Making content strategy stick

How to operationalize and socialize your work

Hilary Marsh

Seattle Content Strategy Meetup, September 2020

Photo by Kelly Sikkema on Unsplash

Three elements

1. Build a strong foundation
2. Foster champions and allies
3. Keep content practices top of mind

1. Build from the foundation

Photo by Ashim D Silva on Unsplash

You've done the work

Photo by Choi Ben on Unsplash

Content strategy roadmap

1. Understand the organization and project business goals (stakeholder interviews, document review)
2. Understand the dynamics and goals of top-priority audiences (audience survey, personas and audience journey mapping)
3. Audit and assess existing website content
4. Analyze content from comparative/competitive organizations
5. Develop guidelines for content creation and publishing
6. Identify roles, lifecycles, workflow, and governance models
7. Facilitate the creation of a single, organization-wide taxonomy
8. Plan for content transformation and migration
9. Create a framework for content planning and marketing/promotions

However.....

Content strategy documents are aspirational

- **They articulate what *WILL* be**
- **Just because you've written them down....**
  - Not everyone knows about them
  - Not everyone remembers them
  - Not everyone uses them

Putting content strategy into action is about more than documents

Extending the roadmap

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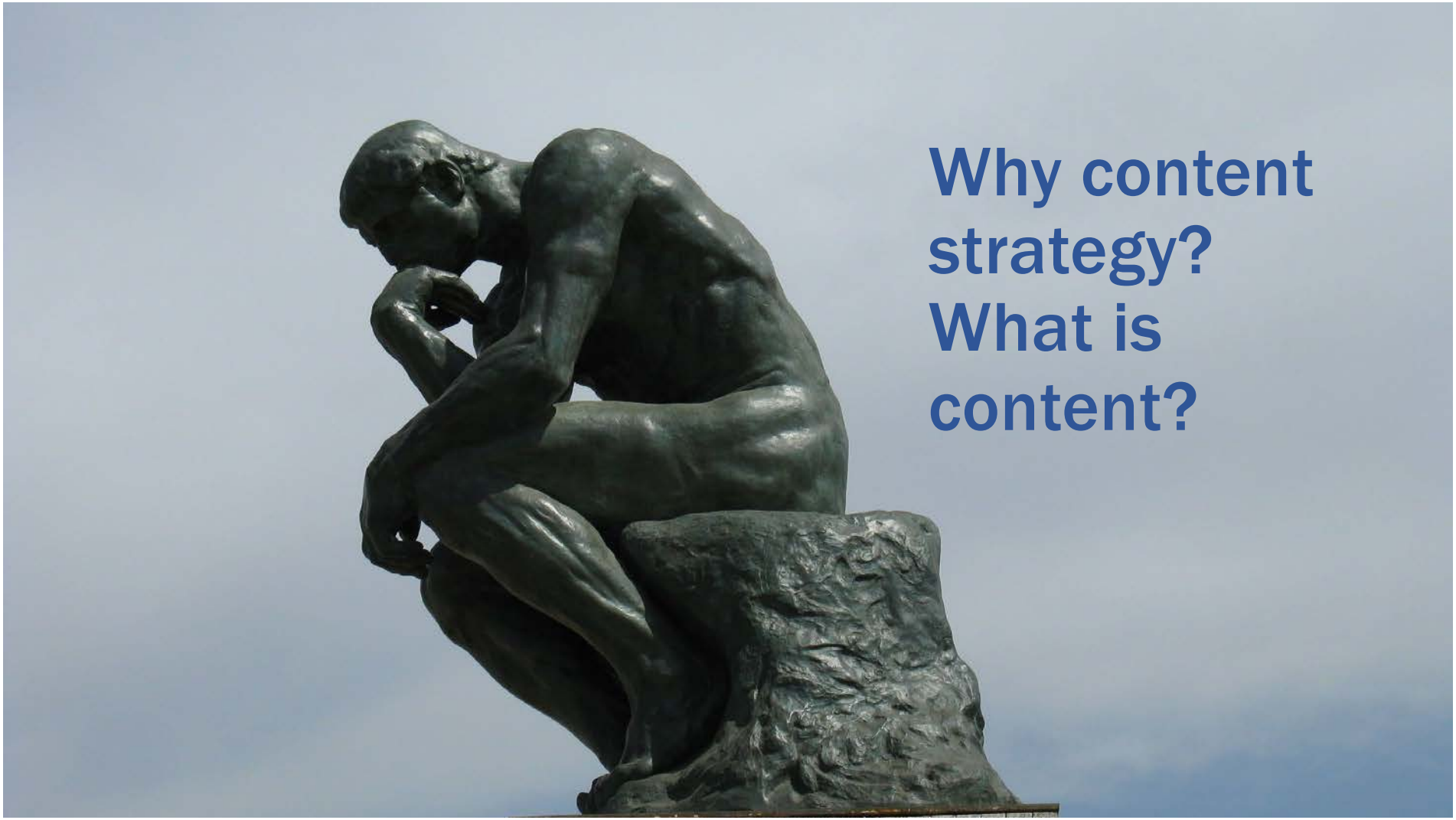
2. Understand the dynamics and goals of top-priority audiences (audience survey, personas and audience journey mapping)
3. Audit and assess existing website content
4. Analyze content from comparative/competitive organizations
5. Develop guidelines for content creation and publishing
6. Identify roles, lifecycles, workflow, and governance models
7. Facilitate the creation of a single, organization-wide taxonomy
8. Plan for content transformation and migration
9. Create a framework for content planning and marketing/promotions
10. Determine staffing needs
11. Plan for training and communications

2. Fostering champions & allies


Why content strategy? What is content?

Products

Services

Programs

Research

Events

Advocacy

Information

Tools

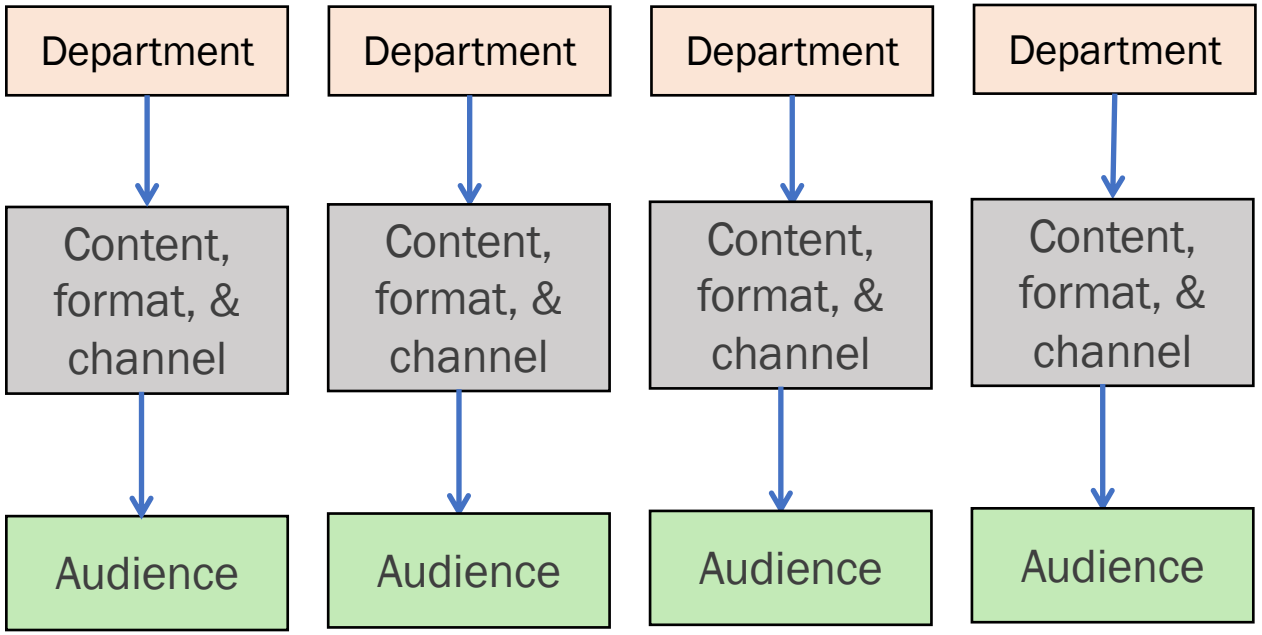
Content is
the way our work
is manifested in the world

My Products
My Services
My Programs
My Research
My Events
My Advocacy
My Information
My Tools

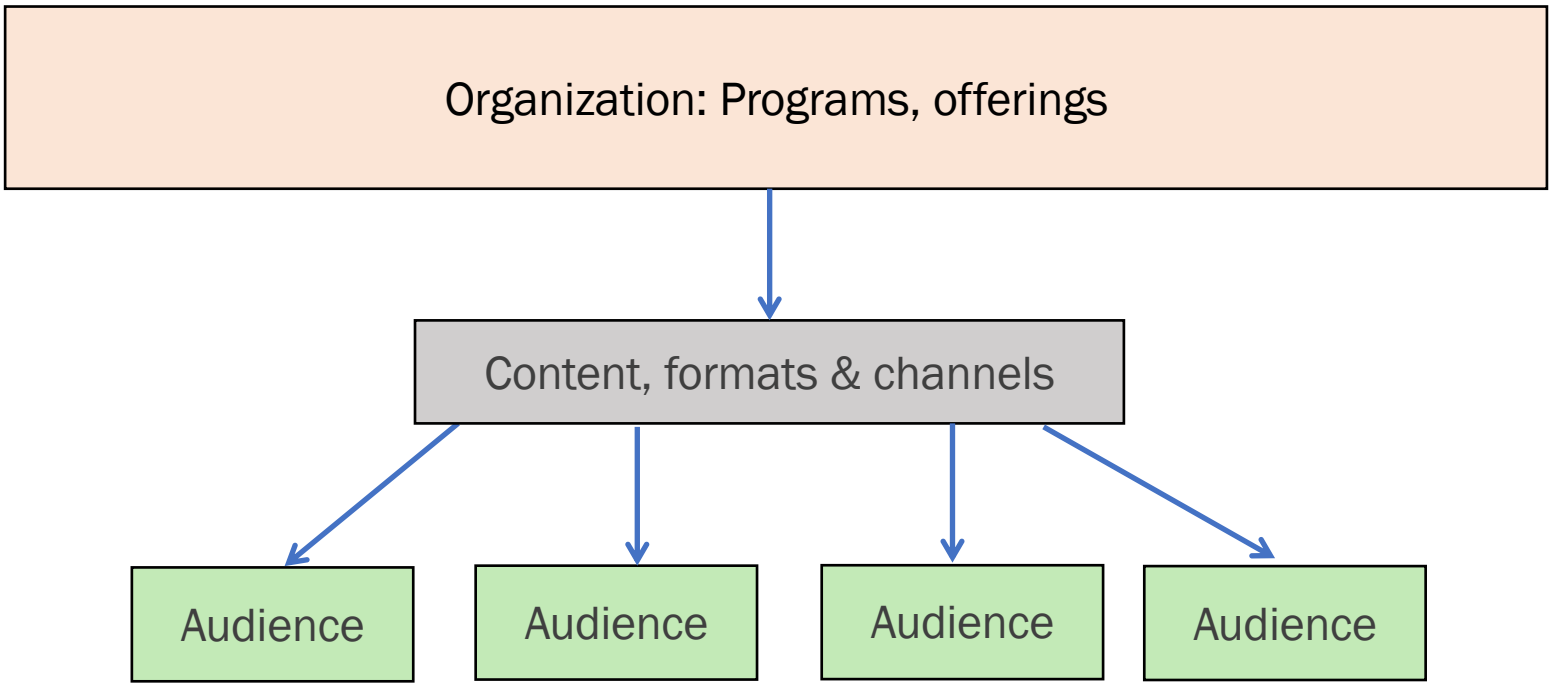
https://www.flickr.com/photos/lentini/14112670288/

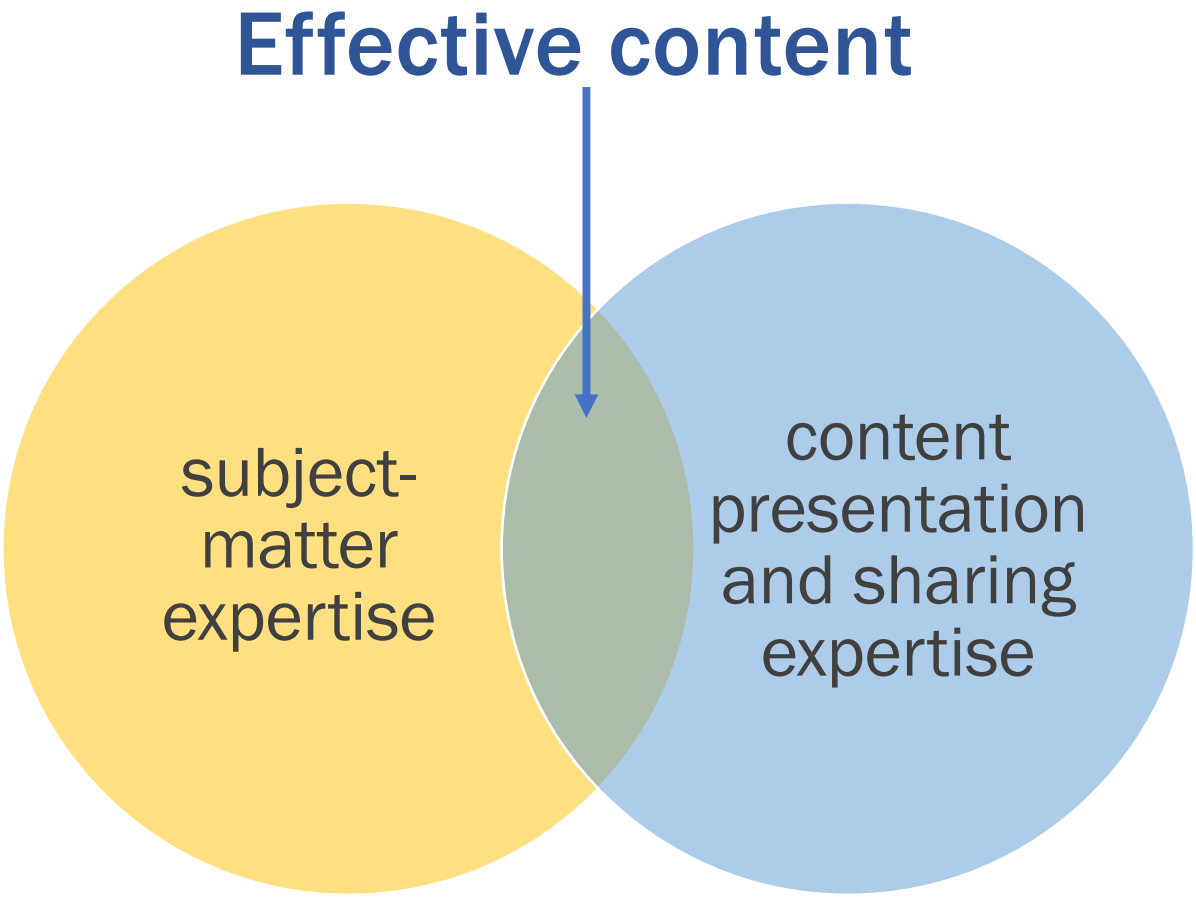
It’s about the people

Old thinking



New thinking




Effective content
subject-matter expertise
content presentation and sharing expertise

Success before buy-in

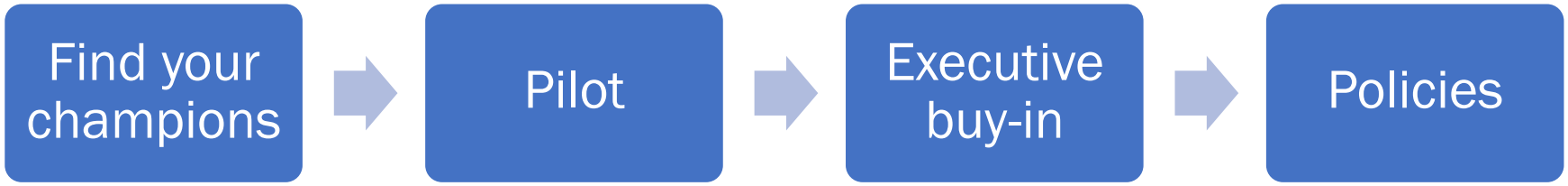


Photo by Annie Spratt on Unsplash

Time for learning
Photo by Louis Reed on Unsplash

Then, executive buy-in

- “We have a problem”
- “I know how to fix it”
- “I know it will work”
- “I’d like your approval to move forward”

It’s OUR content

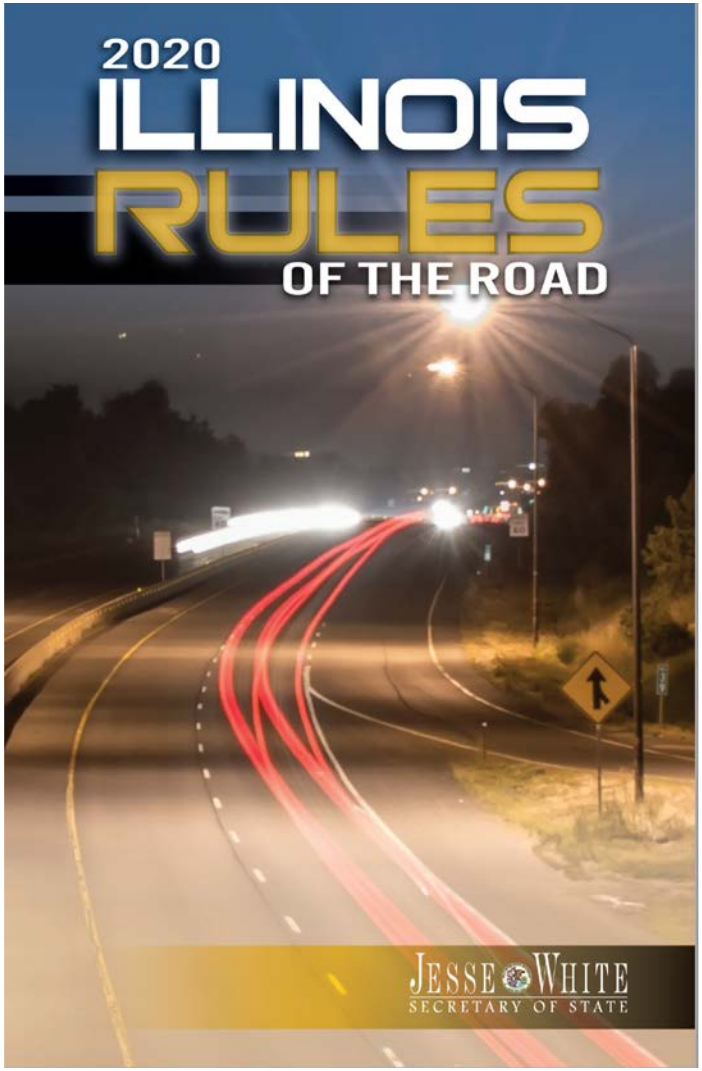
Photo by Helena Lopes on Unsplash

Invite SMEs into the process

- “With you, not to you”
- Listen to their concerns, understand their goals
- Reinforce what they’re doing well now—and why it’s good
- Extend their good work with education
- Help them see/empathize with the audience
- Help see that collaboration and content reuse is a win-win

3. Keep content practices alive

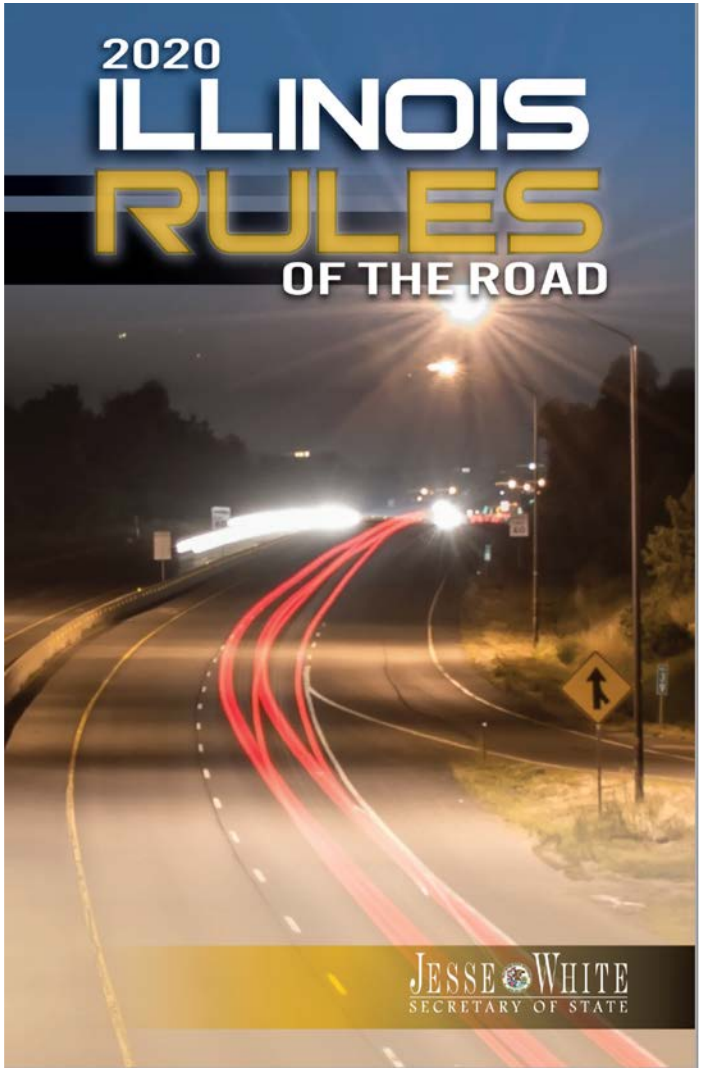
or, how to help good content practices go viral



Graduated Driver Licensing Program 18
Parental Responsibility 19
Related Laws 19

Chapter 4: Traffic Laws 21
Proper Action When Stopped by Law Enforcement 21
Distracted Driving 22
Safety Belt Law 23
Child Passenger Protection Act 23
Speed Limits 24
Construction Zones, Emergency Vehicles, School Zones and Funeral Processions 25
Right of Way 26
Passing 27
Lane Usage 29
Signaling 30
Turning 30
Rotaries and Roundabouts 32
Special Stops 32
Parking 34
Prohibited Stopping, Standing or Parking 35
Additional Laws 36

This book is 112 pages long!



- Chapter 1: Illinois Driver's License
- Chapter 2: Driver's License Exams
- Chapter 3: Drivers Under Age 21
- Chapter 4: Traffic Laws
- Chapter 5: Sharing the Road
- Chapter 6: Driving Under the Influence (DUI)
- Chapter 7: Traffic Violations/Crashes
- Chapter 8: Driver's License Revocation, Suspension, Denial and Cancellation
- Chapter 9: Roadway Signs
- Chapter 10: Traffic Signals and Pavement Markings
- Chapter 11: Safe Driving Tips
- Chapter 12: Equipment for Safe Driving
- Chapter 13: Owning a Vehicle

https://www.flickr.com/photos/lovestruck94/2607744709/

Fortunately, we don’t just hand out keys to a car along with this book

DO NOT
ENTER
ONE
WAY
SCHOOL
SPEED
LIMIT
25
ON SCHOOL DAYS
WHEN CHILDREN
ARE PRESENT
ONE
WAY
ROUTE
US
66
STOP
RAIL
ROAD
CROSSING
EAST
INTERSTATE
294
SPEED
LIMIT
55
YIELD
ONE WAY
ONE WAY

LOOK RIGHT
LOOK LEFT
LOOK RIGHT

STOP
ZONE

Nebraska Safety Council
STUDENT DRIVER

Content governance topics

1. Content lifecycle
2. Team structure and staffing
3. Oversight
4. Review processes
5. Authority
6. Success metrics
7. Content access levels
8. Taxonomy and Best Bets governance
9. Implementation plan

Content
strategy
is an HR issue
#WOCinTech Chat

Content work needs to be part of people's jobs

Communications and training

- Provide regular reminders and updates
- Share successes
- Establish communities of practice (online + in person)
- Include content training in employee on-boarding
- Make content training part of employees' professional development program

Make it easy to succeed

Make it ~~impossible~~ hard to do it wrong

- Create content request forms with required information about audience, measurable goals, and expiration dates
- CMS: headline length limits, automatic expiration dates
- Build in a review process that can't be skipped
- Include the work in people's job descriptions and what they are measured on

Use motivation science

1. Social incentives to change (peer pressure)
2. Immediate rewards (form habits)
3. Progress monitoring (highlight progress)

Social incentives

CITY OF PALO ALTO UTILITIES
Inspired by a brighter tomorrow.

Home Energy Report
Report period: 09/10/10 - 11/09/10

We are pleased to provide this personalized report to you as part of an energy saving program.

The purpose of this report is to:
- **Provide information**
- **Track your progress**
- **Share energy efficiency tips**

[redacted]SCH 5-DIGIT 94301

This information and more available at **www.CityofPaloAlto.org/HomeEnergyReports**

Last 2 Months Neighbor Comparison | You used **16% MORE** energy than your neighbors.

Efficient Neighbors 1,255*
All Neighbors 1,896
YOU 2,195

How you're doing:
You used more than average
Turn over for ways to save →

* This energy index combines electricity (kWh) and natural gas (therms) into a single measurement.

Who are your Neighbors?

All Neighbors
Approximately 100 occupied, nearby homes that are similar in size to yours (avg 1,864 sq ft) and have both electricity and natural gas service

Efficient Neighbors
The most efficient 20 percent from the "All Neighbors" group

Last 12 Months Neighbor Comparison

You used **24% MORE** energy than your neighbors.
This costs you about **$556 EXTRA** per year.

Electricity | 22% more electricity than your neighbors

Natural Gas | 26% more natural gas than your neighbors

Turn over for savings →

The first group of ComEd customers to get the reports, in 2009, reduced their electricity use by 2 percent.

https://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/ct-xpm-2014-03-03-ct-energy-comparisons-brotman-talk-0303-20140303-story.html

Real-time feedback

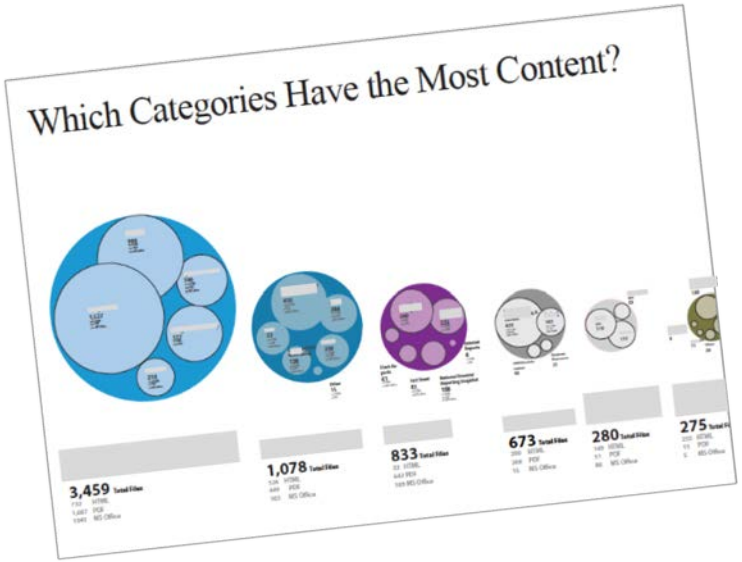
By Dwernertl at the English Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=42415554

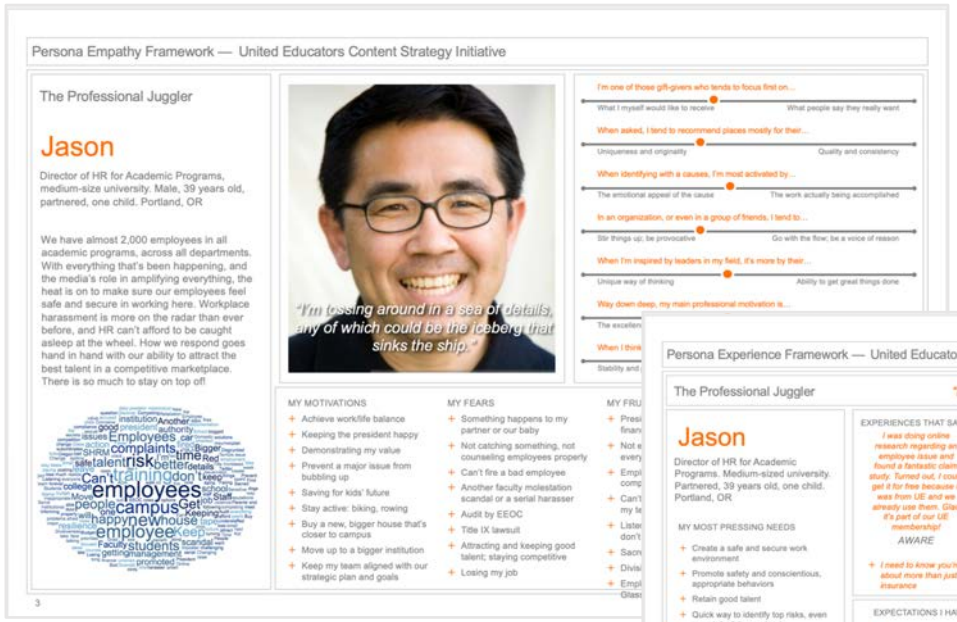
Reward successes

Photo by Robert Anasch on Unsplash

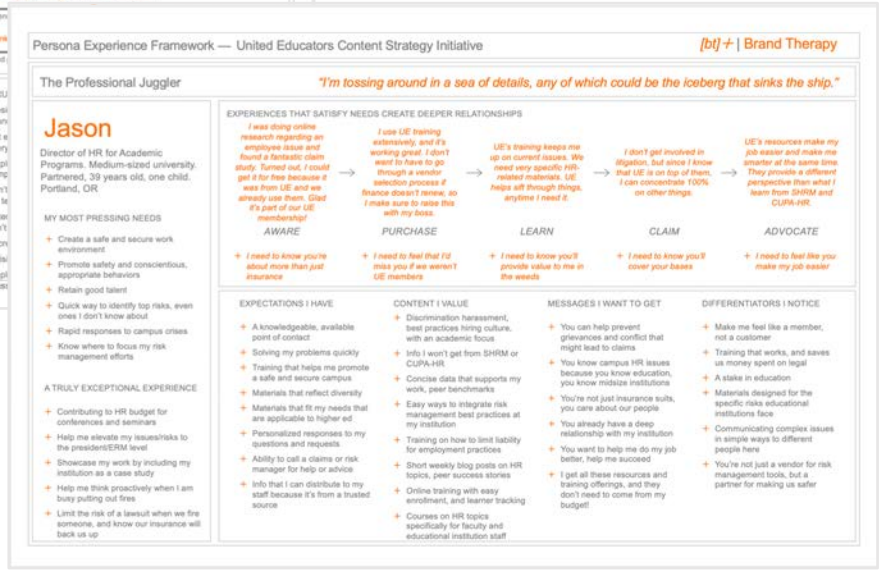
Bring the artifacts of your work to life

- Involve stakeholders in the solution
- Choose artifacts that brought the most insights





Experience



Empathy

THE DREAM PARTNER

Rachel Sue

SENIOR BROKER AT A SMALL BROKERAGE | CHAPEL HILL, NC

- Works with education and non-education clients
- **Still learning about education liability coverage**; looks for information to be written **"in plain English"**
- Needs **content segmented by client type**
- Her philosophy in working with UE is, **"Help me look good to my client** and I will show UE in a positive light"

38 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, TWO KIDS

My success is all about my relationships and being a trusted advisor who can anticipate needs.

THE SEASONED CONTENDER

Christine

VP, RISK MANAGEMENT AT A LARGE UNIVERSITY | ALBANY, NY

- **Well versed** in education liability insurance and risk management
- Looks for **"what's new"** or **emerging** in a short format with the bottom line up front
- Looks for **resources on nuanced topics**, not just general information
- Looks for **clearly written, shareable materials** that support risk management initiatives

55 YEARS OLD, DIVORCED, THREE KIDS

I've discovered that being a successful senior exec is knowing how to marshal your resources.

THE MAN ON A MISSION

André

BUSINESS OFFICER AT A PRIVATE K-12 SCHOOL | BOSTON, MA

- Experienced in corporate finance, but relatively **new to education**
- Looks for content that **explains conte** and defines education-specific terms
- Looks for **digestible resources on general education risk management topics** first (to lay groundwork for advancing to more nuanced topics)
- Looks for resources that help **show th value of proactive risk management efforts**

42 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, TWO KI

Education is important. I'm doing my part to make sure we serve that ideal.

THE PROFESSIONAL JUGGLER

Jason

HR DIRECTOR AT A MEDIUM-SIZE UNIVERSITY | PORTLAND, OR

- Experienced in HR for education, but **still learning about risk management**
- **Engages with staff at all levels** to address strategic risks
- Looks for resources that:
  - Help him **start conversations** about risk management with partners on campus
  - Communicate **complex issues simply** and with graphics

39 YEARS OLD, PARTNERED, ONE CHILD

I'm tossed around in a sea of details, any of which could be the iceberg that sinks the ship.

THE PROFESSIONAL JUGGLER

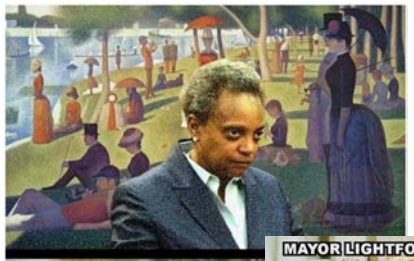
United Educators

"I'm tossing around in a sea of details, any of which could be the iceberg that sinks the ship."

Jason

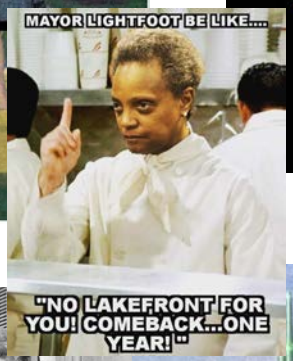
Make it fun

- Laminated card-size versions of your personas
- Scavenger hunts to find content ROT
- Jargon bingo
- Offer swag prizes – pens, stickers, etc. ←sneaky reinforcement
- Memes



MAY THE FOURTH BE WITH YOU

The HELL You are going out for your B-Day!


MAYOR LIGHTFOOT BE LIKE....
"NO LAKEFRONT FOR YOU! COMEBACK...ONE YEAR! "

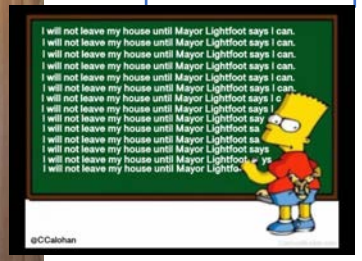
OK Google. Can we go out yet?
Nope.

They're outside without masks! Lori's gonna get them!
@CCalohan

The hell you are!
We're off to see the Wizard!

WHERE IS YOUR MASK, SO

WHEN YOU TRYNA SNEAK OUT YOUR APARTMENT
EXIT
CAUSE THE SUN IS "SHINING" OUTSIDE


I will not leave my house until Mayor Lightfoot says I can.
@CCalohan

CINCO DE BYE-O

People
can be
proud
of their
content
successes
DAM
PROUD
DAM
PROUD
DAY

Content strategy becomes part of how things work

https://www.flickr.com/photos/crschmidt/2955871565

Resources I mentioned

- **How to sell content strategy to management:** http://bit.ly/selling-cs-to-mgmt
- **How does your CEO know your content strategy is successful:** http://bit.ly/ceo-cs-success
- **Content strategy roadmap:** bit.ly/cs-roadmap2020
- **Content governance topics:** bit.ly/content-governance
- **How to motivate yourself to change your behavior: Tali Sharot, TEDxCambridge:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xp0O2vi8DX4
- **Content maturity assessment tool:** bit.ly/contentstrategy-maturity-assessment
- **Content strategy study:** bit.ly/assn-content-strategy-report
- **Content staffing:** https://bit.ly/content-staffing

Thanks, and please stay in touch!

- **Contact me via email:** hilary@contentcompany.biz
- **Follow me on Twitter:** @hilarymarsh
- **Connect on LinkedIn:** https://linkedin.com/in/hilarymarsh
- **Subscribe to my newsletter:** https://contentcompany.biz/newsletter/
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