



STRATEGIC SERVICES

Content Mapping Framework

Viewstream's content mapping framework (CMF) is based on the principle that by defining your target customer in terms of attributes relevant to today's sales cycle and buyer's preferences, you can significantly improve your marketing results. CMF is a conceptual framework that delineates the relationships between key marketing attributes, including buyer persona, sales cycle stage, content format, content subject, messaging and outcomes.

Is Content King?

Content is critical, and often considered "king." Yet, much content today is more like an evil king: the content doesn't make sense to your buyer, doesn't match their role in the sales cycle, and is not congruent with how buyers define themselves. This can make for bad content, and no matter how much budget you allocate, this type of content is ineffective. For example, one recent study* showed eighty-six percent of people surveyed said that content affects not only how they feel about your brand, but also the likelihood of taking the next step during a purchase decision. Another study** showed that technology vendors may be losing 40% of their potential sales as a result of poor or mismatched content. Today, providing good, appropriately targeted content is both essential and a differentiating factor. Viewstream's CMF was developed to help companies ensure their content is king.

Start With The Sales Cycle

Here is a typical version of the sales cycle:



At every stage of the sales cycle, your prospect requires a unique content set. If you offer your customer a high level solutions overview, for example, but they already know about your solution from research, you are spending money on content that is not aligned to the buyer's place in the sales cycle. In this example, your target is evaluating vendors, while you think they are forming awareness. The basis for Viewstream's CMF is understanding your buyer's stage in the sales cycle, and mapping the necessary content attributes to that stage.

The Content Mapping Framework Process:

- Define Your Customer
- Determine How To Reach Your Customer
- Align Messaging With Customer Needs
- Gain Better Traction In Sales Cycle

How To Chart A CMF

Charting a CMF begins with a specific marketing problem. Let's assume we are bringing to market a semiconductor that delivers virtualization. This chip creates a new category for hardware virtualization in the enterprise. Most people are not aware of this solution, and in fact they may not understand the problem. Here's how you chart a CMF for this case.

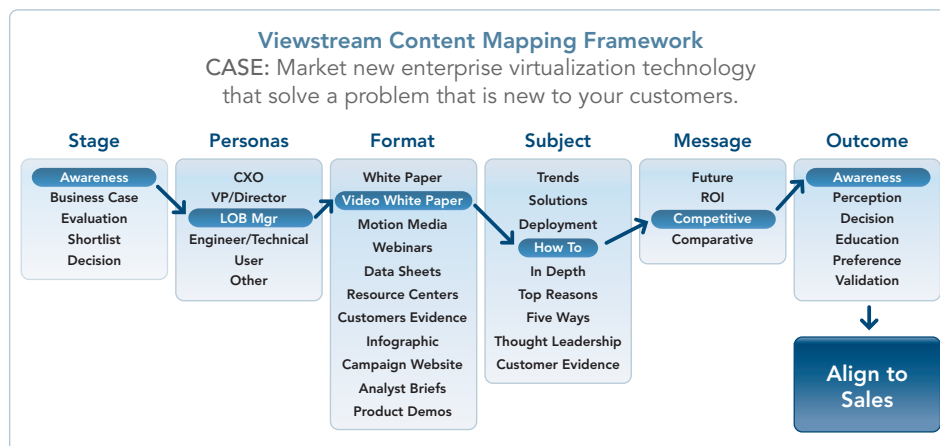
First, define your target persona by role in the organization. By defining an exact role early on, you are already forming a target account to allow for more precise demand generation. In this case, we are targeting CIOs and Director Level IT roles.

Second, define your persona's stage in the sales cycle. Because this is a problem that people do not necessarily know they have, and it's a new solution, our prospects are in the early sales cycle stage of awareness.

Next, you need to determine content format, subject, message and outcome. There is no cookie cutter way to define these elements, as different formats can work equally well throughout the buyer's cycle. Subjects and messages will also vary depending on your understanding of the customer. Here's how we map these elements:

- **Format: Video White Paper**
This new format will work well for the high level personae that, research shows, read white papers, but are also affected by video content. Video can provide a differentiated media platform for this kind of technical content. We are trying to stand out, and this format accomplishes that.
- **Subject: Trends**
When polled or interviewed, our target is very focused on the future and enterprise computing trends. This is a subject they spend a lot of time thinking about, so we can grab their interest.
- **Message: Preparedness**
We can begin to define the landscape of the problem and how we see this market developing. Our message is: Are you prepared for the future?
- **Outcome: Awareness**
Our intended result is awareness of the current and future challenges. We communicate to the audience that there is this problem they didn't even know existed, but when solved can provide significant benefits.

With this information, we now have a complete map for this marketing activity. Below is the result of the exercise in a CMF chart:



Charting A CMF

- Define Your Target Persona
- Define Target Persona's Stage In The Sales Cycle
- Determine The Format, Subject, Message, And Outcome Of Your Content
- Track Performance

Benefits

CMF clarifies who your customer is, where they are in a sales cycle, and the message/story you will use to reach them. By showing the relationship between sales cycle stage, persona, format, subject, message and outcomes, you can represent a clear picture of your marketing action and ensure you are delivering relevant content. You will get better traction in the sales cycle as you align messaging with customer questions and needs. You frame the problem and provide the answers in the right place at the right time.

CMF can also reduce your content creation costs because you are creating only relevant content for the target persona. Start with your market segmentation while approaching the segment that you know (through research, trial/error or intuition) is most likely to buy. With a smaller group to target, you can create more relevant content and save money by not trying to reach everyone.

Cutting Through The Content Deluge

There is forty percent more content than just seven years ago, and there are many more channels for that content to be distributed. If you survey your prospects, you will see that most rely on multiple channels to learn about any solution. A typical purchase decision may involve reading your website, checking out YouTube content, search, peer review sites, and editorial content. Figuring out where your customers' eyeballs land, and what type of content works for them, depends both on the channel and where they are in the sales cycle. This is what CMF is all about. The Viewstream Content Mapping Framework can bring your marketing activities into better focus. Plus, you can enhance your legacy as the King of Content!

Learn More About Viewstream's Content Mapping Framework:

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* Source: IDG Connect, Bob Johnson, Analyst, The Marketer as Publisher: Mapping Content to the Buying Cycle and Prospect's need, Thursday 24, 2009, PowerPoint Presentation from 6th Annual B2B Marketing Summit

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