

MARKETING

How to produce effective digital content

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Digital marketing is a top 2021 initiative for CEOs. Image credit: Chief Outsiders

By **Mark Corona**

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As we gear up to enter the post-pandemic business recovery, it is critical for business executives to step up their digital programs, whether that includes digital marketing, digital engagement with customers and prospects, a healthier and higher-performing Web site or digital transformation of business processes.

Why now? According to the Boston Consulting Group, businesses that invested in order to take advantage of post-recession economic tailwinds developed a **14 percent increase in revenue and a 7 percent margin advantage** over their peers.

Think about what it would cost you to gain a 14 percent market share in normal times. Acting now gets you out of the chute faster and the advantage you develop is most likely sustainable as the economy recovers.

Digital imperative

A **recent study** by my company, Chief Outsiders, identified digital marketing as a top 2021 initiative for CEOs.

There are few businesses, even in the small to midsize category, that do not have a Web site, but to paraphrase George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, all Web sites are created equal, but some are more equal than others.

What makes a "more equal," high-performing Web site? Effective content.

Content best practices

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Find every way you can to demonstrate your expertise. Add "visible" to your brand.
- Start with topics you have expertise in and match them to what you think the market is interested in.
- Be practical. No one has the time or interest in understanding the strategy behind the scenes.
- Use co-authors or secondary research to add credibility.
- Offer brief, intrusive advice.

- Add links, including to your own and works from other authors.
- Make it visually interesting.
- Write and reuse, over and over.

Your content checklist

There is a consistent set of criteria that I use to evaluate content effectiveness. These criteria are useful in designing, authoring and evaluating nearly all forms of content. The criteria are:

- Intrusive: Will it get readers' attention?
- Believable: Are the claims made both clear and reasonable?
- Credible: Does it contain facts and third-party endorsements or awards?
- Customer-centric: Does it stress benefits, applications or features?
- Memorable: Will readers be able to associate the offer with the brand or company?
- Actionable: Does the content inspire readers to take action?

This content checklist can be used for all forms of content, such as Web site pages, social media posts, ads, articles, e-books, sales collateral and email campaigns.

What results will more effective content drive?

- You will be more visible, allowing more prospects to find you.
- You will look different than other experts who are less visible.
- You will drive leads and new business.
- You will improve your closing rates.
- You will gain prospects' trust.
- You will have great content for your proposals.

Finally, one of the best benefits from an investment in effective content is your ability to repurpose and reuse it. Quality content is one of the highest ROI marketing investments you can make.

These results are there for you if you are willing to develop content as the fuel for your digital initiatives.



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