successful content strategy.

Content creation and production need to be methodical and data-centric Search volumes help gauge user interest. 'Handbags' may be a huge search category with high search volume, but the intent is more general. While 'red cross shoulder mini bag' may not have as much search volume but the intent is hyper focused. A strong content strategy will contain both elements.

Your keyword and content themes, grouped by like-minded intent, will then present content opportunities. Themes with high search volumes represent high user intent. It helps you build a priority template that drives resource optimization.

Just because the user is interested doesn't mean it is a quick SEO win for you.

To build content that both users and search engines love, you need a strategy that helps you build relevance as well as authority.

Our prioritization framework follows two strong logic –

1. **Look for the low-hanging opportunities**
   Work with the pages you have. See which ones you can optimize easily. Existing pages have existing traffic. They are already ranked on Google. You can build on it through simple, faster-to-execute on-page and off-page interventions.

2. **Remember your end goal**
   What is the ultimate action that you want your customer to take? If the conversion is important, then focus on pages that will bring you conversions. Aim to optimize or build content that helps you close the deal. Remember the intent funnel and then decide the investments that best help you achieve your business goals.

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The iQuanti Approach

At iQuanti, we have developed an in-house prioritization framework that seeks to maximize existing properties while slowly building a user-focused content funnel.
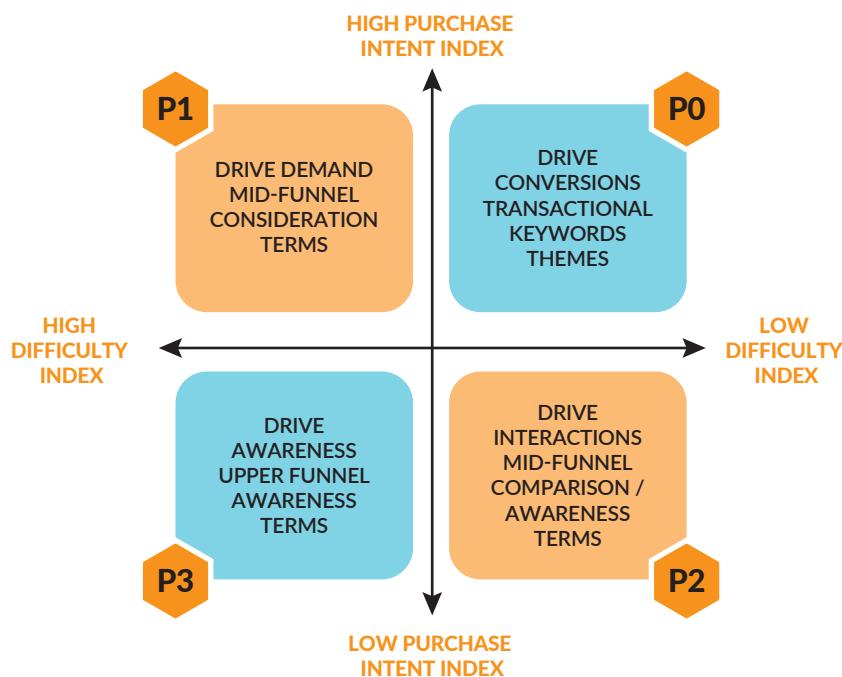
Purchase Intent Index is calculated considering the buyer's intent as represented by the keywords. Difficulty index is a calculation based on our proprietary algorithm which indicates how easy or difficult is it for your brand pages to rank for a particular keyword theme.

Our approach helps you map your content priorities at the beginning. You can prioritize delivery and optimization to maximize your SEO investments. Mapping 'purchase intent' vs 'difficulty index' gives a sense of what is achievable. The process and plan help you 'keep the light on'. You can then look ahead to address the more difficult keyword themes that you wish to rank for.
Our framework looks at how much growth is possible. What is addressable in the evolving market landscape? What are the most relevant, executable, and influential content ideas? And finally, how can you build a self-driving content engine? Using our prioritization framework, you can navigate these questions easily.

Our approach will help you optimize and produce content that will rank faster on search engines.

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STEP 4:
Translating Strategy to Action

Planning for collaboration and process efficiency

Planning is key to executing an efficient effective and elastic content strategy.
A fantastic content calendar is the foundation of this plan. A thoughtfully designed
content calendar will help you produce and distribute high-quality content. It should
offer value to an online searcher and a great visitor experience.

Of course, the devil, as always, is in the details. Our comprehensive prioritization
framework can make all the difference here. It not only focuses on quick wins but
leverages the initial success to fuel long-term content efforts. The next step is to
execute your content calendar in a phased, responsive manner. Collaborate across the
board – internal, external, teams, individuals, freelancers – anyone who can help you go
to market faster. We highly recommend you use collaboration and content marketing
tools to help you drive execution excellence. Your content calendar must be flexible.
Allow for continuous optimization of processes and goals. Inefficiencies in the content
production, distribution, or measurement process must be addressed.

Leverage agile methodologies such as sprint planning to build more efficient systems.
Drive innovation through your system by fostering a participative employee culture.
Measure and optimize your agility metrics such as time-to-market and adopt an
'always-on' mentality.

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STEP 5:
Measuring the Impact

Recognizing SEO as a continuous process

We know that an SEO-led content strategy involves significant investment in time and resources.

It is totally worth it if you can show the results.

Monitor and nurture your content's performance to evaluate SEO success in the long run.

Remember – that just because your content doesn't rank, doesn't necessarily mean it is not relevant. Make sure and measure your relevancy against other SERP competitors to see how you stack up.

Using measurement tools such as our ALPS™ platform, you can measure the performance of individual keywords, themes, pages, and more. Tracking metrics not only helps measure your success but also shows you opportunities for improvement and further optimization. Track your overall digital presence. Look for enhanced performance reporting that gives clarity and context around what impacts KPIs.

Build a Comprehensive Reporting Foundation
- Look at the maturity of your organization
- Choose an attribution model

Determind Cost
- Determine how you are thinking about costs
- Increase the scope of what counts as a cost

Clean Up Your Data
- Ensure UTM parameters give accurate Information
- Clarify the timeframe of each touchpoint

Leverage the Right Technology
- Manual reporting fails to provide real-time insights
- Ensure tech is setup correctly

Measure your ROIs, based on your initial business goals. Remember where you started and then see where you have come from. Measure your success against an accepted standard and avoid shifting goalposts frequently.

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ALPS™
An Enterprise SEO platform

As SEO strategists and implementors for some of the biggest brands globally, our focus is on helping our clients accelerate their growth and capture rankings, traffic, and revenues through the search channel. As we worked on SEO solutions for our enterprise clients, we realized there was a gap in the existing SEO technology and platform landscape – while there were some great tools that provided current data, integration, and reporting, there was nothing that specifically addressed the need for predictive or prescriptive data, which is critical for working towards a reliable and data-driven SEO plan.

We asked ourselves:

- Can search be made predictable?
- Can we build a prescriptive roadmap to solve SEO challenges?
- Can we quantify how search can lift a brand's overall acquisition efforts?

If we can solve the above three, will it enable our enterprise clients to make smarter SEO investment decisions?

Our data scientists and search marketers worked on developing AI/ML-driven SEO tools that specifically addressed this key gap. Thus, was born ALPS™ – incubated, and developed within iQuanti as an in-house SEO platform, now grown into a stand-alone enterprise SEO platform.

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Driving
SEO success

From strategy to execution, a sophisticated, mature, and dynamic content strategy is key to driving long-term SEO success.

Prioritize content roadmaps that maximize ROI. Continuously drive agility and process efficiencies through inventive technology and collaboration. Adopt a 'simulate-forecast-optimize' approach. And finally, measure the performance of your efforts and monitor the ROIs.

An SEO-driven content strategy will drive traffic and conversions. Content is what the search engines use to fulfill their user's intent. Your goal is to capture that intent with your content assets, thus completing a full-funnel connection to your users.