AMAKA
PLAYBOOK

Content Strategy

Starter Pack for SMEs

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Editorial Calendar
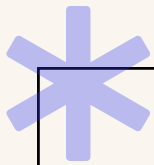
Editorial *Calendar*

Consistency is a big aspect of content marketing. However, it can be challenging for startups and small businesses, especially when you're also juggling multiple responsibilities. An *editorial calendar* is your secret weapon to combat this challenge.

An editorial calendar ties your content to your *business goals*.

Instead of posting randomly, you get to create content that aligns with your product launches, campaigns, business objectives, or key events in your industry. For example, if you're launching a new product next quarter, your calendar can guide you to create posts to build awareness, such as behind-the-scenes and how-to content leading up to the launch. Also, if your product or launch can be tied to something topical or timely — such as Mother's Day or a major sports event like the World Cup — a calendar is really helpful for pre-scheduling.

Another huge reason to have an editorial calendar is that it helps with **time management**. With a calendar, you can create content in batches, plan ahead, and even delegate tasks more efficiently. This is especially useful to reduce burnout and ensure every piece of content has a purpose.

A calendar also makes *collaboration* easier across teams or talents.

With a calendar, writers, designers, and social media managers can all see what's coming up and plan accordingly.

Here's what a strong editorial calendar might include:

- ✓ Content topics
- ✓ Publishing dates
- ✓ Assigned team members
- ✓ Platforms (e.g., blog, Instagram, LinkedIn)
- ✓ Call-to-action or goal for each post

To further optimise the process, leverage tools like **Google Sheets**, **Trello**, or **Notion** to create the calendar and ease collaboration. You can also employ dedicated platforms like **CoSchedule** or **Asana** to manage your calendar based on your team's workflow.
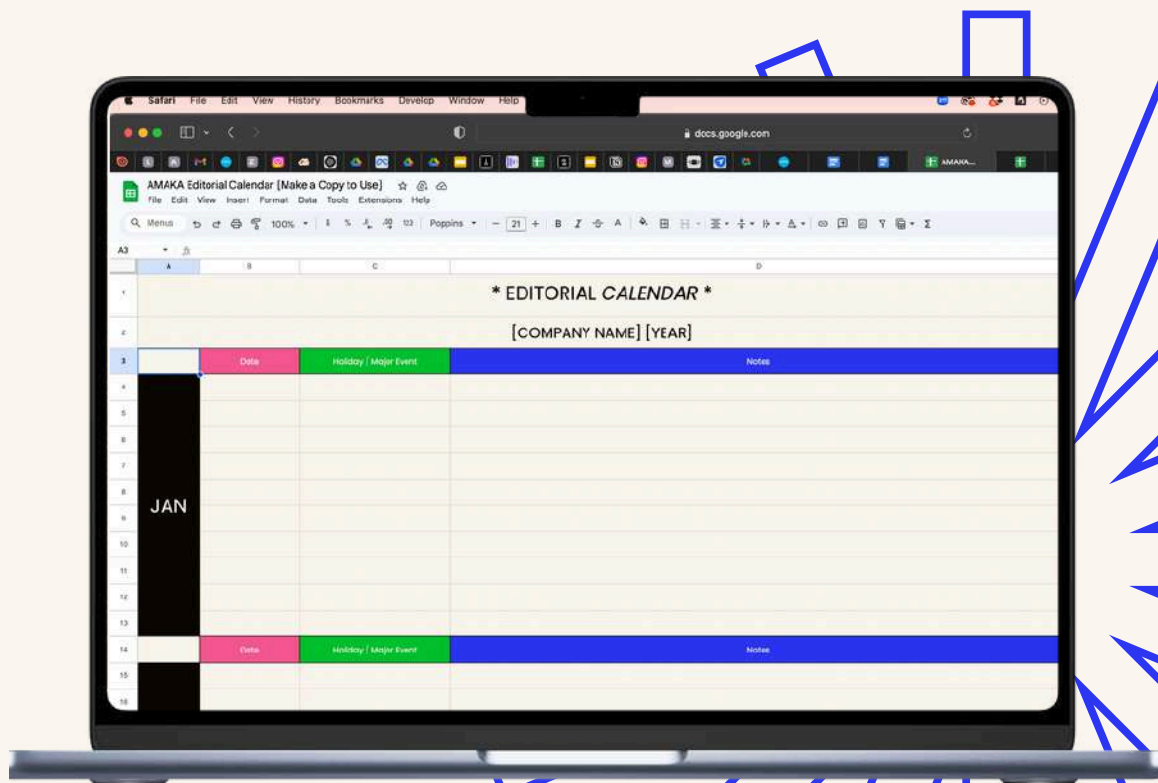
Google Sheets   Trello   Notion   asana   CoSchedule

Basically, an editorial content calendar makes your content creation process run smoothly. It helps you stay consistent without burning out and ensures that every post aligns with your goals.
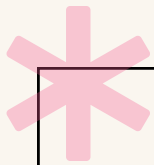
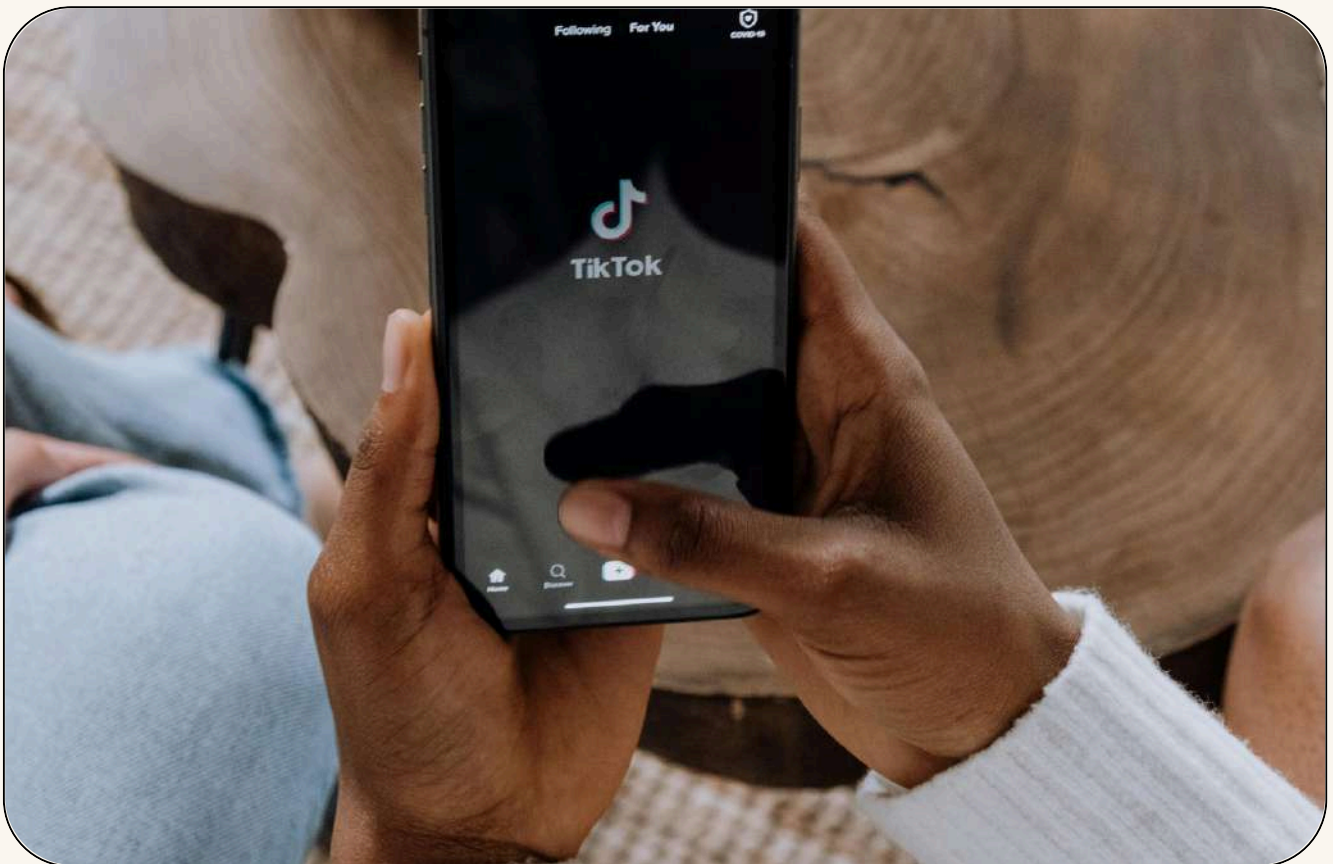Access our Editorial Calendar template *here*

02

Content Strategy Ideation

Content Strategy *Ideation*

One of the biggest challenges startups and small businesses face when it comes to content is figuring out *what to say* and *how to say* it in a way that connects with their target audience. That's where content strategy ideation comes in.

Content ideation is the process of generating valuable content ideas that:

- ⊘ Align with your **brand,**
- ⊘ answer your **audience's needs,**
- ⊘ and meet your **business goals.**

Posting just to stay active is not a smart strategy; you need content that has purpose.

That's why generating ideas should start with identifying:

→ Your **target audience** - ideal customers

→ Your target audience's **pain points** and desires

→ Your brand's **value proposition** - why your customers should choose you over your competitors

→ Your **business goals** for the quarter or a specific campaign

Once those are defined, you can brainstorm ideas around the above across content types - blog posts and how-to guides, video reels, customer testimonials, carousel posts, and educational infographics.

A smart way to generate consistent ideas is to build content pillars. **Content pillars** are themes that all your content can fall under; 3 to 5 is a good place to start.

For Example

If you're a skincare brand, your pillars might be:

1. **Skincare education**
2. **Behind-the-scenes**
3. **Customer testimonials**
4. **Product benefits**

This structure helps you stay focused and makes brainstorming easier.

At AMAKA, we encourage businesses to generate ideas as a team. Whether you have an in-house content team or you're using a fractional team like ours, bring everyone into the brainstorming process - marketers, customer service reps, even your clients, etc. They all see your business from different angles and can contribute fresh, out-the-box ideas.
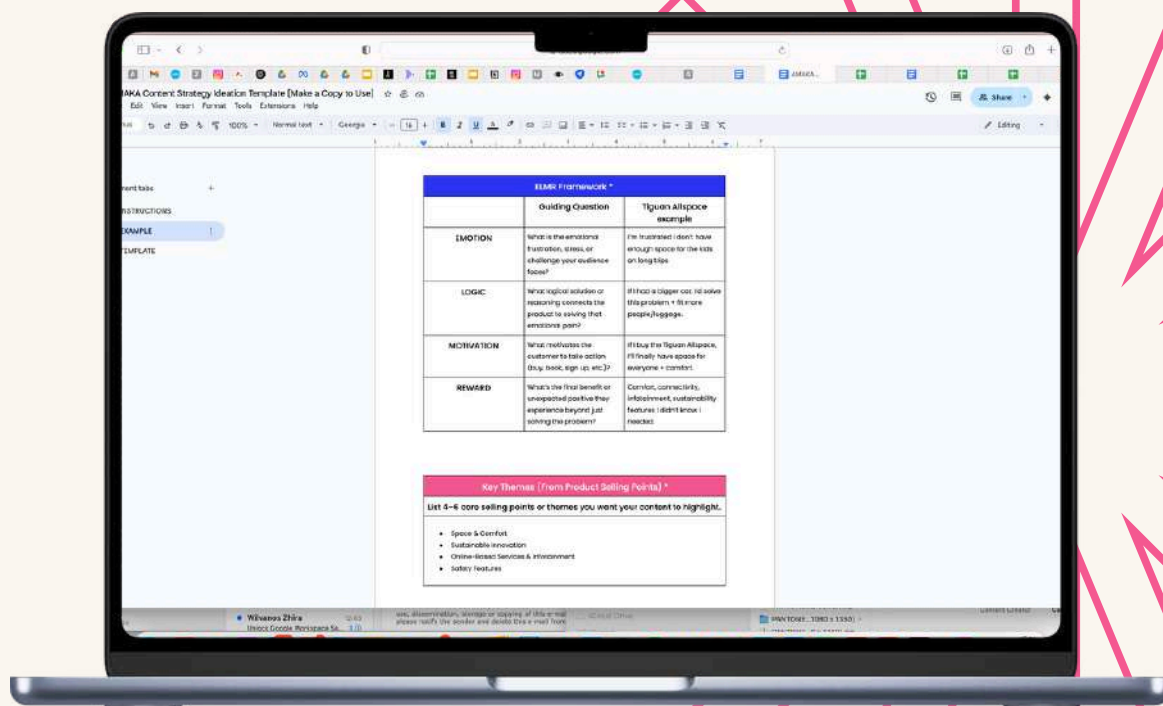
You can also pull inspiration from:

- ⊘ **Customer** FAQs and DMs
- ⊘ **Competitor** analysis
- ⊘ **Trending topics** in your industry
- ⊘ Past **high-performing posts**
- ⊘ **Seasonal trends** and cultural moments

When done correctly, content ideation makes sure you never run out of relevant ideas that don't just fill up space but build genuine connections and drive results.
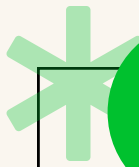

Access our Content Strategy Ideation template *here*

03

# Monthly Publishing Output Calendar & Audience Breakdown

Monthly *publishing output* calendar and *audience breakdown*

Again, consistency is everything in content marketing. But it's not enough to show up, you must show up *strategically*. That's where your Monthly Publishing Output Calendar and a strong audience breakdown come in. Together, they help you build a content system that *performs*.

But let's go deeper.

At AMAKA, we use the *Habit Loop Model* to guide our content strategy, and it's something every startup and small business should borrow.
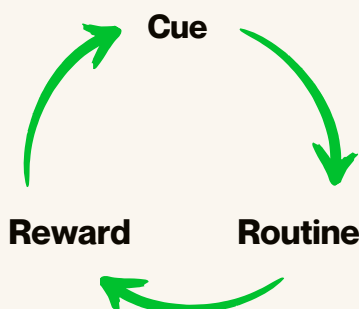
If you're unfamiliar with this model, the habit loop is a psychological framework made up of a cue, routine, reward.

It's a loop that explains how people build habits - they have a cue (which is the trigger), take an action based on that (routine) and get a reward that further keeps them in the habit.

While this is a psychological concept, it can be used in marketing and applied to content creation. After all, successful marketing strategies require understanding human psychology. Simplified, the idea is that your product showcased by the content should become a habit in your audience's life.

Here's how we apply it at AMAKA:

- ☑ **Cue:** We identify the triggers in our audience's daily routine, like when they're likely to check LinkedIn or read emails.

- ☑ **Routine:** We consistently show up with content that solves problems, educates, entertains, or inspires

- ☑ **Reward:** We ensure the content gives value - a tip they can use or a new way to think about their business. Over time, they start looking forward to hearing from us.

On how a calendar comes to play here, you use your monthly calendar to intentionally build that loop. Here's a quick guide to do that:

- Start by building your **content pillars.**

- Then identify **key dates**, such as campaigns or launches (taken from your Editorial Calendar)

- Create **content plans** for specific platforms. For instance, you could do an Instagram LIVE or write about the benefits of your product to a professional on LinkedIn.

- You can then monitor content performance using analytics tools such as Google Analytics, tracking metrics like page views, reach, and link clicks.

This helps you plan in advance and repurpose your content into different formats for different platforms.

Now, you need to do an audience breakdown to identify who you are talking to.

Identify the personas of your ideal customers, including their pain points, habits, content preferences, and buying triggers. Are they busy founders who only read short, punchy posts? Or are they visual learners who respond to carousels and reels?

This helps you know when to post and what type of content will resonate with them.

Practical Application of the Habit Loop Model

For a more practical application of the habit loop model, here are two examples for a skincare brand and a fitness coach:

Skincare brand	
Cue	Your audience scrolls Instagram first thing in the morning or before bed; that's when they're most likely thinking about their skincare routines.
Routine	You consistently post "Morning Skincare Tips" reels or "Nighttime Routine" carousels at those times, showing easy 3-step routines, ingredient breakdowns, or product layering tips. Make sure to include **ASMR** sounds, soothing visuals, or voiceover instructions - sensory elements that align with the experience of skincare.
Reward	They learn how to care for their skin in simple, actionable ways and associate your brand with helpful, expert advice. And over time, they expect you to guide their routine. This builds trust and makes them more likely to buy your product when they're ready to upgrade.
How to Apply it:	
Create a recurring content series and post it consistently at the same time, and use strong CTAs like, "Save this for your next routine" to create that loop of anticipation and action.	

Fitness Coach

Cue	Your audience finishes work and hits a motivational slump, so they need a push to get up and move. This usually happens around 5-7 PM.
Routine	You post a daily "Quick 10-Minute Workout" video or Instagram Story at this time with an energising challenge and no gym required. Pair it with music, motivation, and easy-to-follow instructions.
Reward	They feel accomplished, energised, and proud after completing a small win. You become their go-to for post-work exercises and and over time, they'll begin to see you as their trusted coach.

How to Apply it:

Encourage engagement with statements like "Tag me when you're done" or "Comment 'done' if you smashed it." This builds a feedback loop that triggers positive reinforcement.

Depending on your kind of business, the trigger and routine will be different, but this should give you an idea of how to apply it to your business.

Basically, when you combine your Monthly Publishing Output Calendar with a sharp understanding of your audience's daily habits, you get to create content that resonates with your audience and actually drives results.

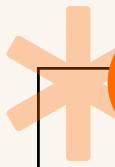# And just like any good habit, the more consistent and valuable you are, the more they'll come back for more.
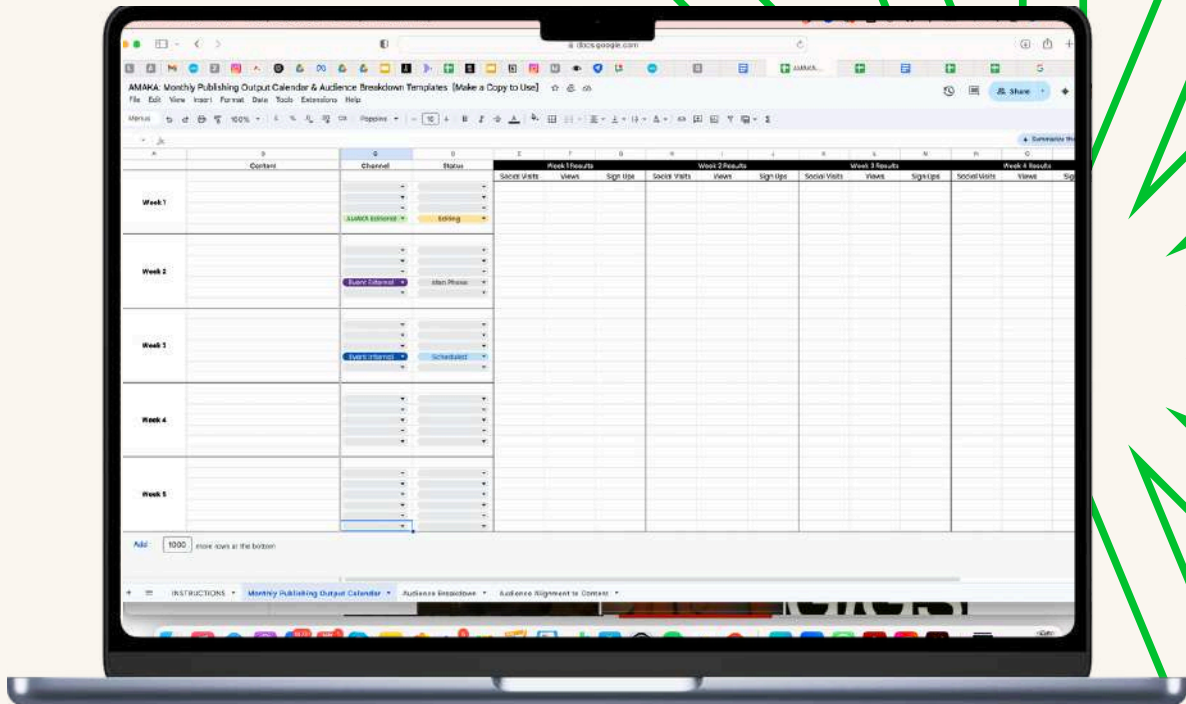
Access our Monthly Publishing Output Calendar & Audience Breakdown Templates *here*

04

Editorial Style Guide / Brand Guidelines

Editorial *Style Guide* / Brand Guidelines

Businesses cannot afford to be all over the place every time they "speak". You will have confused customers if your brand style is not well-defined. Imagine being formal today, slang-heavy tomorrow, and robotic the next; that doesn't present you as an *authoritative voice* in your industry.

This is why every startup or small business needs an Editorial Style Guide or Brand Guidelines doc.

An editorial style guide is your brand's communication bible. It defines your tone, voice, writing style, and language preferences. But most importantly, it ensures that everyone creating content for your business - everything from social media and blog articles to newsletters and website copy - sounds like you across the board.

A style guide ensures your audience recognises you immediately every time they come across your content across every platform.

Here's what a solid editorial style guide typically includes:

1. Brand voice and tone

Your voice is your brand's personality, which can be bold, playful, warm, or professional. On the other hand, your tone is how you adjust that personality depending on context.

2. Grammar and formatting rules

Decide how you want to handle punctuation, title capitalisation, emojis, etc. For instance, do you write in British or American English? Do you say "&" or always spell out "and" or do you use the Oxford style or not?

3. Word choices and brand phrases

Define if there are specific words, slogans, or taglines you want to use often or industry jargon you prefer to avoid. For example, some influencers have certain names they call their followers/fans, and some businesses sign off their emails in a consistent, branded way.

4. Audience-specific language

You should also tailor your content to how your customers speak. For instance, if you're targeting Gen Z founders, you'll write differently than if you're appealing to seasoned business execs.

A style guide serves as a time-saver and quality control tool. It ensures that every piece of content is consistent and on-brand, no matter who creates it - a freelancer, someone on your internal team, or a fractional team member from AMAKA.

Moreover, your editorial style guide becomes essential as you grow. The more people involved in your content process, the more important it is to maintain a unified voice. It presents you as a cohesive brand rather than just another business trying to post for the sake of posting.

At the end of the day, consistency builds trust, and your style guide ensures you earn it.
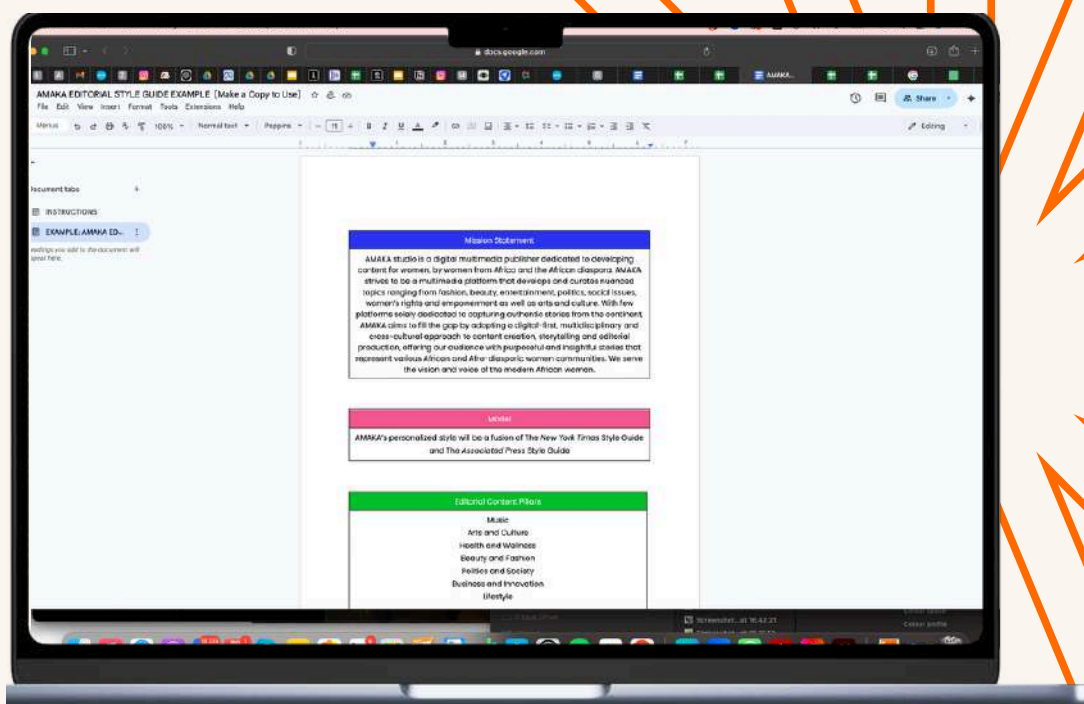
Access our Editorial Style Guide Example *here*