Simplified Content Marketing Strategy

For A Leading Business School

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Executive Summary

1. We are aiming to become #1 trafficked website in MBA education space in India; in order to get a large number of students to trust us enough to apply for our MBA program.

2. There is a content team in place but the content production and promotion is not planned. Same team can execute on bigger scale (5-10x) with a proper content marketing plan.

3. To make this happen we'll need to sync content production with business goals.

Content Marketing Goals

The overall marketing goals for **ibsindia.org** include establishing brand awareness for IBS as a trusted MBA education institution (one that provides high quality education); and driving traffic and email signups at ibsindia.org.

Content (marketing) supports these goals by;

- Providing an opportunity to share quality information (how-to, tips, news) on MBA education

- Bringing more visits to the website where people can view the content and subscribe to the email list

Key metrics include:

- Unique visits

- Time on site

- Referral sources

- Email signup rate

- Open rate and click rate (email list health)
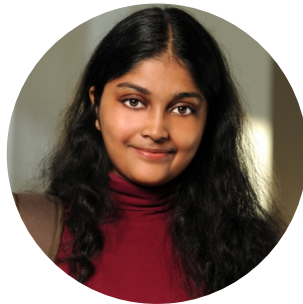
Specific goals:

Goal: To become #1 trafficked website for any MBA education institution in India; and in the process become a thought leader in this space.

- **Objective #1** - 500,000 views per month to the site by July 1, 2016.

- **Objective #2** - Rank on the first page for fifty or more content terms by July 1, 2016.

- **Objective #3** - Be featured in 50 outside MBA focused publications and 10 large media outlets (national and regional) by July 1, 2016

.Goal: To grow an email list of targeted, engaged subscribers.

- **Objective #1** - 85,000 subscribers by March 1, 2016.

- **Objective #2** - 15% month-over-month list growth.

- **Objective #3** - 40% open rate for weekly email newsletter, and 25% open rate for course updates and sales emails

Audience personas

Anushka (Student)

Jose (Entry Level Marketer)

	Anushka (Student)	Jose (Entry Level Marketer)
Role/Title	Final Year Student	Marketing Associate
Senority		Junior Manager
What a day in their life looks like	Begins day by checking Facebook, WhatsApp, Snapchat and Instagram, catching up on updates from friends and family. Check on to the class schedule for MBA test prep classes. Sits through a MBA test prep class. Hangs out with friends. Comes back, gets some rest and studies. Checks out MBA forums and websites to make sure that she is not missing out on any updates. Logs onto social media to schat, engage with folks, and find new information to act on.	Begins day by checking WhatsApp, email, catching up on the latest marketing stories. Sits in on a marketing brainstorm to identify overall marketing strategies. Comes up with new marketing activities for the week ahead. Researches about career growth options during the lunch break. Logs onto social media to engage with folks, find new content to read/emulate and to ask advice from seniors, alumni of the college he intends to apply to.
Problems we can solve for them	Making sure that she does not miss out of any important MBA related news, make her decision to choose a college easy and share step by step process to crack MBA exam. Keep her motivated to stay on track with her preps	Making sure that she does not miss out of any important MBA related news, make her decision to choose a college easy and share step by step process to crack MBA exam while working in a full time job. Share knowledge from those who have walked on a similar path before

Their goals	- Admission in top MBA college - Get right info and help in decision making - Staying on top of updates	- Admission in top MBA college with less time investment - Get right info for decision making - Connection with those who have already done it - Staying on top of updates with minimal time investment
The most important thing to them	Making her parents proud	Growing quickly in career and getting ahead of peers
Where do they go for information	Careers360.com, Shiksha.com, TestFunda.com, Time4education.com, MBAguru.com	Careers360.com, Shiksha.com, TestFunda.com, Time4education.com, MBAguru.com, MBA.com
What are their most common objections to what we offer	Too long, didn't read; not actionable or specific enough for them to use; not sure of one source when/where to find new updates, not sure where to get started	Too long, didn't read; not actionable or specific enough for them to use; lack of time to read, not sure of one source when/where to find new updates, not sure where to get started

How the audience's needs match our solutions

Anushka's goals	Our solutions
- Admission in top MBA college - Get right info and help in decision making - Staying on top of updates	- Content about MBA test prep - Downloadable work study plans - Daily digest for social

Jose's goals	Our solutions
- Admission in top MBA college with less time investment - Get right info for decision making - Connection with those who have already done it	- Content about MBA test prep for working professionals - Case studies and tips for what works - Time saving workflows and study plan - Webinars to share deep info and live Q and A

Competitive research

There are a number of websites that offer content for those preparing for an MBA. Among these are the websites of competing institutions like Amity, ISB, Narsee Monjee., SP Jain etc - they are our main competition to them our potential customers may pay money instead of us.

In addition, there are websites of test prep brands like Time4education.com, MBAguru.com, CareerLauncher.com, and IMSIndia.com. The content they publish also plays a role in the student decision making process; because students trust their advice and B-school rankings they publish.

Then there are various forums and destination sites that take a more top-of-funnel approach by simply writing about MBA education and use the eyeballs that they have to sell advertising inventory and other paid products to MBA institutions. Sites like Careers360.com, Shiksha.com, TestFunda.com, MBA.com/India from GMAC, MBArendezvous.com, and others fall into this category.

How can we stand out?

Our unique advantage is our scale, brand and an involved alumni that is open to share their stories and to interact with future students. We also have a unique knowledge of our persona and their aspirations and where they need help based on interviewing and teaching thousands of candidates every year.

Similar content sources that our target audience frequents:

In addition to the sites like the ones shared above - there are other sources that our audience already trusts.

There are also sites run by thought leaders who have followings around their personal brands like Gautam Puri who runs gpkafunda.com; and watering holes like pagalguy and Quora MBA segments - where those doing MBA test prep hangout..

We need to keep an eye out on for the content on these sites.

Content Inventory

Using SEMRush, these are the keywords that we currently rank for:

- MBA admissions - rank: 12, traffic: 17,000/month

- Investment for an MBA - rank: 17, traffic: 1,200/month

- Top MBA institutes in India - rank: 21, traffic: 11,000/month

- MBA ranking - rank: 13, traffic: 6,700/month

- MBA courses - rank: 31, traffic: 4,500/month

Using Google Analytics, these are the pages that are currently bringing significant traffic (monthly)

134,176 visits - http://ibsindia.org/admissions/

67,134 visits - http://admissions.ibsindia.org/ibsat2016/mocktest/login.asp

35,127 visits - http://ibsindia.org/IBSAF/alumni.php

25,731 visits - http://ibsindia.org/educational-loans/

13, 214 visits - http://blog.ibsindia.org/how-i-cracked-gd-pi-of-ibs-hyderabad/

These are the email lists we currently have

General interest list - 34,012 subscribers

Mock test list - 11,703 subscribers

Blog updates list - 5,604 subscribers

These are the social media accounts:

Facebook Page - IBSIndia - 247,019 fans

Twitter - @ibsindia1 - 2140 followers
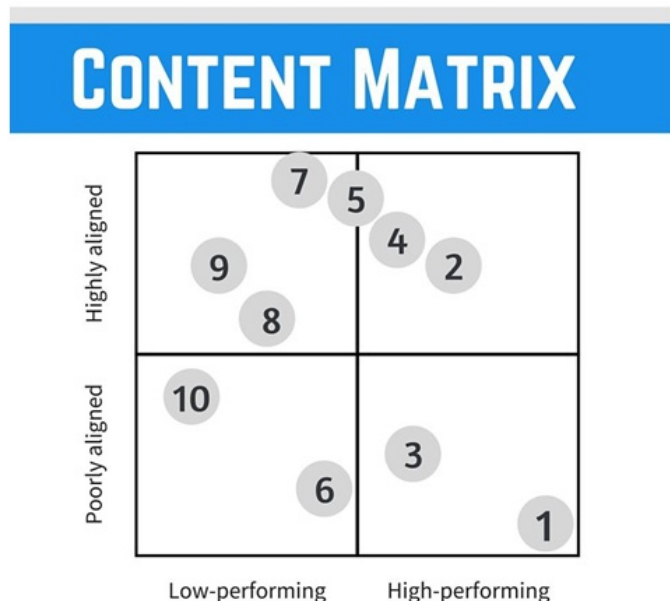
LinkedIn Company Page - 6526 followers

Instagram - @ibsindia - 2967 followers

Evaluation of existing content

The X axis plots performance: that's metrics like pageviews, likes, shares, comments, and rankings. The Y axis plots alignment, which is a little fuzzier. The higher up a piece of content is, the more in alignment with our brand's goals and ethos it is. Here we are plotting blog content on this matrix.

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We need to keep an eye out on for the content on these sites.

1.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/fire-in-the-belly-an-inspirational-story/
2.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/how-i-cracked-gd-pi-of-ibs-hyderabad/
3.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/mba-institute-ratings/
4.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/my-ibs-life/
5.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/attitude-is-everything/
6.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/experience/
7.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/my-mba-journey/
8.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/why-should-women-consider-an-mba-degree/
9.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/why-mba-3/
10.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/day-0/

What sticks?

Content in the upper-right quadrant.

1.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/how-i-cracked-gd-pi-of-ibs-hyderabad/

2.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/my-ibs-life/

3.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/attitude-is-everything/

What should we fix?

Content in the upper-left and lower-right quadrants.

Example:

1.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/my-mba-journey/

2.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/why-should-women-consider-an-mba-degree/

3.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/why-mba-3/

4.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/fire-in-the-belly-an-inspirational-story/

5.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/mba-institute-ratings/

What should we nix?

Content in the lower-left quadrant.

1.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/experience/

2.   http://blog.ibsindia.org/day-0/

What should we add to the mix?

What seems useful to add?

●   Ultimate Guide to Cracking the MBA Entrance

●   Email Course: Win the MBA test prep battle in 100 Days

●   How to Score a 99.9 percentile in MBA

●   Video Series on MBA Test Prep for Working Professionals

Content themes

How to articles, ultimate guides, email series that offer step by step guidance

Why that might be:

Great for learning and taking action right away, fits with the constant

learning/improving goal, learning in bite sized lessons, ultimate guides

New content to create

Types of content to create

- Long-form, SEO-driven blog posts
- Interviews
- Ebooks
- Infographics
- Email courses
- Explainer videos

Details about content:

- Long-form, SEO-driven blog posts. Posts targeting specific search concepts, usually 2,200+ words in length, written to gain backlinks, comments, and organic search.
- Email newsletter. Collection of links and resources on MBA test prep, delivered every week and allowing an opportunity for subscribers to reply back with any thoughts, questions, or ideas.

Estimate of content capacity

A snapshot of our current team.

Who's the (current) team:

- Nidhi, Prachi, Shweta, Anindiya (content crafters) to brainstorm and write,
- Subhani to design,
- Alekhya and Dr. Parvati to edit,
- Neha to publish,
- Sanjeev and Nishanth to promote,

What's the (current) workflow:

- Content Crafters work on headlines on Monday, write whole week.

- Editors - reviews and feedback on Monday and Thursday, edit on Tuesday and Wednesday, and 4 hours on Friday. For 4 hours on Friday, review and tweak content calendar for next week based on the content flow.

- Content Associate publishes - gets the content ready for publishing on Monday and Wednesday, publishes on Tuesday and Thursday.

- Community Managers promote through the week as soon a particular piece of content is published. For major content pieces they work on a promotion plan with the editor and have it ready 2-3 weeks in advance and use this time to build connections with influencers.

Moving forward:

- Double down on content production synced with the big goals (traffic, email subscribers and conversions).

Editorial calendar

Content Type and Frequency:

Blog posts: Write one longform in-depth (2000+ words) blog post per week and schedule for every week on Tuesday. Write one short form (1000+ words) blog post per day and schedule for every weekday morning 8.30am.

Newsletter: Write one newsletter every week, to be sent on Monday afternoon

Ebooks: Write one ebook per month and publish it on 1st Tuesday of every month Email course: Create and launch an email course every quarter.

Content promotion workflow

Example:

For every new blog post:

- Post to relevant social media accounts

- Buffer 12 updates to Twitter

- Notify the email list

- Reach out to influencers mentioned

- Reach out to influencers on the topic

- Answer questions on Quora

- Add a Google Alert for long-term promotion

Summary

We have a unique ability to serve MBA aspirants with some really useful content!

Executing on this content plan, we'll be in a great spot six months from now - a trusted brand for MBA education, getting a large number of students to apply - leveraging the email list and the content.

Let's get started with this.

Ready, set go!