

How 401(k) Plan Providers Can Write Great Content

By Ary Rosenbaum, Esq.

When I started at a law firm over 16 years ago, my idea was to start a National practice that was devoted to ERISA and single-employer retirement plans. The idea was that utilizing the law firm's existing clientele to cross-sell my services would be a great way to jump-start it and develop relationships with other plan providers. Thanks to law firm partners who didn't want to help, I decided that developing content in the form of articles and social media that a plan provider could use to maintain and develop their business would do the trick. The law firm had other ideas and so did I, so we thankfully parted ways. With the freedom of my practice, I was able to develop content that helped 401(k) plan providers around the country produce results that helped me in the long run in developing a National ERISA practice that continues to grow. 401(k) plan providers have had issues in developing content, so the purpose of this article is some tips on how 401(k) plan providers can improve their marketing content, so it can help build results.

Most 401(k) plan provider marketing “sucks”

People tell me all the time how much they hate attorneys and it doesn't bother me because I'm not that kind of attorney. So when I say that most 401(k) plan provider marketing sucks, I don't understand why people get offended because there are quite a few retirement plan providers who are doing a pretty good job. The fact is that most professional services marketing "sucks" too and after reading this article, you'll

know why it doesn't have to be that way.

The purpose of content is to draw a dime.

Part of my charm or lack thereof is that I'm about getting to the point and the point of marketing is to draw business. Whether the content helps build your reputation (as mine has and will continue to do), the underlying reason to produce is to draw busi-

ing legal services. So the point is that articles about your philanthropic endeavors look nice for a small article in your newsletter, it isn't going to bring you business.

Who is the audience?

As a 401(k) plan provider, you need to determine who will be your audience for the specific articles/content. The audience depends on your practice. I was always lucky that I knew that the closest way to my ideal retirement plan sponsor clients were financial advisors. My audience was financial advisors who would eventually invite me to meet their clients because my content helped these financial advisors recruit and maintain their client base. It was articles geared towards helping plan sponsors take better care of their retirement plans as well as letting financial advisors know some good tips to help them expand their business. So in developing a content development plan, you have to identify your audience, i.e., the people who can become clients or get you clients. If you are a third-party administrator or financial advisor, that might be plan sponsors, accountants, or other professionals. Find out who brings you business and develop content that will interest them.

Target the audience

The way you should write is based on the audience you are trying to target. My humor writing works for most of my audience, but if my audience were other lawyers, my references to *Caddyshack* and *The Shawshank Redemption* probably would get lost.



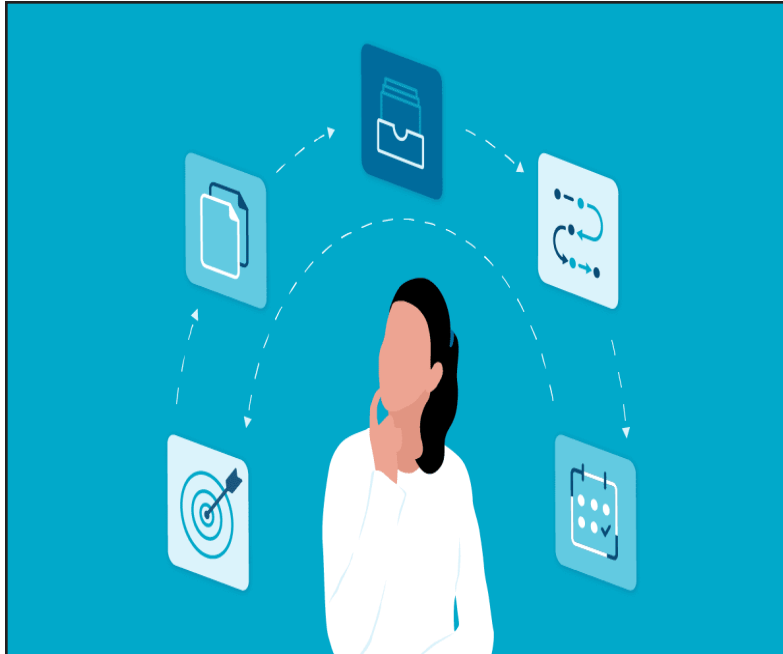
You will get positive interaction when the content fits the audience. So figure out who the audience is for the content you're writing and make sure the article fits the target. Articles drafted for plan sponsors are certainly going to be using more basic retirement plan terms than if you are writing an article geared towards other retirement plan professionals.

Don't write over their heads.

If the point of content is to get a positive interaction with your audience, one of the worst things you can do is write over the heads, meaning that you are writing in a way that your audience won't understand. I have seen this most often with other attorneys, who feel that their content is less about having an interaction with their audience and more about making themselves look so damn' smart. I don't have such issues. If you write articles that are above the comprehension level of your targeted audience, your message is going to be ignored or get lost. The only reason I think I have been successful in producing content is that I always make sure that what I write is easy to understand by the targeted audience. Potential clients are interested in hiring you trust that you know the technical aspect of your retirement plan services, so being overtly technical in your writings isn't going to spark interest. I had a boss who used to have to listen to his actuary who would not only stammer in his speech but give a highly technical explanation that no one understood and my boss said loudly that he only wanted to hear the bottom line. Since he would just drain on and on; we avoided taking this actuary out on sales meetings because his talk would never be understood or comprehended by potential clients.

Less is More and More Won't be Read

Any content you write should be short and sweet. Effective content isn't a serious Russian novel. Today, it seems everyone has less time to do anything and they have less time to read. If your intended audience sees your content and they think it's rather too voluminous to read, they are going to take a pass. You're writing content that is going to inspire interaction and business, so



try not to turn your content into a Russian novel. Back before the Department of Labor rained on our parade, multiple employer plans (MEPs) were all the rage. I know, I started one. I reviewed a brochure from one of the competing MEPs and it was 22 pages long, plan sponsors interested in joining this MEP were bound to be lost on page 2. When it comes to writing content, less is more, and more isn't going to be read.

Content isn't advertising.

An article or blog piece you write is content, or information targeted to a specific audience. To be effective, it can't be advertising because the audience will treat it the way people treat those Nigerian scam emails, they will tune it out. Writing good content is like the icebreaker at a singles scene, it is a way to start a conversation with the audience you are trying to target. It is a cost-effective way to build a reputation that will grow your business and raise your profile to a level you never thought possible and if your content is all about shilling your services, it isn't going to be that effective because readers of your materials will tune out your sales pitch as well as yourself.;

Blog Too

Aside from just writing articles, the other major outlet there is blogging. Blogging requires at least 2 posts a week and it should be shorter pieces of content than one of your articles or newsletters. I compare blogging and writing articles to how my favorite band Aerosmith records music. Compare articles to songs and compare blogging to riffs that can eventually develop into songs.

Many of my JDSupra articles were developed first as blog pieces. Then distribute your blog posts through LinkedIn by posting them on profiles and relevant groups, as well as Facebook, and Twitter. Blogs can also be recycled as part of an e-mail blast. Great content is evergreen content; it can be constantly reused in different formats to reach out to your audience.

Interaction with old media

Getting your name in the newspaper is great, but it won't develop clients for you. When I hired my P.R. advisor, I was told that my dream of appearing in the Wall Street Journal would take time after

I appeared in other publications. After firing the p.r. Advisor, I did appear in The Wall Street Journal two months later, because I posted an opinion of mine regarding the use of exchange-traded funds in 401(k) plans on Twitter. Getting in the Journal was great, but I never had a client call me because of it. Appearing in what I call old media (print and television) helps you build credibility, but social media fleshes out that credibility. My late father-in-law once said: "If your mouth is shut, people will think you're stupid. If you open your mouth, then they know you're stupid." On the flip side, appearing in old media, people will think you're smart. Reading your well-written social media, then they know you're smart.

THE ROSENBAUM LAW FIRM P.C.

Copyright, 2025 The Rosenbaum Law Firm P.C. All rights reserved.

Attorney Advertising. Prior results do not guarantee similar outcome.

The Rosenbaum Law Firm P.C.
734 Franklin Avenue, Suite 302
Garden City, New York 11530
(516) 594-1557

<http://www.therosenbaumlawfirm.com>