

COLUMNS

3 ways to build content for sales and marketing

February 13, 2017



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Generating content for sales and marketing cannot be done in a bubble. But how can organizations resurface to start listening and engaging in a more effective way with their customers or readers?

There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but there are strategies that companies can use to keep their ears to the ground and tap into trends their customers would actually find value in ultimately leading to better engagement with marketing and sales efforts.

Know your audience inside and out
With content, one size does not fit all.

To know what resonates best with your audience, start by looking at the numbers.

Do a deep dive into your analytics to determine which of your past posts have been the most successful in terms of page views and unique visitors.

For example, which terms brought the most people in via organic searches? What keywords were people using to search your site? Are there any themes you notice between your best performing posts? Do they all use a similar style of headline (i.e. "how to" guides or lists)? Are these popular posts all around the same length?

These questions will help pinpoint the top-performing topics your audience engages with.

Beyond the type of posts you are publishing, Google Analytics can get extraordinarily granular with your audience profile that goes well beyond age and demographics.

Make sure to take a look at the "Interests" tab to delve into your audience's behavior and psychographics, which can help you generate topic ideas.

If you have a high percentage of shutterbugs, that is a pretty good indicator a guide on photography tips and camera products would perform well. Or, if you run a travel blog and have a large number of readers who are movie buffs, get creative with how to tie the two together.

Some examples would be a roundup of "The Best Movies for Long Haul Flights" or "The Top 10 Flicks to Inspire Instantaneous Wanderlust."

Always be on the lookout for ways to forge new connections that are relevant to the interests of your readers.

Capitalize on evergreen content

Named for an evergreen tree, which never sheds its leaves, evergreen content is content that essentially always stays fresh. It is not written to be timely or seasonal, but is meant to remain relevant forever.

Unlike a trends piece, which loses momentum over time, evergreen content should gain traffic the longer it has been online and indexed by Google.

Make a list of the keywords you want your site to be known for and start brainstorming from there.

The best evergreen content is written at a beginner level on a narrowly defined topic.

If you have a health and fitness blog, that could mean anything from "How to Lose Weight in 60 Days" to "How to Properly Stretch" or "How to Maximize Your Cardio Routine."

In short, these are topics that people will always be interested in and for which they will search.

Once you have a few evergreen articles created, you can get even more bang for your buck by repurposing them.

Create an infographic to present the content in another manner or interview experts who have successfully implemented tips similar to yours.

If you have a podcast or video blog, consider turning the text into audio or visual form. It is a way to give old content a new lease on life.

Keep a pulse on the trending topics

On the flip side of the coin, writing for current trends is a great way to get a quick, short-term boost in traffic by inserting yourself into the conversation about relevant, newsworthy topics.

Google Trends gives you get a leg-up by allowing you to filter by topic to determine keywords that consumers are searching for right now along with volume and competition.

For example, popular topics today would be current events such as the Grammys, Valentine's Day and New York Fashion Week, but could also include seasonal topics including best places to ski or the best new television shows.

Taking it one step further, performance marketing tools can help you view globally trending products.

Whether you write a feature piece on one of these standout products or a roundup gift guide, you can look into best-selling products by category and your research is essentially done for you.

THESE TIPS will not only help you earn more revenue by talking about products and topics that your readers really want, but you will also maintain your thought leader position by staying on top of market trends. It is a win-win for both yourself and your readers.

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