The 5 Steps of an Effective Content Curation Strategy

Curate

A solid content-curation strategy can help you build authority and create tons of traffic (and curation converts like crazy)

To achieve these goals, commit to following the 5 steps we've outlined in this document. They are designed so you have the right roadmap to make content curation one of the best marketing strategies you can employ.

About the Authors

What you're reading here was written by the team at You Brand, Inc. and Curation Traffic.

Over the past few years, we've enabled people just like you to have success with sales and marketing, and to overcome every challenge they face in their business.

Curation Traffic is a Wordpress based content curation platform that makes curating content from around the web push button simple.

We've ensured the tips and advice contained within this report can be executed even without our curation platform.

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Step 1 – Value to Your Market

Decide on Your Value Proposition

If you want success with curation, the first step is to define the core value you want to provide to your target market. This core value is that one thing, idea or feeling that you want to be known for. It's what you want your target market to connect to you or your business.

In a way, this is positioning 101, but when applied to curation it acts as the fuel in a traffic machine that's tough to stop. It's tough to stop because we live in a world in which people feel tremendously overwhelmed with information.

As a curator (and one who has defined a core value), you give clarity and direction to your target market. This is why defining your value proposition is so important — without a clear definition of your core value you'll be sending mixed messages and confusion. Not a good recipe for the time and effort you'll put into curating.

So where do you start? Ask yourself a few simple questions:

- What do you want your target market to connect to you or your company?
- Why should someone pay attention to your curated content?
- What's in it for them? What will they get out of it?
- How will you consistently add clarity to the problems or issues they have?
- Why do you have any business curating content for your chosen market anyway? (This last question isn't meant to put you down; it's a valid question that you should have a good answer for.)

Spend time creating the best and most honest answers to these questions for you or your business.

Here are a few examples from our experience:

> *I want to be the single best source for business-to-business sales tips. People will visit because I'll not only point out the best content and tips but expand on how they are relevant to their business.*
>
> *I want to be the single best source for the new tennis shoes that come out.*
>
> *I want to be the single best source for new Android apps that are released.*

An added note…

Sometimes people skip this step because they feel they have it all figured out.

In our curation efforts, we've learned even this value is constantly changing. It's changing because we use these questions as a gut check on that overall value we provide. If we didn't begin with these questions we wouldn't have started curation in a direction that helps us succeed and make curation one of the most profitable forms of traffic for our business.

So spend a little bit more time strategically thinking about what you truly want to be known for —and ensure it's what your market truly wants.

Step 2 – Sourcing

Finding Valuable Content and Sources

A curator is as only good as his or her sources.

In addition, those sources and sourcing of content shouldn't be something that gets more difficult as time goes on. In many ways, when sourcing is done correctly it becomes a competitive advantage for you or your business.

You should make finding sources for curated content as simple as possible. One sure-fire way to make curation a nightmare is to have a haphazard sourcing system. No, you should have a sourcing plan that involves some type of system or process.

This system (or series of systems and processes) will be unique to you or your organization and should allow you to easily and quickly find sources where you can gather curated content.

Create a Listening Platform

A listening platform is a series of systems, process, and tools you use to listen and find great content to curate.

We like to call these systems and processes a **listening platform**.

As curators ourselves, we have quite a few listening platforms and we combine these to find the best sources, articles, ideas and posts in our niche markets.

Example of Listening Platform

An example of a listening platform we use is something we've termed "the RSS method." In its simplest form, this is a combination of more than 500 RSS feeds that we sift through daily.

We then use a series of RSS readers like Google Reader, Feedly, etc., to find relevant content to curate. The key here is we've spent time building our source websites. In addition, we are always adding to these curated sources.

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This is just one example of a listening platform. Now, with social media, real-time search and other platforms, there are many options to create an effective listening platform. In fact, we put together a pretty long post titled The Ultimate List of Trending, Real-Time Search and Social Search Websites.

But a listening platform simply isn't enough, you must...

Strive to Find Unique Sources
Your Sources Are Gold

They should be unique to you and not shared by others within your market

Imagine someone who has visited your curation platform a few times. If all they ever see is the same news stories, articles or images that everybody else in your market is sharing, how unique does that make you? Is there any unique value they can attribute to you? Sure, your commentary or perspective might be unique, but usually that's not enough.

But what if they visit your curation platform and discover thoughts or ideas that are different from all the others in your market? This is approaching curation more like unique content — and that is the key to creating true value in your market.

The next step involves taking your unique sources and wrapping them in value.

Step 3 – Distil and Add Commentary

Analyze and Find Relevant Value

Your calling as a curator is to distil information so your audience will get tremendous value. A curator adds value not only by the act of choosing what to curate but by giving context and commentary to what they choose to feature.

Adding commentary or context is what creates the value with curation.

The best way to add commentary is to always be thinking about how you are giving clarity to your market. Ask yourself how this item helps your target market accomplish their goals quicker or easier, or how it gives them the solution to their pains.

For example, I recently curated a story on why Google doesn't have to be worried about Apple, Facebook, Twitter, etc., the real concern they should be worried about is Amazon. The main point of the article is that a large percentage of people are no longer going to Google to do product searches, they are going straight to Amazon. com or doing it via tablets or phones with the Amazon app. Obviously, this should worry Google because they used to be in the middle of these searches and if this trend continues they would lose their dominance.

Here's my commentary:

> *If this is a trend, and Amazon is the #1 concern for Google, what does that mean for you? If you have a product and you've spent any effort with SEO I would reason you should have an Amazon strategy. Hopefully, you already do. If not here's a good kick to get started.*

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A little explanation…

I did two things there. First, I took the company that was buried within the story and put it front and center. Second, I related it to something actionable that someone in our target market can think about and plan for.

Doing this type of commentary and context is how you increase your authority and audience in any market.

One more thing you'll notice as well…

As you spend more time analyzing content, you attune your mind to going through content and you become much better at finding the key gems your market cares about. In addition, your discovery process will rapidly improve.

Do You Need to Add Commentary?

Not always. We just discussed how you should be distilling your curations and adding commentary that connects with your market. But there are other forms of curation that you might want to employ. This is something employed by DrudgeReport.com or Techmeme.com. (Check out the sidebar for a brief explanation of this tactic.)

Do You Always Need to Add Commentary?

This will depend on your market and your circumstances, but an example of really lightweight commentary would be DrudgeReport.com.

This is a curated site about the latest news and politics. Very seldom do the curators (most times Drudge himself) ever add commentary. But that's not entirely true.

If you look closely you'll notice the main point of any linked story is usually the lead of any news story. Often, though, if you click through you'll notice there will be a different headline and sometimes the main thing Drudge highlighted is buried within the story. This is very smart and subtle way of doing curation.

Step 4 – Publish

Once you've found your source and added your commentary, your next step is to publish.

This is one of the most missed opportunities of curation, and it's one of the easiest to fix.

But first we offer what we hope is an obvious disclaimer… *we are slightly biased because we've created a curation platform named Curation Traffic.*

Before we go further, let's talk about the alternative.

The simplest form of curation you could do after you've done the steps above is to share your curated content on social platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or Pinterest. This is the recommended tactic by just about all the social-media experts and gurus I've run across.

While these are quick and easy (and where most people are online), they have one major drawback — **you're sharing on someone else's platform.**

The other option out there is the type of platform (commonly termed a curation platform) that you can easily sign up for. Typically, you get your own page or site and often these come with bookmarklets allowing you to easily pull in content.

While these are better, they still have one major drawback…

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The value you're creating by curating and adding context and commentary is essentially being transferred to someone else.

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They benefit from the unique content. They benefit from the traffic. They benefit from the growth as your authority and trust builds.

Step 4 – Publish (Continued)

This is why, if you're looking to start content curation as a strategy that meets even the most basic marketing goals, you must own the platform.

When you own the platform:

- You benefit from the traffic.
- You benefit from the authority.
- It's hosted by you so you also benefit from search and SEO traffic.
- When someone lands on your platform they are only seeing your content and your offers (not the community's).
- It can be fully branded to you or your company.

2 Types of Curation Platforms

We break them down into 2 camps – hosted (someone else's) and owned (yours).

Hosted can be good, since you can usually get up and running by simply setting up an account. You also have the added benefit that there might be a built-in user base that can help you grow your audience. The downside is you are on someone else's platform, beholden to their rules, design, etc. It's also sometimes tougher to monetize these platforms as the platform itself gains from the traffic and not you.

On the other side is a platform that you own and you control. This is the preferred method of publishing. This way your curation efforts are your own and it's something that as time goes on you benefit from.

Step 5 – Distribute

Aggregate and Share Your Curation

Once you've published your curation, the next step is to tell the world. If you're sharing your curation within social networks or on other sites, while you are getting some benefit, ultimately it is the platform itself that enjoys the fruits of your traffic.

You'll want to share to the following locations:

- Email lists
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, etc.)
- Other hub sites (Tumbler, Scoop.it, etc.)

Another nice thing about sharing is that popular curations can often be shared for months, if not years. We have one curated post that consistently delivers more than 1,500 unique visitors every single month. It's an evergreen post that we share a few times a month. To think that we might not have had that traffic is unbelievable.

The Simple Answer That Pulls This All Together

Regardless of what curation platform you choose, these same 5 steps will apply.

The better you get at each one of these steps, the greater your success at employing a strategy like curation will become.

We suggest you take each one of these steps individually and build sort of a mini-plan on how each one of these will be employed in your content strategy.

Here's Where It All Comes Together

We'd also like to introduce to you Curation Traffic, a WordPress based push button simple content curation platform. It's been designed to easily curate content from around the web and capture and convert traffic.

Curation Traffic is a WordPress based push button simple content curation platform

Curation Traffic comes in both a theme and a plugin version.

The Curation Traffic theme has been built from the ground up to convert. It's a standalone theme that is highly customizable and includes the custom-built bookmarklet CurateThis. CurateThis makes pulling in content as simple as pushing a button. Here are a few key features from the Curation Traffic theme:

Designed from the ground up to capture traffic and convert your offers

- Easily curate with the custom built bookmarklet CurateThis
- 10+ layouts
- Skins and Themes (so you can be up and running quickly)
- Highly customizable (Fonts, Headlines, Backgrounds, Headers, etc.)
- Top-Bar built right in
- Social sharing buttons built right in
- Plus much more…

# The Simple Answer That
Pulls This All Together (Continued)

The Curation Traffic theme is a perfect standalone curation platform that allows you to easily curate and capture traffic and will work for any niche or market.

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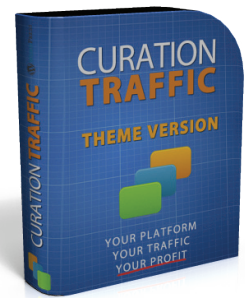
The Curation Traffic Plugin

The Curation Traffic plugin allows you to easily add curated content to your existing blog or website. It includes all the great features of CurateThis and works with any WordPress blog or website.

- Works with any WordPress Theme
- Easily curate content from around the web with the custom built CurateThis bookmarklet
- Finds Twitter users allowing you to create engagement opportunities
- Integrates with Buffer, Hootsuite, Pinterest, and AddThis for easy sharing
- Includes the bonus plugin Ultimate Call to Action.
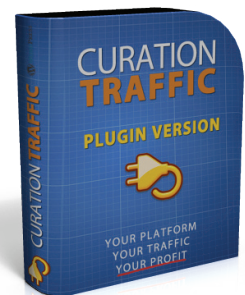
The Curation Traffic plugin is the simplest way to add the strategy of content curation to any WordPress website or blog.

The Simple Answer That Pulls This All Together (Continued)

Curation Mastery Training

When you purchase either the Curation Traffic theme or the Curation Traffic plugin bundle, you get instant access to our Curation Mastery Training. This training covers not only curation 101 but advanced topics such as:

- How to build authority with content curation.
- How to create traffic with curation.
- The exact system to set up so you can curate in minutes a day.
- Tried and tested curation conversion and monetization strategies.
- How to create the ultimate listening post.
- Plus much more.
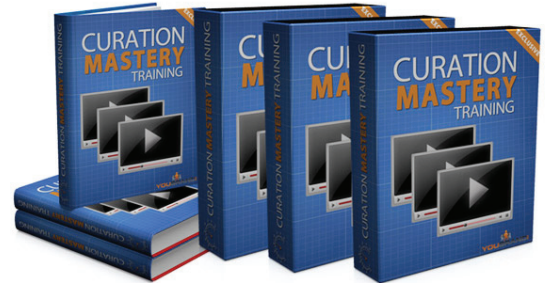
The All in One Bundle

The most popular option to get started with Curation Traffic is the All-in-One Bundle. This includes the Curation Traffic Theme, the Curation Traffic Plugin, instant access to the Curation Mastery Training and as a bonus the Ultimate Call to Action Plugin.

Click here to learn more about the All-in-One Bundle.