



THE
FASHION
CONNECTION

CONTENT
STRATEGY

shelleyfeist.com

Content Strategy for a Start-up Nonprofit

Client: Rebecca Ballard, The Fashion Connection

“Working with Shelley enabled us to look at our content in new ways. The ideas she shaped are helping us better create and deliver content to our users.”

Strategy developer: Shelley Feist

“Rebecca has a powerful vision for TFC. Even as she juggles the full plate of actions required of an early-stage nonprofit, Rebecca knew instinctively that investment in content strategy made sense now, so clarity of content gets fully baked into organization operations from the start.”

Entrepreneur Rebecca Ballard founded The Fashion Connection to empower the U.S. ethical and sustainable fashion community to connect with one another, promote conscious consumption, and collaborate on solutions to industry issues.

Challenge:

Develop a content strategy that will strengthen TFC's capacity to create content that grows and engages the community of ethical fashion entrepreneurs,

Current State- The Fashion Connection:

TFC launched with a successful live virtual event in April 2021.

After launch, Rebecca turned to energizing her team around bringing new users to the TFC community platform and creating compelling ways for sustainable fashion entrepreneurs and pros to engage.

As Rebecca and Shelley started working together, Rebecca characterized the current state as "we are 'on the radar', but I'm unsure if TFC is distinguished in people's minds. We're not seeing a lot of activity on the TFC platform – even though it is free."

We set out to collaborate on developing a content strategy.

Onboarding:

Shelley values an optimized client onboarding process.

She developed a custom onboarding meeting that allowed Rebecca to:

- Know what to expect
- Feel confident in her choice to work with Shelley
- Get a full understanding of Shelley's content clarity process
- Consider the value of the resulting insights and strategy that would come from committing to the process

Goals at Start:

Shelley proposed a set of goals for her work with TFC and Rebecca:

- Complete the foundational Content Clarity Process to fully align The Fashion Connection's mission with the needs of its' chosen audience.
- Get clarity on chosen audience and develop a content strategy that will result in growing a healthy online community of engaged people for the cause of ethical fashion.
- Ensure systems are in place to combat content creation fatigue and team burnout.

The Four Process Stages:

1. Assess/Empathize

What happens: We articulate the action problem statement and identify brand personality; we choose audience and we interview users.

2. Define

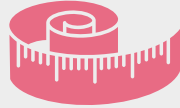
What happens: We capture your audience jobs-to-be-done; we define the desired future state.

3. Ideate/Prototype

What happens: We design and test new approaches and message frames.

4. Content Strategy

What happens: We synthesize inputs and create a content strategy responsive to your audience's needs.



Assess/Empathize

Through direct dialogue and a set of four free-form audience interviews, we worked to bring definition to TFC's action problem statement and brand personality.

Pre-interviews we met to work through Rebecca's articulation of current state and desired future state.

Shelley conducted interviews with four current TFC platform users. These free form interviews are pure gold!

After completion of the interviews, Shelley and Rebecca met to discuss how audience members described the desired future state.

This helped us ensure we were aligning TFC and user ideas of a desired future state – a critical foundation for the strategy.

In this Assess/Empathize state Shelley did a top-line review of TFC's website content, web traffic and social platform users.

Define

Shelley mapped the key journey points and jobs-to-be-done for each individual user interviewed. There were commonalities in the users' journeys and in their desires for a bright future for ethical fashion.

Their early experience is characterized by:

- style awareness and personal identity
- volunteer experiences
- international travel
- direct witness to poverty/war or unrest

Their "click moment"- awareness leading to their commitment to ethical fashion as a path for them - is characterized by:

- "If I care about fashion, what is my role to stop contributing to this?"
- "What are my consumer habits fueling?"
- Passion for travel, expression, and cultural craft



The current situation of users is:

- Developing the funding (for the business) takes so much effort.
- Resources feel limited for having the impact
- Big labels are talking – real action is lacking.
- Want “ethical fashion” to just be what FASHION IS

A live ideation session with TFC leadership helped stimulated a variety of ideas to reframe TFC opportunities around the question: “How might we?” This set of “how might we” ideas will serve the TFC board as they guide the organization to a vibrant future with impact.

Ideate and Prototype

Shelley created prototypes and a guide to shift TFC message framing to new approaches informed by user insights.

Prototype posts were developed for LinkedIn and Instagram.

These prototypes were fielded over a two-week period. Based on the performance of the prototypes, the revised frames of *Tools for Your Business* and *Values-Driven Business* appeared to be effective.

Content Strategy

Shelley developed the final content strategy over an approximately 14-day period, allowing time for crafting conclusions and guidance responsive to the user insights.

Building time and space around the identified concepts, themes and ideas provided room for more nuance to come through in the proposed voice and platform uses.

The final TFC content strategy:

- Guides TFC on content that will meet the needs of users
- Grounds TFC content in addressing user’s real-world challenges and opportunities
- Is a framework for presenting the TFC brand
- Supports the team in ensuring consistency of content purpose and voice

And from an operational standpoint the strategy should help:

- Realize efficiencies in content creation
- Improve the experience of TFC users/subscribers
- Allow for better governance and management of TFC content

Importantly the VOICE of TFC future content is identified as--

- Optimistic, helpful and unifying
- Addresses the challenges and hopes of TFC’s individual community members
- Shows users the better future
- Gives users the benefits upfront. Delivers insights, not just the path to information.



Shelley developed a content strategy for TFC that includes:

Topline actionable guidance, including suggestions around critical elements of TFC content creation:

- ~ imagery ~language learning
- ~ forms of listening to users ~presenting data w/visuals

And

- ~Themes
- ~Swipe file of boilerplate language for each of three themes
- ~Platform purpose and approaches (Email; Website; LinkedIn; Instagram)

Strategy fundamentals of:

- ~Audience future state
- ~Jobs-to-be-done
- ~Persona
- ~Voice
- ~Message architecture

As a complement to the content strategy, Shelley developed a final process report. The process report documents the work accomplished together, allowing for a repeat, refresh or review of the process in the future.

Results:

This description of our work together is being developed just a couple of weeks after Shelley turned the final report/strategy over to TFC.

We look forward to sharing more about the results in the near future!

For now we are working together to deliver training to TFC's passionate volunteers and to put measurements in place.

A whole-team approach is critical to the successful implementation of the strategy.

Shelley Feist



Visit The Fashion Connection



Rebecca Ballard



Client Feedback



We felt that Shelley really "got" us, and I appreciated her organization and leadership of this process. As the busy ED of a new nonprofit, it was a relief to be able to turn over something this important into Shelley's capable hands.

Shelley is a strategic thinker and deep listener. Working with her enabled us to look at our content in new ways. Shelley did a wonderful job presenting the content to our leadership, including our Board of Directors, and the ideas she shaped are helping us better create and deliver content to our users.

--Rebecca Ballard, Founder of
The Fashion Connection

A content calendar is not a content strategy.

I facilitate content clarity for purpose-driven organizations.

When you have an informed strategy, your chosen audience understands who you are, what you offer, what your values are, and, importantly, - *how the relationship with your organization enriches their life.*

You do so much good in the world – I would love to support you!

In a free, 30-minute call we can work together on your problem action statement – giving you a solid first step for building your content strategy.

shelley@shelleyfeist.com

202-247-0140

