



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

BRANDING AND IDENTITY GUIDELINES

QUICK TIPS

Content Planning

Content Planning

STRATEGIES AND BEST PRACTICES

Choose Your Platforms. When setting up a content plan, it is helpful to begin by determining who your primary audience is and what platforms will best reach that audience. If you decide a website is your main content engine, you may want to focus the content strategy there first then adapt the content to other platforms as needed.

Begin with Milestones. When planning your content calendar, look at what is already taking place. Are there certain holidays, milestones, observances or events, for example, that you could use as a foundation to build other content around? Leverage and complement other calendars and content plans for alignment and keep evergreen stories ready in the mix.

Follow Themes. Explore ways that your content relates to other topics or themes either locally, state-wide, nationally or globally.

Think Ahead. Usually, planning out about three months ahead is ideal so that there is ample time for content production and collaboration.

Find Creative Connections. Frame the content around your specific audience(s) by applying language or context that is specific to your unit or group. Find creative ways to relate the content to your specific goals.

Amplify and Build. Small teams (or teams of one!) sometimes do not have the time or capacity to create all original content. A great strategy when some extra help is needed is to aggregate relevant content and amplify. Additionally, build on relevant content that can be tied back to your messaging goals by seeking connections to your audience.

Go for the Expected. Don't be afraid to use an existing or well-known format for your content. For example, Q&As or Top 10 lists. People are familiar with the format and will likely appreciate the familiarity of structure.

Show the Value. If you are using software to organize your content calendar, consider sharing the file or select key points to relay to your unit's leadership. It can really help with showing the value of the content choices. One tip to show the importance of content choices is to color code the connections to things such as strategic initiatives, the University's strategic plan, earned media and unit-specific goals or priorities.

Spend the Time. It is helpful to show your school's or unit's leadership that building a strong content calendar takes time but is worth the effort. For example, along with original content, content aggregation is important work that is time consuming but effective. Likewise, diligently researching milestones and themes strengthens the unit's connections, messaging and goals.

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SHARING CONTENT

Rely on Teamwork. Find other people who are linked to similar programming, or units that have similar goals, then collaborate for shared content. Making these connections will also be beneficial to ensure efforts aren't being duplicated when telling similar stories or sharing the same news. In many cases, this will also help you highlight the cross-campus collaborations on our campus.

Share Early and Often. To get maximum exposure for your content, share your ideas and pitches early and often with others who may be able to collaborate on the content creation or amplify the finished work. Depending on the scale of content, typically reaching out at least two weeks, but ideally around a month, ahead of the expected content delivery is a helpful time frame to keep in mind.

Provide Messaging and Visuals. Make it as easy as possible for others to share and amplify your content. Creating toolkits, pre-written messages (emails, social media posts, etc.) and available visuals are all great assets to share with others when asking them to share and promote your content. Modifying your content in collaboration with your various stakeholders will make it even easier for them to share quickly and effectively.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Excel - Data and content organization software (free with the University's Microsoft license)

Word - Word processing software (free with the University's Microsoft license)

Microsoft Planner - Task management software (free with the University's Microsoft license)

Trello - Task organization and project management software (free and paid versions)

Asana - Project and process management software (free and paid versions)

Canva - Design and template software (free and paid versions)

Content Marketing Institute - Content ideas and best practices website