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The Content Planner

A Complete Guide to Organize
and Share Your Ideas Online

Includes
free access
to download
forms kit



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Self-Counsel Press
BUSINESS SERIES

The Content Planner by Angela Crocker

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Welcome to *The Content Planner*, your guide to organize and share your ideas online. I'm Angela Crocker. I'm a writer, a teacher and an information organizer with more than twenty years' experience in business communication. I want you to be successful with your content sharing. Together, we'll establish processes that make good use of your time, create shareable content and benefit your business.

The Content Planner is for anyone who publishes online. You might own an established business or be starting a new entrepreneurial venture. Maybe you're a creative entrepreneur – a writer, an artist, a musician – wanting to raise your profile and share your work with a wider audience. Or, perhaps, you aspire to share the things you love to establish yourself as an influencer. Whether you work alone, as part of small team or within the communications department of a large organization, you'll be able to make the most of limited content marketing time and leverage opportunities to generate sales and reap non-monetary benefits. Whatever your role and situation, this book will help you get your ideas online efficiently and effectively.

Online publishing can take many forms. You might write for a website or blog. Perhaps, you're in charge of an email newsletter or, maybe, you share through social media tools such as Facebook, Instagram or YouTube. Together, we're going to gather your ideas and make a plan to publish your content regularly and with purpose. We'll also take time to connect your content to your business objectives.

Savvy business owners know the importance of publishing frequent, unique content. Yet, they often struggle to take action. Some are overwhelmed at the prospect of brainstorming topics. Others find it a challenge to write, photograph or video record their content. Still others are muddled by the mechanics of how to use a Wordpress dashboard, the Facebook interface or a Constant Contact template. Even

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folks who accomplish this much are sometimes unable to organize their ideas into a viable publishing schedule and end up publishing nothing. If you struggle with any of these challenges, this book can help you.

The Content Planner walks you through eight steps to success.

Step 1: Determine your platform.

Step 2: Define your purpose.

Step 3: Brainstorm your ideas.

Step 4: Make an editorial calendar.

Step 5: Create your content.

Step 6: Publish to your platform.

Step 7: Monitor the response.

Step 8: Evaluate and make improved plans.

We'll explore these steps in detail in Chapter 2: How to Use *The Content Planner*.

Creating content is an investment of time and, sometimes, money. A confirmed return on your investment makes it easy to justify spending the resources. With a content plan, you have the potential to experience a wide range of benefits. The benefits that matter most to you will depend on your business model and goals.

Some businesses see a direct return on their investment in the form of product sales, ticket revenue, appointment bookings, consultations and other revenue creation activities. New money in your virtual cash register sounds great, right? I agree but keep in mind that financial return should not be your only objective. There are many valuable indirect benefits to a carefully executed content plan.

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Indirect benefits can take many forms. First, consider the human resources perspective. Businesses can save paid working-hours by having the team focus on making and then executing the content plan. Dedicated, focused planning time is much more efficient and effective than an ad hoc approach. Don't make your team work on content only when they have time or, worse, during unpaid overtime. Good content cannot be created as a side project. It demands focus and action. *The Content Planner* method also allows you to capture brainstorming for future content plans without being distracted from the plan in progress.

Planning content time is also an opportunity to include other team members. Perhaps a subject matter expert, the founder of your company or a worker involved in manufacturing could contribute to your content plan. Drawing on many perspectives within a company makes for a more interesting and well-rounded content plan. It's also an opportunity for collaboration and team building, a terrific indirect benefit.

Well-planned content can be created to be consistent with your brand's visual look and style. Consistent use of fonts, colours and graphics adds to your business' credibility. Narrowing your efforts to specific content also makes for more professional writing, photography and videography that better represents your brand. Externally, content sharing is a great way to build relationships with customers. You will be able to better serve existing customers and get acquainted with potential customers.

Depending on the nature of your business, you might also receive invitations for teaching opportunities, conference speaking gigs or guest post invitations to reach a new, but similar, audience. The benefits can also include more website visitors, opt-in email subscribers, and social media followers. Great content lets you take your ideas and products to the online places where your fans want to interact with your brand.

For many, the biggest hurdle is knowing what to write about. *The Content Planner* includes brainstorming strategies and idea organization techniques. You'll learn about types of content to consider and have a range of thought starters to inspire you. You'll be able to capture lots of great ideas

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and then prioritize and schedule the ideas that support your current business objectives. Any great ideas that don't fit your current plans can be set aside for future use.

The Content Planner provides a structure that focuses your business on the types of content that support your business objectives. This book includes pages to formalize your plans in a "pen on paper" workbook. There's also a digital download available, if you prefer to work in bytes rather than ink. By knowing what content to create and when, your writers (or photographers or videographers) are empowered to take timely action to meet those deadlines. So, let's get to work.

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