10 Tips For Creating

Great Website Content

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Content is your website magnet and arguably the most important part in achieving your company's online marketing goals. Whether you're creating a new website, looking to overhaul an existing one, or just want a few improvements to your current site, a solid content strategy is essential.

A content strategy will guide the what, where and when of content creation. People visit your website for the content, and site design should be conducted with a content-first approach. However, even solid content ages with time, so if you haven't touched your site for a while it's probably due for a refresh. Read on for a few pointers on developing a strong, client-focused content strategy.

Identify your unique value proposition.

Your website should answer the why and how of your business, explaining how your goods and/or services provide value to your clients. Your value proposition should also be unique from other firms in the industry so you can differentiate yourself from your competitors. Use this as a basis for your website content. Your unique value proposition should be prominent on your website and the theme should continue throughout your content. It's critical to ensure that content is focused and relevant to your target audience. Some points to consider:

Why are you in business?

Why this particular business?

How are your goods / services aligned with your business purpose?

Do your goods / services function as a natural extension of your brand?

Are your goods / services niched down to your specific target client?

See bonus worksheet below on writing your Value Proposition.

TIP	
#2	

If you already have a website, audit your content.

Before creating new content, review any existing content and identify holes that need to be filled. Does anything need to be re-written? What segments are performing well and may not need as much work? Document current content and then identify what can stay, what needs to be refreshed and what needs to go. This will help identify how much new content you need to create and where to start.

TIP	
#3	

Target your buyer personas.

Personas or avatars are fictional characters you create based on your research, in order to represent the different user types that might use your service, product, site, or brand in a similar way.

When creating website content, companies often write about what they want to say rather than what their audience wants to read. ***It's essential to create content with your target audiences in mind and consider what's most important to them – they are who your content is truly for.*** Buyer personas help you visualize the type of people you want to reach, and better understand their behavior.

By determining your key buyer personas you can create personalized, targeted content relevant to their interests, wants, needs and goals. Your content is meant to answer their questions, educate them on industry topics, and address their pain points. Remember that you likely have more than one audience, and your website should have content that caters to each one. In addition to prospects, you should create website content targeted toward existing clients, potential clients, prospective employees, business partners, the media, etc.

Map your content to the prospect lifecycle.

Visitors to your site will be in different phases of their buying journey, from 'shopping the market' to 'ready to buy'. Your content should guide visitors and prospects down the sales funnel. Your website might have a variety of content that addresses different questions or concerns depending on where the prospect is in the client journey, from awareness to purchase to advocacy.

For example, a blog is a great tool for building awareness, educating prospects, and answering general questions about your services or industry. But for a prospect who is evaluating your firm for hire, for example, a case study or testimonial is more appropriate to demonstrate how you have helped other clients succeed.

Include only essential content.

Each piece of content on your website should have a specific purpose and target audience… truly, **less is more**. People use the internet to research and discover information on a variety of topics. Be sure to use your website content as an opportunity to educate prospects about trends and common questions in the industry, and for those further down the sales funnel, your company, process and services. Let them know how you can solve their particular business problem!

Some content suggestions for your website could be:

◆ Demonstrate industry leadership and knowledge via a blog
◆ Upsell with premium content (i.e. whitepapers, e-Books, videos, etc.)
◆ Info about your company services and/or capabilities
◆ Case studies and client testimonials
◆ Compelling "About" page
◆ Portfolio of projects

- Your team (or a team of one!), and how they add value for clients.
- If you do have employees, spotlight their talents and achievements
- Current job postings, if any
- Info on any unique processes or products you offer
- FAQs – visitors are looking for answers or they wouldn't be there
- Videos can be effective (perhaps featuring company culture, client testimonials, etc.)

TIP #6   Consider which pages your website will need.

Too little content can leave visitors wanting more, but too much can overwhelm and discourage them. For example, everyone is familiar with a home page – it's the front door to your website. But do you need a landing page, too? What is a landing page, for that matter, and how does it differ? From my FAQ topic:

> *A home page is the showroom of your site – it's where you greet visitors. A landing page has a more specific purpose – to convert a visitor to a client or customer via an offer or other incentive. Usually a landing page contains only the information the visitor needs to determine whether your offer is worth claiming.*

Typically visitors expect to see a home page, an about page (people like to know who they are dealing with) and a contact page. Beyond that the sky is the limit, with limit being the operative term - don't add a page just to have it. Make sure it serves a purpose in your overall online strategy!

Some standard web pages are:

- Home
- About
- Services and/or Products
- Contact

Optional additional pages:

- Landing page: only if you need it!
- Testimonials: can be combined with another page... About, for example
- Blog: if you have something to say to visitors
- E-commerce: this depends on your business.

TIP #7 Write compelling web copy.

I know... easier said than done. Think of web content as 'blocks' which are used to build your story. Take care to create copy that informs, educates and guides your visitors. The length of content blocks depends on the purpose of the page and your overall message, but blocks of 100-150 words are easy to digest. Google recommends 200 - 400 words per page for search optimization, but this is certainly not a hard and fast rule. Remember—your main focus should be quality, not quantity. Share interesting, relevant information that your audiences will value. Statistics, research, quotes and case studies are effective ways to add substance to your copy – using high quality images and graphics is also important. Remember to proofread thoroughly as nothing derails compelling copy and makes a bad first impression like typos or punctuation errors. Three reasons to avoid overly long text blocks and/or pages:

1. **Nobody wants to read long blocks of text.** People prefer instant gratification, they don't want to read a novel.

2. **Bounce rate increases.** A bounce rate is the percentage of visitors who leave your site within 5 seconds. Reasons for this vary from an instinctive dislike of what they see, to finding the page too confusing.

3. **Lower conversions.** Overly long text blocks can defeat the purpose of your site, which is to convert visitors to clients. You never want your website copy to get in the way of lead conversion.

TIP #8   Use language appropriate for your audiences.

When writing your content it's important to speak the same language as your audience. Avoid industry jargon, and instead use verbiage your audience will understand. If your audience is more technical, then you can use technical language in your content; otherwise, stick to simpler language that will resonate with your audience and demonstrate expertise and familiarity with your industry.

Apart from blog articles or other 'thought leadership' content, your style should be more conversational than formal. Write as if you were having a one-on-one conversation with a prospect or client. *Remember - your content is not about you, it's about current and prospective clients and how/why you are the best resource to help resolve their problem.*

TIP #9   Develop a schedule for new content.

A website is not a 'fire and forget' project. It should be a work in progress. Once your site is published and public, new content keeps your site fresh and current. Adding regular blog posts (with quality content) is one of the most effective methods of increasing SEO ranking and adding authority to your site. It's also a good idea to periodically revisit your site with an eye toward removing any stale content, improving your existing message, or adding new content as needed. One suggestion is to establish a schedule, perhaps quarterly, for website review. A defined strategy is the key to keeping your website fresh and relevant.

Monitor ongoing page performance.

The key to an effective web content strategy is to keep it consistently relevant to your audiences. This means regular performance monitoring of all of your content via Google Analytics or other tracking method. Review which pieces are being shared, which pages have the most views vs those not getting much traction, and how long visitors spend on each page. This helps identify where you are connecting with your audience and delivering valuable content, and where you need to change things up.

A defined content strategy is essential!

Having a solid online content strategy is essential in today's digital environment where quality content drives search engine rankings and greatly increases the chance of prospects discovering you. Well written content helps people find your website, but the quality and relevance of your content entices visitors to stay and explore. By following these steps, you will create a path to successful website content that will increase traffic, generate leads, and raise your business profile!

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Worksheet:
How To Define & Write Your Company Value Proposition

A value proposition is the product or service you promise to deliver to your customer. It's the reason people buy from you, and what makes your product or service more attractive and/or better than whatever your competitor offers. An effective value proposition is rarely about the product or service itself. Instead, it focuses on how your product or service solves a pain point or otherwise improves the customer's life.

A value proposition explains:

♦ How your products solves problems / improves situations

♦ What specific benefits customers can expect

♦ Why customers should buy from you over your competitors

A value proposition is NOT:

♦ A slogan

♦ A positioning statement

Elements of the value proposition:

♦ Headline: describes the end benefits you're offering to customers

♦ A subhead or paragraph: Detailed explanation of what you offer to whom and why

♦ 3 bullet points (optional): List primary benefits and/or features

♦ A visual element (optional) : A video or image to enhance your message

The process of creating a value proposition:

1) Identify customer benefits: make a list of all benefits your product offers to customers.

2) Link benefits to value offering: Identify what value your products bring to the customer.

3) Differentiate and position yourself: Make it clear who your target customer is, what you offer to them and how you are different.

What makes a good value proposition?

1) Clarity: easy to understand

2) Communicates specific results the customer will get

3) Explains how it's different and better

4) Can be read and understood in 5 seconds

Your value proposition should attempt to answer the following questions:

Who is your ideal client, customer, or target market?

Target Market 1:

Target Market 2:

What problems do you help them solve?

Problem 1:

Problem 2:

 Problem 3:

What benefits can they expect from working with you?

Benefit 1:

Benefit 2:

Benefit 3:

Why should people buy from you and not the competition?

Reason 1:

Reason 2:

Reason 3: