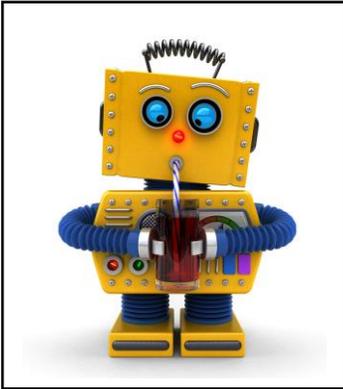


# Spiking the Content 'Kool-Aid'

By Trish Mahon



The more I read, research, and peruse the online realm --- the more worried I become. The lack of care in digital copy and content is somewhat of a pandemic. The World Wide Web has now become the Wild, Wild West of idle words.

Can one automate hot air?

Not too long ago 'publishing' came with an implied stamp of professionalism, competency and basic editorial standards. We've always assumed that online articles, news reports, and opinion pieces met the fundamental benchmarks of good writing.

Surely, someone is reviewing this stuff?

Alas, one can look past the dangling modifiers and sentence fragments --- but the robotic and uninspiring yammer often proves unforgivable. I'm not sure if journalism is dead, or if it's just had a lobotomy.

Recent surveys suggest that good content matters and many of us would actually prefer to read something atrociously written that actually says something --- as opposed to an essay in the 'King's English' that articulates nothing. A provocative rant gets more admiration than vacuous chatter. A rabble-rousing editorial is more likely to provoke a response than a gutless chalk talk.

Suffice to say, the art of content marketing has become a word stuffing exercise in algorithmic tedium. Unfortunately, there are no magical pixies or pieces of code that turns bad writing into prospects or unremarkable copy into qualified leads. Only good content does that.

Far too many "Content Directors" spend more time trying to program the delivery of binary babble than on the substance, relevance or quality of what they're actually trying to say, or hoping that the reader will do. There is an inherent abdication to process and procedure as opposed to outcomes and results that leaves marketing departments over budget and CEO's underwhelmed.

This is not a case of not seeing the forest through the trees, but rather of not understanding that a jungle is enveloping the forest.

News Flash --- just because you load some essays into an automated blast, doesn't mean they'll be effective. Just because you power up an optimization platform doesn't mean things will get read. Just because you juice the pipeline with big data doesn't mean you'll move the needle.

More importantly --- just because you '*build it,*' doesn't mean they will '*come*' --- and the presumption that they will is precisely why so many content marketing efforts fail.

Contrary to popular belief, engagement is not an 'easy button.' We're not really writing for algorithms. We're writing for human-rhythms. Passion still applies --- point of view still matters --- tone is still critical --- and connecting on an intrinsic level remains an essential element of selling anything.

Producing captivating copy in 2018 has become so uncommon and rare that it's now akin to spiking the 'Kool-Aid.' But there's no magical recipe, it simply entails good old fashion storytelling which science recently confirmed activates parts of the brain unreachable by Google spiders or bots. When we're told a story, everything in our sensory and motor cortex changes because we're hard-wired to make connections based upon language, emotion, and personal experience.

So, if you want to wildly improve your content marketing efforts, find yourself a storyteller. You'll likely save a lot time, money, endless programming hours and countless months of profitless frustration.