

Making content strategy stick

How to operationalize and socialize your work

Hilary Marsh

Three elements

1. Build a strong foundation
2. Foster champions and allies
3. Keep content practices top of mind

1. Build a strong foundation

What is content?

- Executive biographies
- Product details
- Marketing collateral
- Press releases
- Program information
- Membership details
- Journal articles
- Advocacy issue updates
- Support content
- Etc., etc., etc.

Content takes different

forms

- Web pages
- Blog posts
- Infographics
- Images
- PDFs
- Video
- Audio
- Articles
- Brochures
- Reports
- Social media posts
- Podcasts
- Courses
- Etc., etc., etc.

What is content strategy?

The right content

To the right person

At the right time

For the right action

Put another way....

Content strategy is the practice of planning for the creation, delivery, and governance of useful, usable, **effective** content.

Content strategy roadmap

1. Understand the organization's goals and challenges (document review, stakeholder interviews)
2. Understand the dynamics and goals of top-priority audiences (personas and audience journey mapping)
3. Audit and assess existing website content
4. Analyze content from comparative/competitive organizations
5. Develop guidelines for content creation and publishing
6. Identify roles, lifecycles, workflow, and governance models
7. Facilitate the creation of a single, organization-wide taxonomy
8. Plan for content transformation and migration
9. Create a framework for content planning and promotions

However.....



Putting content strategy
into action
is about
more than documents

Extending the roadmap

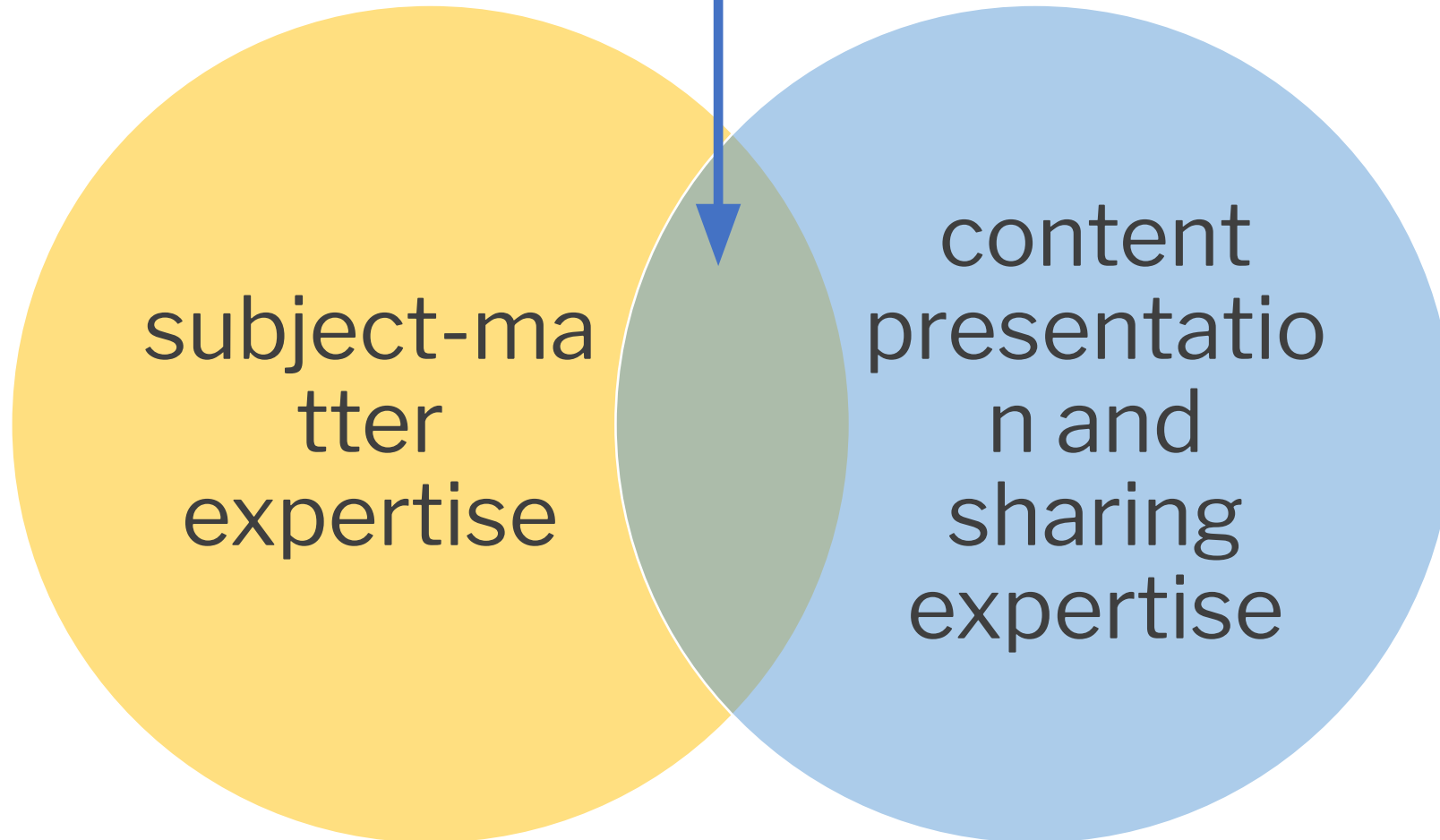
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10. Determine staffing needs

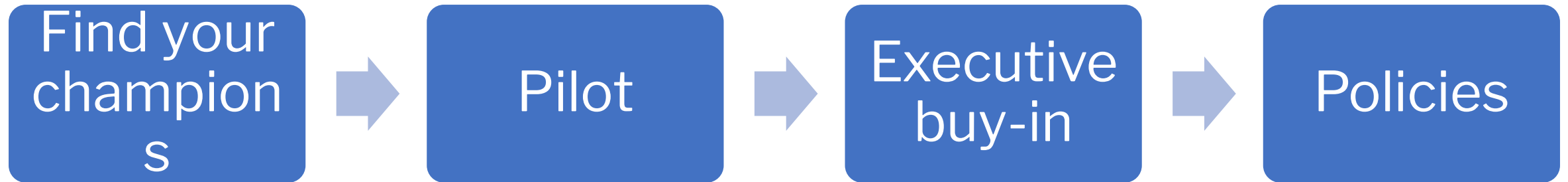
11. Plan for ongoing training, communications, and operations

2. Foster champions & allies

Effective content



Success before buy-in



Find your allies



A close-up photograph of a person in a white lab coat and blue gloves pouring a vibrant purple liquid from a glass beaker into a clear glass Erlenmeyer flask. The liquid is captured mid-pour, creating a thin stream. The background is a blurred laboratory with yellow equipment. The text "Time for learning" is overlaid in the upper left quadrant.

Time for
learning

Then, executive buy-in

- “We have a problem”
- “I know how to fix it”
- “I know it will work”
- “I’d like your approval to move forward”

It's OUR content



Invite SMEs into the process

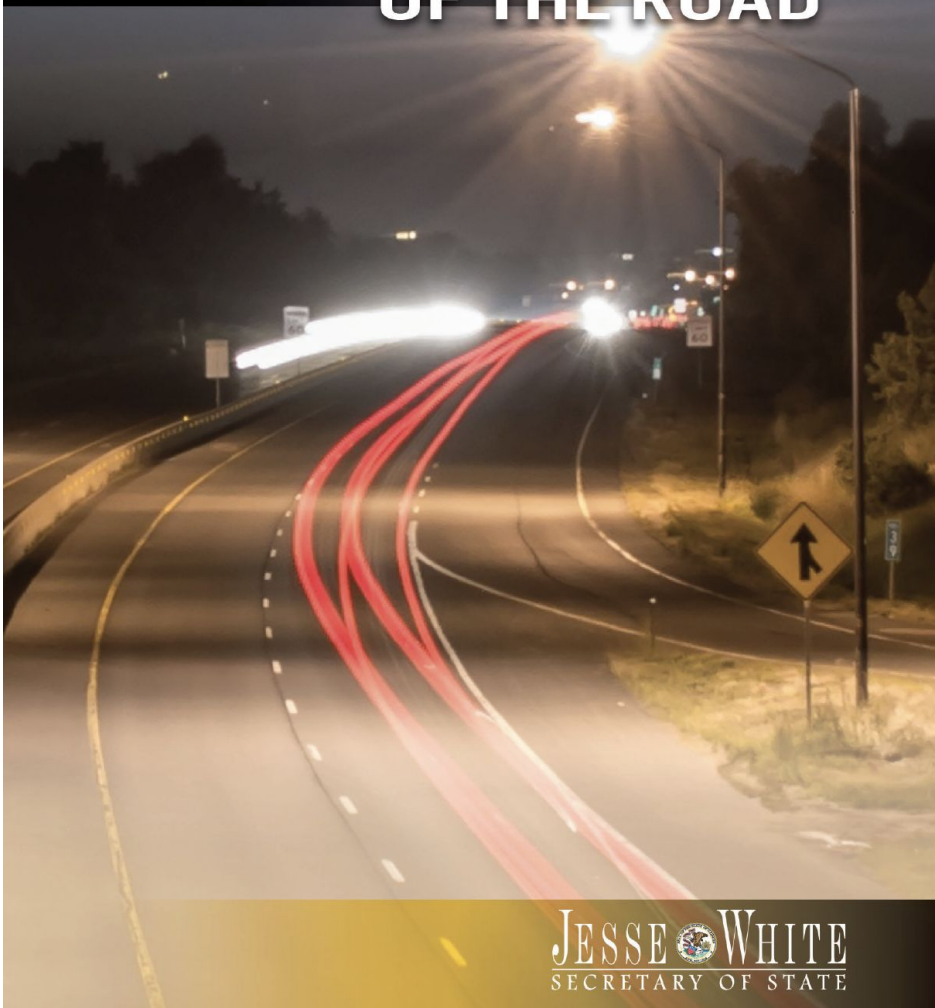
- “With you, not to you”
- Listen to their concerns, understand their goals
- Reinforce what they’re doing well now—and why it’s good
- Extend their good work with education
- Help them see/empathize with the audience
- Help see that collaboration and content reuse is a win-win

3. Keep content practices alive

or, how to help good content practices go viral

2020

ILLINOIS RULES OF THE ROAD



JESSE WHITE
SECRETARY OF STATE

Graduated Driver Licensing Program.....	18
Parental Responsibility	19
Related Laws	19
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Proper Action When Stopped by Law Enforcement	21
Distracted Driving	22
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Child Passenger Protection Act	23
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This book is 112 pages long!

2020

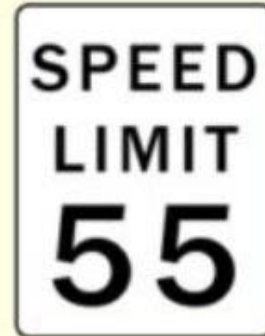
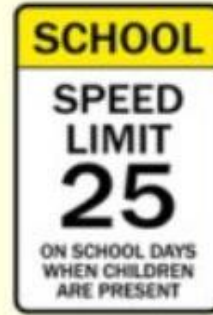
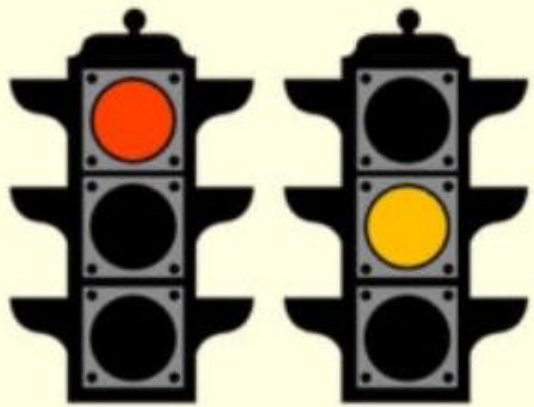
ILLINOIS RULES OF THE ROAD

JESSE WHITE
SECRETARY OF STATE

- Chapter 1: Illinois Driver's License
- Chapter 2: Driver's License Exams
- Chapter 3: Drivers Under Age 21
- Chapter 4: Traffic Laws
- Chapter 5: Sharing the Road
- Chapter 6: Driving Under the Influence (DUI)
- Chapter 7: Traffic Violations/Crashes
- Chapter 8: Driver's License Revocation, Suspension, Denial and Cancellation
- Chapter 9: Roadway Signs
- Chapter 10: Traffic Signals and Pavement Markings
- Chapter 11: Safe Driving Tips
- Chapter 12: Equipment for Safe Driving
- Chapter 13: Owning a Vehicle



Fortunately, we don't just hand out keys to a car along with this book











Content governance topics

1. **Content lifecycle**
2. **Team structure and staffing**
3. **Oversight**
4. **Review processes**
5. **Authority**
6. **Success metrics**
7. **Content access levels**
8. **Taxonomy and Best Bets governance**
9. **Implementation plan**



Content
strategy
is an HR issue

Content work
needs to be
part of people's jobs

Communications and training

- Provide regular reminders and updates
- Share successes
- Establish communities of practice (online + in person)
- Include content training in employee on-boarding
- Make content training part of employees' professional development program

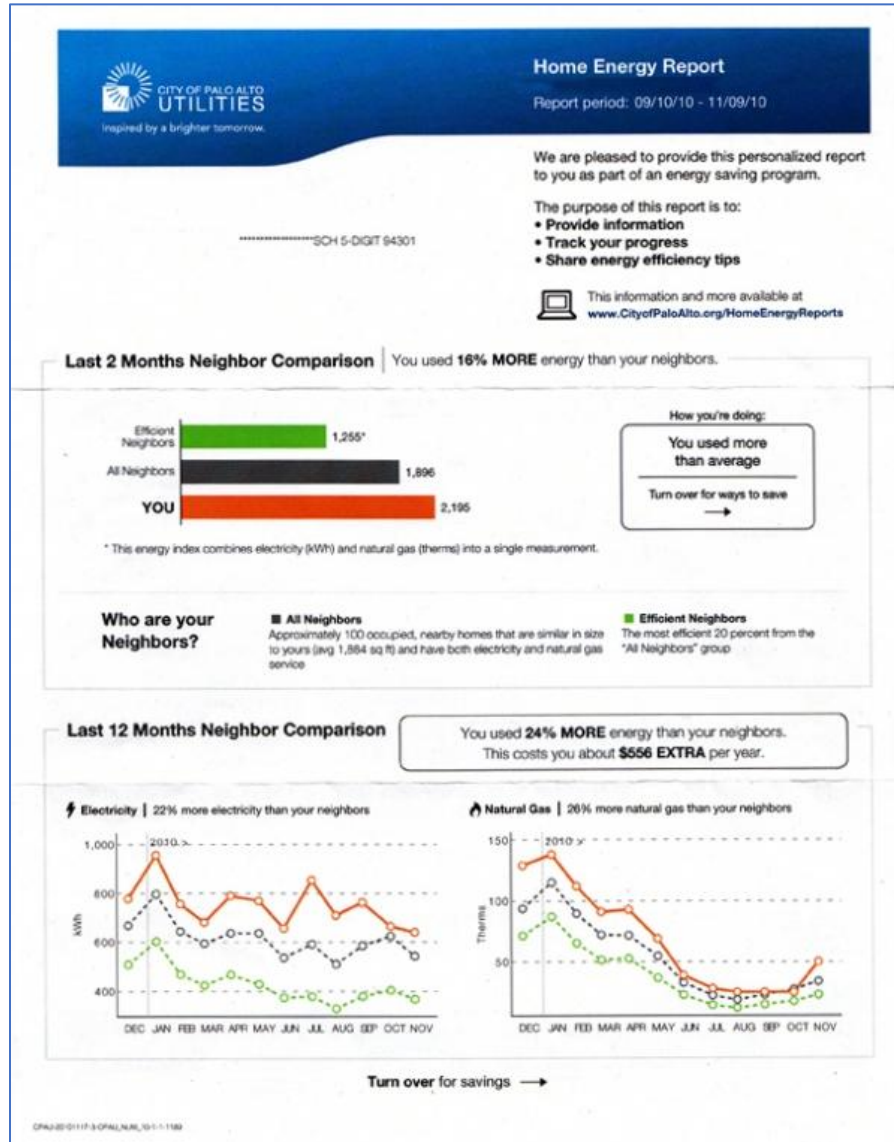
Make it ~~impossible~~ hard to do it wrong

- Create content request forms with required information about goals and expiration dates
- CMS: headline length limits, automatic expiration dates
- Build in a review process that can't be skipped
- Include the work in people's job descriptions and what they are measured on

Use motivation science

1. Social incentives to change (peer pressure)
2. Immediate rewards (form habits)
3. Progress monitoring (highlight progress)

Social incentives



The first group of ComEd customers to get the reports, in 2009, reduced their electricity use by 2 percent.

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/ct-xpm-2014-03-03-ct-energy-comparisons-brotman-talk-0303-20140303-story.html>

Real-time feedback



Reward successes



Bring the artifacts of your work to life

- Involve stakeholders in the solution
- Choose artifacts that brought the most insights

Persona Empathy Framework — United Educators Content Strategy Initiative

The Professional Juggler

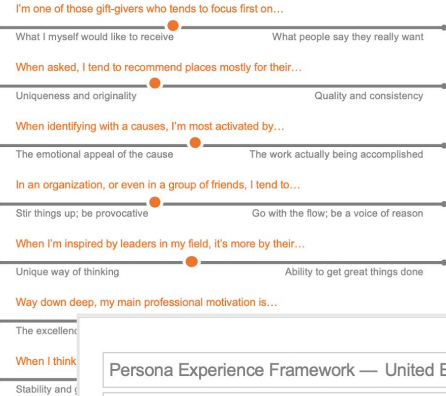
Jason

Director of HR for Academic Programs, medium-size university. Male, 39 years old, partnered, one child. Portland, OR

We have almost 2,000 employees in all academic programs, across all departments. With everything that's been happening, and the media's role in amplifying everything, the heat is on to make sure our employees feel safe and secure in working here. Workplace harassment is more on the radar than ever before, and HR can't afford to be caught asleep at the wheel. How we respond goes hand in hand with our ability to attract the best talent in a competitive marketplace. There is so much to stay on top of!



"I'm tossing around in a sea of details, any of which could be the iceberg that sinks the ship."



Empathy

Persona Experience Framework — United Educators Content Strategy Initiative

[bt] + | Brand Therapy

The Professional Juggler

"I'm tossing around in a sea of details, any of which could be the iceberg that sinks the ship."

Jason

Director of HR for Academic Programs. Medium-sized university. Partnered, 39 years old, one child. Portland, OR

MY MOST PRESSING NEEDS

- + Create a safe and secure work environment
- + Promote safety and conscientious, appropriate behaviors
- + Retain good talent
- + Quick way to identify top risks, even ones I don't know about
- + Rapid responses to campus crises
- + Know where to focus my risk management efforts

A TRULY EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE

- + Contributing to HR budget for conferences and seminars
- + Help me elevate my issues/risks to the president/ERM level
- + Showcase my work by including my institution as a case study
- + Help me think proactively when I am busy putting out fires
- + Limit the risk of a lawsuit when we fire someone, and know our insurance will back us up

EXPERIENCES THAT SATISFY NEEDS CREATE DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS



EXPECTATIONS I HAVE

- + A knowledgeable, available point of contact
- + Solving my problems quickly
- + Training that helps me promote a safe and secure campus
- + Materials that reflect diversity
- + Materials that fit my needs that are applicable to higher ed
- + Personalized responses to my questions and requests
- + Ability to call a claims or risk manager for help or advice
- + Info that I can contribute to my staff because it's from a trusted source

CONTENT I VALUE

- + Discrimination harassment, best practices hiring culture, with an academic focus
- + Info I won't get from SHRM or CUPA-HR
- + Concise data that supports my work, peer benchmarks
- + Easy ways to integrate risk management best practices at my institution
- + Training on how to limit liability for employment practices
- + Short weekly blog posts on HR topics, peer success stories
- + Online training with easy enrollment, and learner tracking
- + Courses on HR topics specifically for faculty and educational institution staff

MESSAGES I WANT TO GET

- + You can help prevent grievances and conflict that might lead to claims
- + You know campus HR issues because you know education, you know midsize institutions
- + You're not just insurance suits, you care about our people
- + You already have a deep relationship with my institution
- + You want to help me do my job better, help me succeed
- + I get all these resources and training offerings, and they don't need to come from my budget!

DIFFERENTIATORS I NOTICE

- + Make me feel like a member, not a customer
- + Training that works, and saves us money spent on legal
- + A stake in education
- + Materials designed for the specific risks educational institutions face
- + Communicating complex issues in simple ways to different people here
- + You're not just a vendor for risk management tools, but a partner for making us safer



THE DREAM PARTNER



Rachel Sue

SENIOR BROKER AT A SMALL
BROKERAGE | CHAPEL HILL, NC

- Works with education and non-education clients
- **Still learning about education liability coverage**; looks for information to be written "in plain English"
- Needs **content segmented by client type**
- Her philosophy in working with UE is, "Help me look good to my client and I will show UE in a positive light"

38 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, TWO KIDS

My success is all about my relationships and being a trusted advisor who can anticipate needs.

THE SEASONED CONTENDER



Christine

VP, RISK MANAGEMENT AT A
LARGE UNIVERSITY | ALBANY, NY

- **Well versed** in education liability insurance and risk management
- Looks for "what's new" or **emerging** in a short format with the bottom line up front
- Looks for **resources on nuanced topics**, not just general information
- Looks for **clearly written, shareable materials** that support risk management initiatives

55 YEARS OLD, DIVORCED, THREE KIDS

I've discovered that being a successful senior exec is knowing how to marshal your resources.

THE MAN ON A MISSION



André

BUSINESS OFFICER AT A PRIVATE
K-12 SCHOOL | BOSTON, MA

- Experienced in corporate finance, but relatively **new to education**
- Looks for content that **explains context** and defines education-specific terms
- Looks for **digestible resources on general education risk management topics** first (to lay groundwork for advancing to more nuanced topics)
- Looks for resources that help **show the value of proactive risk management efforts**

42 YEARS OLD, MARRIED, TWO KIDS

Education is important. I'm doing my part to make sure we serve that ideal.

THE PROFESSIONAL JUGGLER



Jason

HR DIRECTOR AT A MEDIUM-SIZE
UNIVERSITY | PORTLAND, OR

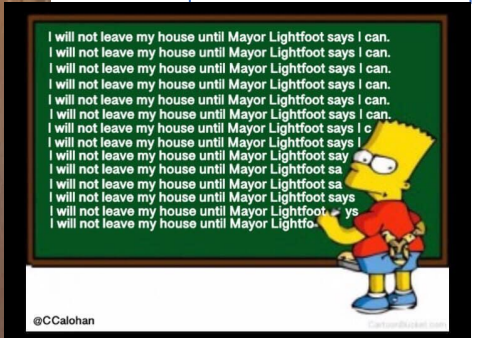
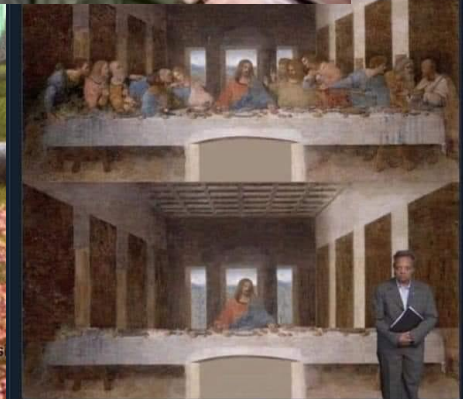
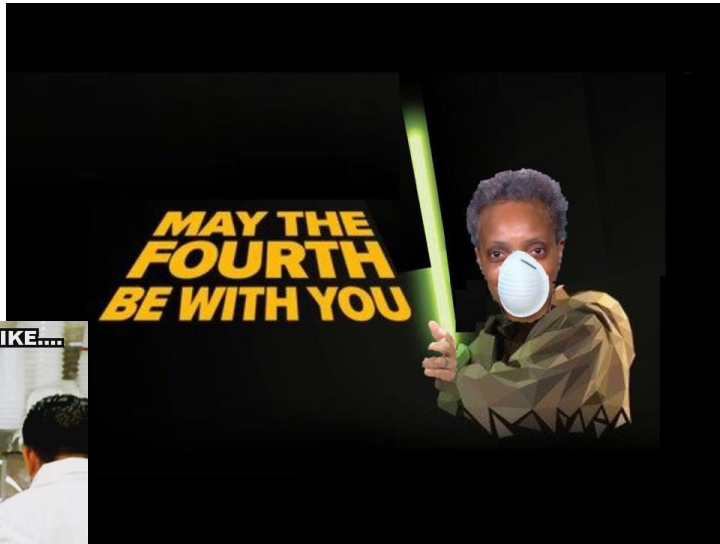
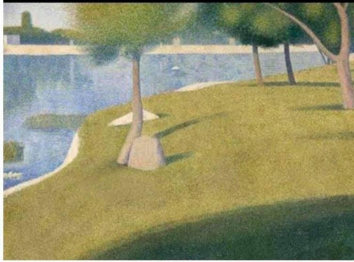
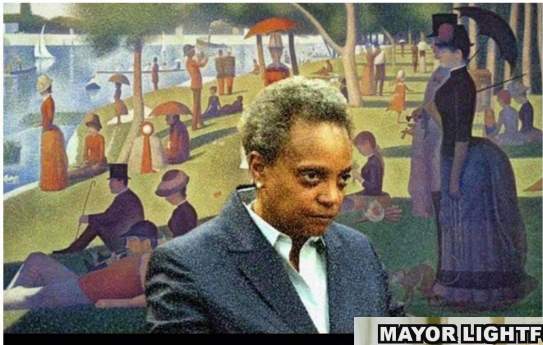
- Experienced in HR for education, but **still learning about risk management**
- **Engages with staff at all levels** to address strategic risks
- Looks for resources that:
 - Help him **start conversations** about risk management with partners on campus
 - Communicate **complex issues simply** and with graphics

39 YEARS OLD, PARTNERED, ONE CHILD

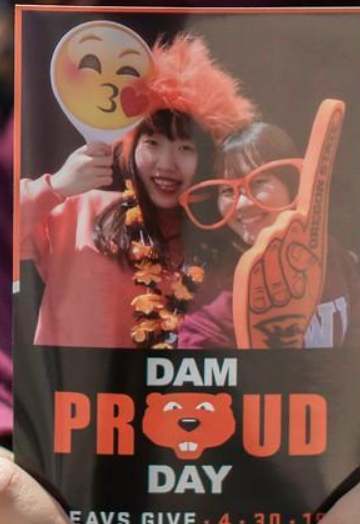
I'm tossed around in a sea of details, any of which could be the iceberg that sinks the ship.

Make it fun

- Laminated card-size versions of your personas
- Scavenger hunts to find content ROT
- Jargon bingo
- Offer swag prizes – pens, stickers, etc. □ sneaky reinforcement
- Memes



People
can be
proud
of their
content
successes



Content strategy becomes
part of how things work



Resources I mentioned

- How does your CEO know your content strategy is successful:
<http://bit.ly/ceo-cs-success>
- Content strategy roadmap: bit.ly/cs-roadmap2020
- Content governance topics: bit.ly/content-governance
- How to motivate yourself to change your behavior: Tali Sharot, TEDxCambridge:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xp002vi8DX4>
- Calculating your content staffing needs:
<https://bit.ly/content-staffing>
- Content maturity assessment tool:
bit.ly/contentstrategy-maturity-assessment
- Content strategy study: bit.ly/assn-content-strategy-report

Please stay in touch!

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- Connect on LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/hilarymarsh](https://www.linkedin.com/in/hilarymarsh)
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