Content Marketing

ISN'T A ONE-NIGHT STAND

Looking for Love in All the Right Places



All you need is Love. Love is all you need.

-The Beatles



Lonely business seeks customers...



As a teacher-entrepreneur, your needs are basic: more leads and more customers for your online courses (in other words, more love).

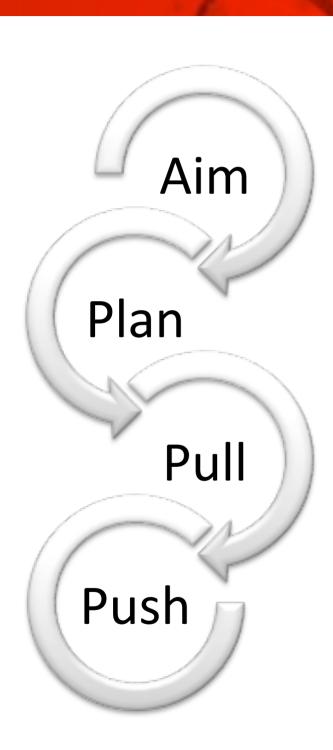
And of course those needs are urgent, right?

So how about a quick fix? Maybe an enticing piece of content - an ebook or a spiffy video - would quench your desire.

Today, it's tempting to see "Content Marketing" as the hot newcomer that can satisfy your business needs. And maybe it is. But if long-term value is important to you, then a one-night stand with the first attractive content to come along isn't the answer.

Instead of temptation, you need commitment – a process – and time.

Here's your process. (Gosh, that was easy!)

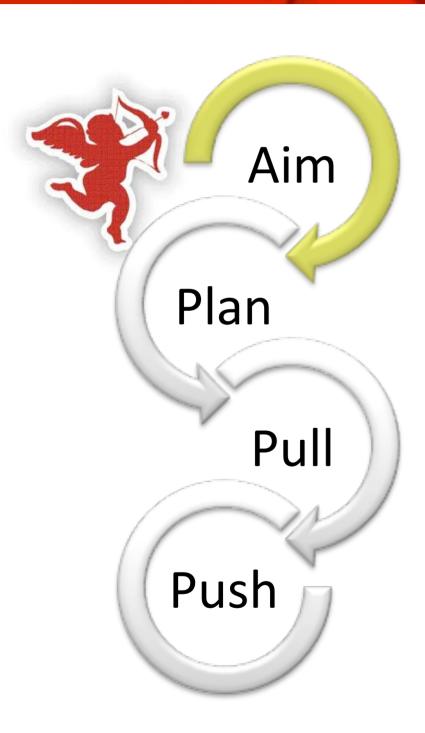


At the highest level, a successful Content Marketing process has four core elements:

- 1. Aim first to determine your objectives.
- 2. **Plan** your approach by profiling prospect needs, and crafting content that will help meet those needs.
- 3. **Pull** prospects to a lead form by placing your offers to help where prospects can find them.
- 4. **Push** more useful content out to known prospects, guiding their buyer journey.

Of course, each step of this process has a few steps of its own. But really, this is what it takes to find love with Content Marketing!

1. Aim: Start with the end in mind.



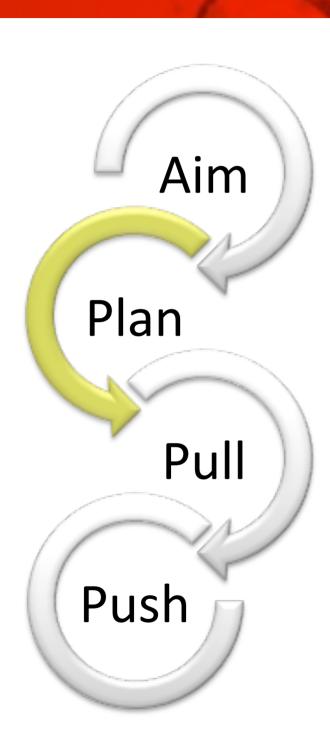
If you were to join a dating service, you'd start by defining what you're after (friendship? romance? marriage?). Think of Content Marketing in the same way. What's your Aim (or goal):

Qualified leads? Webinar registrations? Sign-ups or subscriptions? Website traffic? Bigger email list? Social shares or word of mouth?

Your goal helps you focus your plan and your content strategy. It also helps you measure your results so you can see if you've been successful.

If you have lots of different goals, create separate Content Marketing plans for each so you can perfect your Aim.

2. Plan: Who, What, Where, Why?



Next, your Plan guides your search for love. Skip this step, and you'll end up on some really bad blind dates.

In today's buyer-centric Internet-enabled world, your prospect knows almost everything about your business before you ever meet. So it's a pretty good idea to learn about him or her, too.

With Content Marketing, you'll be engaging prospects in conversation, and walking hand-in-hand with them along their journey to a course purchase or other key conversion.

You'd better know who you're talking to, and why they're listening.

Let's look closer at what that takes: Who, What, Where, Why?

"Who are you?"

The first part of your prospect dating plan is to define the high-level *identity* of your ideal prospect.

If your course is meant for business people, who do your prospects work for? What types of companies employ them? This includes:

Company revenues, number of employees, geographic location(s), industry segments, for-profit or non-profit

If your course is meant for consumers, are they moms, dads, kids, retired people? Men or women or both?



"What do you do?

The second part of your Plan is to identify each potential buyer "persona."

If you market to other businesses, then a persona is a profile of an individual whose *job success* is impacted by your course offering. Define his or her functional role and needs in a work setting.

If you market to consumers, then a persona is a composite profile of an individual whose *personal or family life* is impacted by your course offering. Define his or her individual personality, attitude, behavior and lifestyle.

Most importantly, what are the *challenges* each persona faces as she goes about her work or daily life? If you can help her with those, you'll have a better chance of getting her attention.





"Where do you hang out?

"Maybe I'll see you there sometime."

The third part of your Plan is to find where your prospects spend time online. That's where you're going to meet them – with your content.

It's not stalking. Okay, so maybe it is a little bit. But the point of content marketing is to engage prospects in a conversation, so you'll want to know where to take your opening line:

Industry and trade associations? LinkedIn groups and discussion forums? Twitter follows? Favorite bloggers? Facebook pages? Pinterest boards?

These are the right places to look for love.



"Why are you looking around?"

Remember those work or personal challenges you identified for each persona? This fourth step is where you Plan how to address them head on.

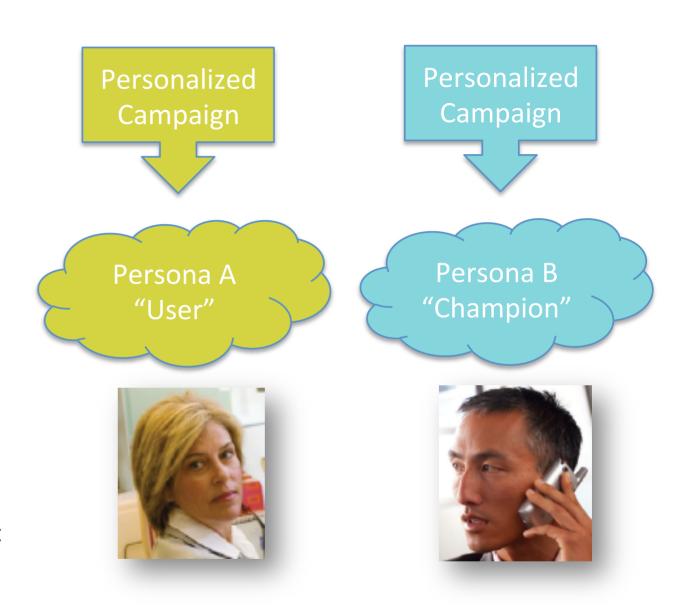
What messages will get attention? How can you show challenges in a new light? How have others handled similar issues? What general solutions are out there?

As you plan this conversation, remember it's not about you. It's about your prospect.

Each piece of content you plan should be aimed at one persona, offering information that is highly relevant to his or her work or personal issues.

Helpfulness is attractive. Selling isn't.

And you do want to be attractive, don't you?

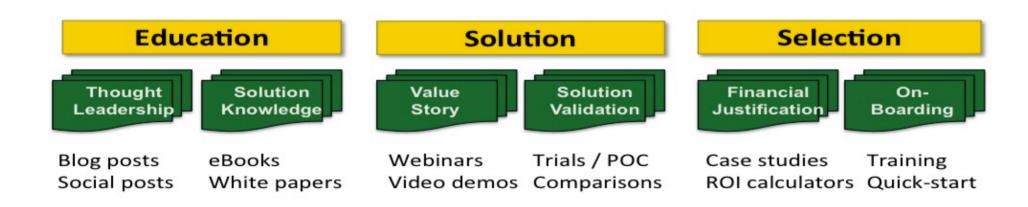


Your content map

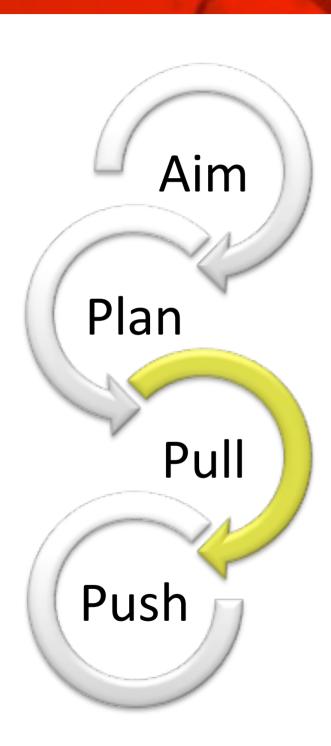
The result of your Plan will be a Content Map.

The Content Map will match persona-specific messages to the three main stages of the Buyer Journey.

It might look something like this:



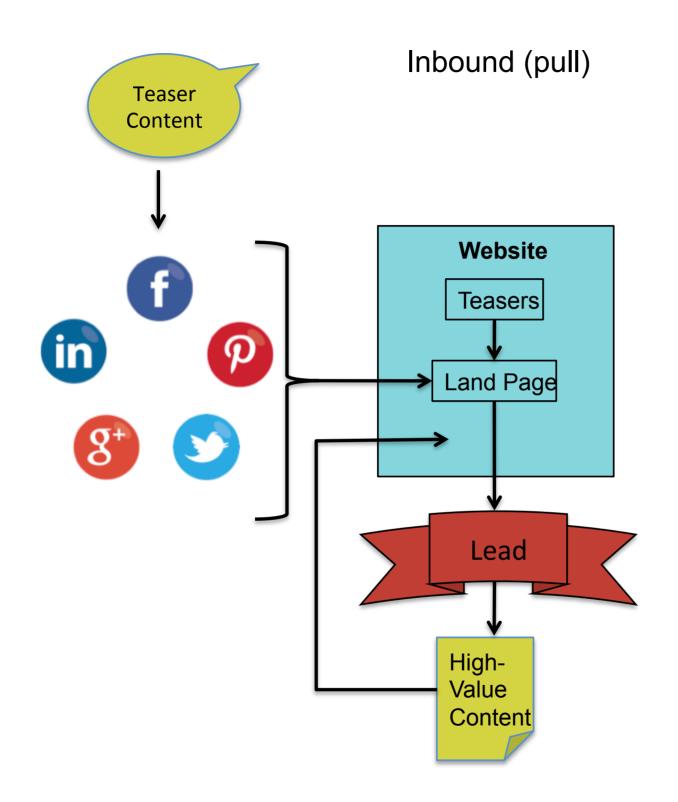
3. Pull: Use your best opening lines.



With your Content Map firmly in hand, you can begin to invite prospects into a conversation with you. Place your best opening lines (offers to help) online where each persona spends their time.

You might lead with your most basic (but helpful!) ebook, available free just by entering an email address.

This is Pull marketing. The idea is to use an offer for valuable information to "pull" prospects to a landing page on your website.



Pull marketing: Content that drives leads

Place your offers to help (teaser content) online using social media, paid ads, your website and other techniques.

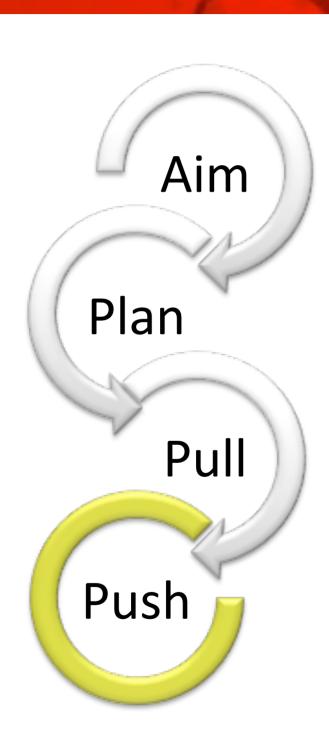
Prospects link to a landing page on your website to learn more. They fill out a short form to download your helpful content.

You've got a lead.

Your prospect has something of value from you.

This could be the start of a beautiful relationship.

4. Push: Get a little pushy



Now that you've had a great first date, you'll want to develop the friendship and see where it takes you.

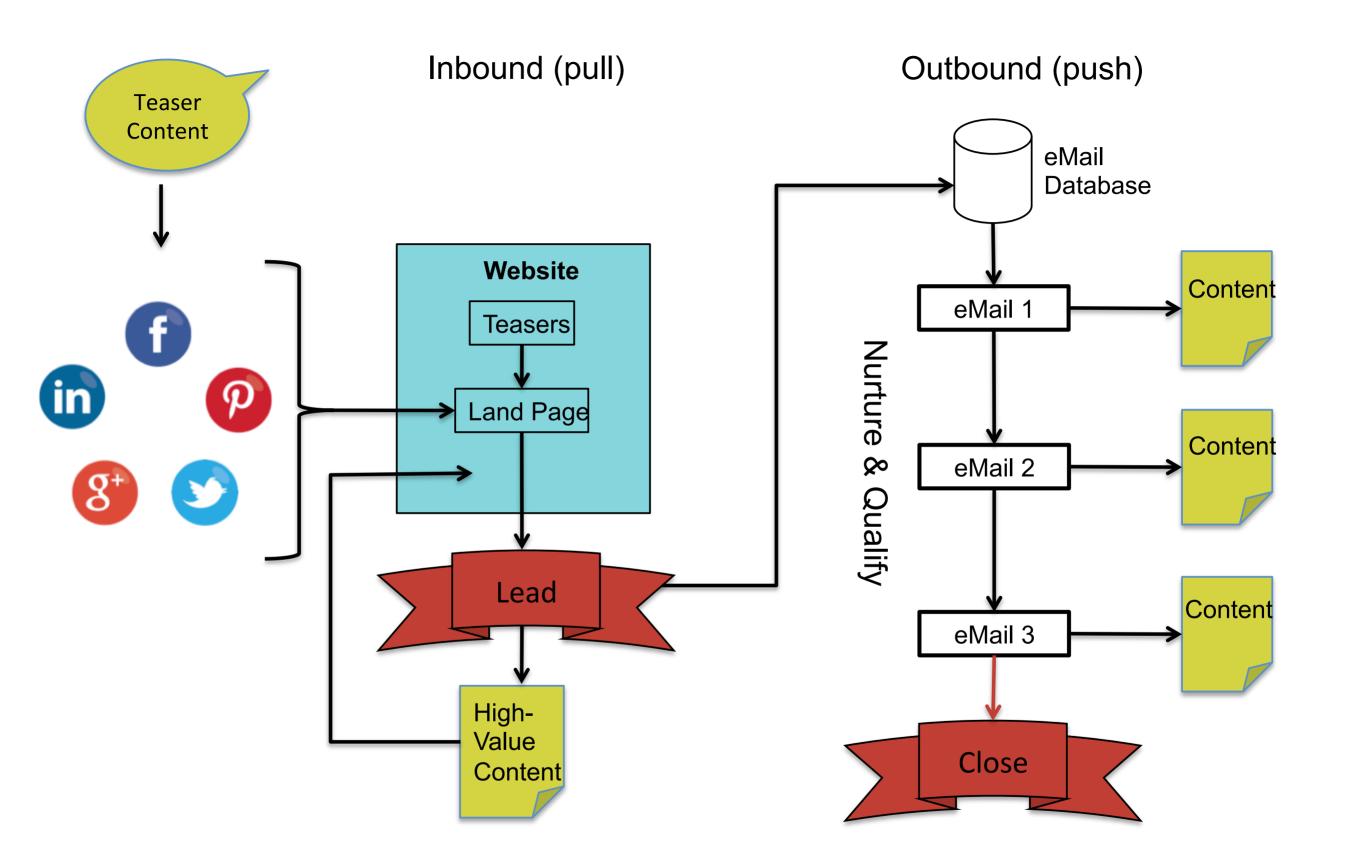
To do this, use "push" marketing - primarily email and direct mail.

The idea is to deliver the right content from your Content Map at the right time for each known prospect.

Although it's tempting, don't rush things here. Of course you want marriage (a sale) and children (more sales). But the term "push" in this step refers to your content delivery methods, not your attitude.

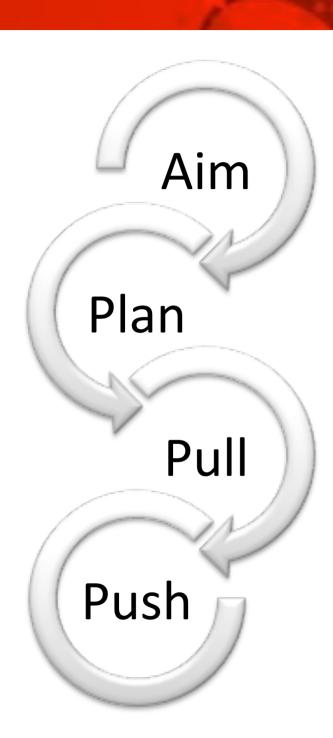
Remain helpful, educational and supportive as you serve up each valuable content element, and your prospect's love for your business will grow naturally and deeply.

Here's what the Push-Pull process looks like together:



Push: Get a little pushy

Wrapping it up



Content marketing can be an effective way to build relationships with prospects and customers for your online course business.

But a one-night stand isn't going to bring satisfaction.

It takes commitment, a process, and time.

Follow the four steps of Aim - Plan - Pull - Push and you'll be more likely to succeed.

This approach works in love. And it works in content marketing, too.

Go get 'em, Romeo.



Love is in the air.

Love is all around you.



eTeachrr.com

Success tools for teacher-entrepreneurs

eTeachrr is an online service run by me, Tom Kuder, to help teacher-entrepreneurs successfully market online courses.

eTeachrr provides a practical guide to the strategies, tactics, tools and techniques needed to start and grow your online course business.

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