

SUMMARY

THE ONE HOUR CONTENT PLAN

MEERA KOTHAND



Summary of “The One Hour Content Plan” by Meera Kothand

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Learn the Solopreneur’s guide to a year’s worth of blog post ideas in just 60 minutes and learn to create content that sells and hooks.

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Introduction

Meera is making a big, bold promise. She's promised to give you a year's worth of blog post ideas in just a single hour. However, before you go all in, you need to know exactly how to formulate your plan. You've heard the quote, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime," right? Well, Meera could easily give you a fill-in-the-blank template to help you generate blog post ideas, but how helpful would that be? Sure, you might get a few ideas, but that might just feed you for a day when you need to be fed for a lifetime. Therefore, Meera is going to give you the strategies you need to come up with content ideas for life. You may think that you already generate great content, that's great! But it's time to create a new content strategy if you find yourself in one of the following categories:

1. You never know what to write.
2. You chase after content trends.
3. Your content doesn't have a strong link to the products or services you offer.

Of course, your content doesn't always have to scream at your readers to buy your products. Instead, your content can simply inspire and entertain your readers. No matter your goals, your content should be inching your reader forward in the direction of your end goal; otherwise, you are missing something entirely. That's why "The One-Hour Content Plan is about treating the underlying problem and arming you with a powerful content strategy for your blog." But what is a content strategy? Chief content writer at Copyblogger, Demian Farnworth, defined it as "a plan for building an audience by publishing, maintaining, and spreading frequent and consistent content that educates, entertains, or inspires to turn strangers into fans and fans into customers." Once you're done reading, you'll never view content the same way again. So if you're ready to create content that's unique to you and your blog, buckle up and keep reading!

Define Your Niche, Audience, Purpose, and Goals

To begin earning a living as a blogger, the first step is creating an audience. How are you going to reach them? Well, the first step is to define the niche that your blog and business serves. A niche should be a solution to a problem and should aim to teach your readers how to become better versions of themselves. There are many areas of interest that people are searching to improve in their lives every day, including personal development, fitness, food, budgeting, fashion, lifestyle, organization, home decor, and travel. However, simply having a niche isn't enough.

You can further define your niche in terms of defining who you serve and what topic. In other words, this is where your value proposition or blog purpose comes in. This will form the basis of every single piece of content you create. To come up with an all-encompassing purpose or value proposition for your blog, you'll need to begin by answering these two questions: 1) What group do you want to help? 2) In what area do you want to help them? Or in what area do they struggle that you believe you can help them?

Let's say your goal is to help women with healthy meal planning. Now, you have two big groups to work with: women and healthy meal planning. Now it's time to break these groups down even further. Instead of helping just women, you're helping homeschooling moms. You're not just helping them plan meals, but paleo meals on a budget. Once you break it down this way, you can examine your content from very specific angles. Now let's dig a little deeper.

Next, ask yourself what *changes* your blog creates for your readers. This is called the Driver of Change (DoC) Model which forces you to view your blog as a catalyst for specific change. Content should transform your readers and should progress both you and your audience toward your respective goals. To begin a DoC model, you'll need to focus on the following three areas:

What are your readers going through? How do your readers feel? And what thoughts run through their minds?

Here's how the DoC model looks for Meera's content. Before reading her books, readers are struggling to identify blogging goals. They probably jump from one Facebook group to another searching for answers and don't know where to focus their time and efforts. They feel lost, confused, and overwhelmed. Her readers are thinking that their blogs will never take off because they don't know anything about tech or design. Even worse, they don't even know what their blogging goals are or how to get started with emails.

After reading, readers will have a clearly defined purpose, know exactly what to focus on, and won't feel the pressure to be everywhere. They will feel in control and like they are making progress every single day. They will begin thinking that they can do it. They can meet their goals by taking one step at a time and don't need to be on all social media platforms. See how that works? So now that you know how to help your readers, it's time to think about the content you need to produce to help your reader get to that endpoint.

To do this, think of your content in terms of buckets. You can have up to seven content buckets, and each will support your blog's overall message. For example, if your blog's purpose is to help 30-40 somethings get out of debt, you might have blog buckets like budgeting, intentional living, saving, and investing.

Identify your Ideal Audience

So now that you've defined your purpose and figured out how to bring value to your readers, it's time to identify your ideal reader. So how do you do this? Begin by imagining your ideal reader as your imaginary friend. In an article for Copyblogger, Henneke Duistermaat writes: "Your ideal reader should become like an imaginary friend. You should know your ideal reader so well that you can start a conversation with her at any time. You know when she shakes her head because you say something she doesn't agree with. You know what makes her smile or laugh. You know the questions she asks. You know how to charm and flatter her."

Once you define who your ideal reader is, you'll be able to talk to your audience at the right level, not waste your effort writing for people who will never enjoy your content, and not waste time thinking about what content to create because you'll know exactly what your audience needs. This isn't just knowing the demographics of your audience, but also knowing the psychographics and motivational factors. The best way to learn all this information is through "spying" on your audience without paying for expensive research. Here's how to spy. Trust me, it's much more legitimate than it sounds!

Begin by searching Facebook groups to find reader motivations. Join Facebook groups where your ideal readers are likely to hang out. Once you have access, you can "search the group" and type in some keywords followed by your topic. Some keywords can be, "need help," "desperate for," "newbie," "have no clue," "advice about," and "question about." These keywords allow you to zone in on your target audience's pain points without spending hours searching through feeds.

Next, you can look outwards. Look at the comment section of other blogs in your niche. You can use tools like Buzzsumo to find content that is popular or viral in your space. What are people saying? What emotions are being triggered? What needs to be fulfilled? In Meera's case, her audience is full

of solopreneurs - bloggers, freelancers, one-person shop owners, etc. who fear they will never grow an audience or be able to create a passive income. They feared that people wouldn't take them seriously or that they wouldn't be able to find their unique voice.

Now that you have a list of fears and frustrations, you can craft headlines and blog post openers that hook readers and tap into their deepest thoughts. For example, Meera once used the headline, "What to send your email list: The beginner's guide for the clueless blogger" to grab the attention of the many bloggers who struggle with creating content for their email list. Finally, you'll want to write a detailed description of who you are writing for. For example, "Emily is a stay-at-home mother of two children under the age of six. She wants to earn some income on the side to help with household expenses. Lately, she has been toying with the idea of starting a blog and freelancing, but she's not sure if she has the time for it, especially with the kids." Isn't writing for Emily much easier than writing for an invisible audience? By creating a detailed description of your target reader, you can better tailor your content to his or her needs.

The "Expert" and "Goal" Methods for Creating Content

So now that you have the ideal target audience in mind, it's time to build content! How can you create content that is new and exciting for your blog? The first method is called the "Expert" method because you're going to create content in which the reader will become "well versed" or "proficient" in a specific category. Of course, a reader will never become the master of a particular category through a single blog post, this is where your sub-categories will come in handy.

Remember the bucket content that we mentioned earlier? We created buckets by breaking down categories into sub-categories. For example, Meera focuses on email marketing as a core category of her blog. To create sub-categories, she would then ask herself, "What does the reader need to know to become proficient in email marketing?" She would then list out her sub-categories: email list growth, nurturing subscribers, running re-engagement campaigns, how to create lead magnets, how to create landing pages, tools for list growth, and how to optimize conversions.

From there, Meera would then break each sub-category into topics or blog posts. So let's say your sub-category is "How to write a pitch," you could break this down even further by creating blog post topics like, "20 essential elements that make a killer pitch," "How to go from pitch to contract in 5 simple steps," "Cold vs. Warm Pitches. Which is better?" and lastly, "20 mistakes you make when you pitch a client." See what just happened? You created four blog posts in a matter of seconds! This system can help give you an endless list of blog post ideas to work with even when you have no product or services to offer.

Once you have content, it's time to create some goals because "Goal and Content is a recipe for success." This is where you'll determine your goals for the quarter. Perhaps your goal for the first quarter is to increase your email list to 500 subscribers. Therefore, your content based on this goal

might include making additional opt-in incentives and writing guest posts on four blogs by the end of the quarter. Your next goal for the first quarter might be to make your first \$200-\$500. Therefore, your content based on this goal will be to write two detailed tutorials on your chosen affiliate product and make a bonus ebook for subscribers who purchase through your affiliate link.

When you create content that is tied to your goals, each piece of content will serve its purpose and you'll know exactly how it's going to help you reach your goals. Of course, the goals you make will depend on what stage you're at with your blog and business. But if you are a "newbie" and have no products or services yet, then the "Expert" and "Goal" methods will work the best for you.

Use the Offer Method to Create Content

Before we go any deeper, it's important to understand that people who experience your content will fall into one of five categories. Once you understand this, you'll find it's much easier to create content around your products and services. Now here's where the "Offer" method comes in. This method is a technique for designing content around the five types of categories. Each category will require you to ask yourself what type of content will take your reader to the next step.

The first category? Those who have no idea about the problem that your product or service solves or why the problem even needs to be solved. The type of content for this category will include bringing attention to the problem. Identify the pain that your readers are going through and highlight the difficulties they will likely run into. Some examples for this category include: "10 things you didn't know about working from home," "Why you should stop sending blog post notifications," "Why your resume sucks and how to fix it," "7 email marketing sins and how to rectify them," and lastly, "12 mistakes mom bloggers make with their media kits."

Next, we arrive at category two. In this category, readers are becoming aware of the problem that your product or service solves but they still have many questions and are turning to you to answer them. The type of content for this category will be posts that are going to maintain people's interest. For example, if your category one post tells them about the seven mistakes they are making in their niche, then the category two post will show them how to avoid those mistakes. You might have posts like, "9 ridiculously simple shortcuts to writing a book," or "The lazy blogger's guide to writing long-form content."

At category three, readers now trust and love your content and they want your product or service but they're not quite ready to buy. These will be the people who email you with, "Hi Meera! Your course looks so fabulous but, for me, I think it's much too soon... one of these days I'll be ready to take

another step!” For these readers, you’ll want to create case studies of your students, clients, or even of yourself highlighting the experiences and successes of using your product or service. This content should instill a desire for your product or service. Some examples might include, “The best blog investment I made and why,” or “5 questions you need to ask before signing up for an email marketing service,” and “Why I hate designing blog names.” In each blog post, you’ll need to talk about how you can solve the problems you addressed and link to either your own product and service or an affiliate's.

The next is category four. These readers are ready to buy but they have questions. They may reach out to you about a question they have and only need a little bit of convincing to buy. The content you should create for these people includes the following: detailed FAQ sections on your sales page, free live-chat functions like Drift or Tawk.to on your sales page, responses to emails in a timely fashion, and content that highlights the benefits of your solution to inspire action. Lastly, we are in category five. These are the people who have purchased from you and are ready for more. The key for this group is keeping them in the loop by having them subscribe to your mailing list where you send details of other products and services that you offer.

Find Your Brand Voice in Three Steps

Are you publishing content? Then you have a brand voice. Maybe you don't know what your brand voice is, that's okay! It's simply the tone you use to communicate with your audience. It's the words, tone, and style you use in your writing which can have a powerful impact on how your audience views your brand. If you aren't aware of your brand voice, you risk coming up with a random concoction of voices and tones that are inconsistent and only confuse your audience.

So how do you create your brand voice? Do you just sound like others in your niche? No. In fact, Jason Fried, the founder of Basecamp once said, "When you write like everyone else, you're saying, 'Our products are like everyone else's.' Would you go to a dinner party and repeat what the person to the right of you is saying all night long? Would that be interesting to anybody? Why are so many businesses saying the same things at the biggest party on the planet - the marketplace?" Finding your brand voice is key, so create your unique voice in just three simple steps.

First, take stock. Look at your current content and determine which content pieces have a similar tone across them. Identify which ones are unique to your style and which ones sound like they could be written by someone else in your niche. Second, think about what words describe your brand. Think about your brand as a person, how would you describe him or her? Is your brand funny, warm, girly, or quirky? Is it sophisticated, modern, and serious? Determining these key attributes will help you create a style and voice that reflects them.

Next, you'll want to put these attributes together using the ADDE, or the Attribute Markers-Do's-Don'ts-Expressions, Formula. To do this, you'll need to determine the Do's and Don'ts of the attributes you chose. So for example, perhaps you want your brand to be honest *but not* hurtful. What will this look like? The Do's might be that you are honest about mistakes and failures. You keep promises and take pride in customer service. You

also find it important to reply personally to emails. The Don't's, however, might be that you don't oversell or hard-sell. You don't push what others are losing out on by not purchasing your product. This is how you define your do's and don'ts.

Finally, decide which expressions suit your brand voice best. Do you use slang? Emojis? End your posts and emails with a phrase like *xoxo*? Do you use CAPS or *italics* for emphasis? Do you use acronyms like LOL or LMFAO? Figure out your special expressions to help embellish your writing and further define your brand voice.

Final Summary

Creating content is exciting at first. But as you dive into the world of blogging and freelancing, you quickly find that content creation is overwhelming. Often you'll find yourself staring blankly at the screen wondering what you should write. It's time to change that. When it comes to content creation, all you need is a good strategy to help you generate big ideas that will add value to your readers' lives. Begin by defining your purpose and your value, then identify your target audience. Once you've identified these key items, you'll need to begin creating categories and sub-categories that can help you generate content with your audience in mind. Each post will serve a purpose and you'll no longer have to wonder if you're on your way to reaching your goals. Through the One-Hour Content Plan, you only need 60 minutes to create content that will generate interest, clicks, and sales. So what are you waiting for? It's time to get started.



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