Content Strategy & Social Media

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Content is King

- Regular content updates are useful to your customers and attractive to search engines

- Content updates can easily be done in-house via a blog
  - Easier to write than polished sales copy
  - Shows your customers that you're active and involved
  - Search engines love 'em!

- Include your keywords in your blog entries and other website updates

- Your overall web strategy must include a plan for updating your site regularly

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Content Updates: DIY or Outsource?

- You will need to consider:

- What technology will you use for updates?
  - Content Management System (CMS)
  - Contribute or other HTML Editor
  - Updates implemented by a web company

- Who will write the content?

- If you don't have the technological skills, writing ability, and time in-house, you should outsource your content updates to make sure they get done

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Social Marketing

- A great way to get more mileage out of your content

- "Write once, publish many" – take the same content and put it in all the different places your customers are

- Update your social media accounts whenever you update your website/blog

- Most important social media outlets:
  - Facebook - fans
  - Twitter – followers
  - LinkedIn – professional connections

- Be sincere – this should not sound like sales copy!

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Content Plan

- Every page is a raffle ticket!
- Ideally, new content is added every week (52 updates)
- Every federal holiday (10)
- Monthly promotions or offers (12)
- Tips/Reminders for spring cleaning of units, preparation for winter, weatherization, first heat wave, pollen, strange weather (24)
- Testimonials or job photos
  (ideally 52 but 1 to 2 a month would suffice)
- Articles – federal tax credits,
  energy saving tips, etc (6)

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How To Write Your Own Website Content

How do I come up with ideas for things to write about?

- **Look online for ideas.** "Content hubs" are websites where writers post articles that others can take and reuse (providing proper credit, of course - you can't pretend that you wrote them yourself).

- **Find your niche.** Everyone is an expert about something, and your area of expertise is your business.

- **Identify your audience.** Once you've come up some ideas for what you'd like to write about, figure out who your audience will be, and direct your content to that audience.

- **Brainstorm.** Every niche has endless possibilities when you start thinking about it. When you first launch your website, have a brainstorming session (include your employees, too, if it's appropriate).

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Ideas for Content Writing

- "Top Ten Reasons to..."
- "Top Ten Tips About...."
- "Top Ten Mistakes People Make When They..."
- "Top Ten Myths About..."
- "FAQ About..." (or, once every week or month or quarter, you could answer one customer question in more detail)
- "What You Should Do This Month/This Season/This Year To Make Sure That..."
- "Christmas/Hanukah/Kwanzaa/Easter/Passover/Ramadan Is Coming, So..."
- "A New Scientific Study Has Shown That..."
- "A Short Bio of X, Who Uses Our Product Because..."
- "A Short Bio of Y, Who Joined Our Company Recently..."
- "Don't Forget To..."
- "How to Prevent..."
- "Did You Know That..." (some interesting tidbit)
- etc!

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How To Write Your Own Website Content

What style should I use when I write content for my website?

- **Write in your own voice.** The style you choose should be your own.

- **Write simply and clearly.** If people of different ages and education levels will visit your site, write for the youngest and least educated of your visitors.

- **Skip the technical jargon.** Tailor your message to the level of knowledge of that a customer will have when approaching you for the very first time.

- **Write to your perfect prospect.** A great technique for overcoming writer's block and finding your voice is to visualize yourself writing a personal letter to your perfect prospect.

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How To Write Your Own Website Content

How do I write content that will get the attention of my website visitors?

- **Identify and clearly communicate your Unique Selling Position (USP).** Your USP is that special thing or combination of things - quality, service, expertise, talent, speed, skill, efficiency, environmental sensitivity, price - that sets you apart from your competition.

- **Get your readers' attention with a compelling headline.** A headline is the "ad for the ad". It should generate curiosity, or promise an attractive benefit. It should get people excited about reading more.

    "Federal Tax Credits for Energy Efficiency"
    or
    "Get Up to $1,500 in Tax Credits for Installing a New High-Efficiency Furnace"

- **Add bonuses to make your offer irresistible.**

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How To Write Your Own Website Content

- **Start with a slam-bang opening.** Is your opening interesting/provocative/arresting? Does it make the reader stop for a moment and really pay attention?

- **Focus on a main theme.** Whatever you talk about in your opening should be what you talk about in the rest of the copy. Don't dilute your message by talking about too many different things.

- **Leave the reader with a clear "take-away" message and call to action.** Before you start writing, figure out what you'd like your piece to accomplish, and end on that note.

- **Strike a balance between logic and emotion.** "Next winter, you can snuggle up in front of your new wood stove on a snowy Saturday evening, knowing that you're heating your home with inexpensive, renewable energy."

- **Make it positive, enthusiastic, and upbeat.** Focus on the positive aspects of what you're selling, rather than on the negative aspects of the competition's products.

- **You should say "YOU" a lot.** Whenever you say "you", your reader will automatically translate to "Me" and "Mine", and he or she will feel personally involved.

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How To Write Your Own Website Content

- **Offer proof.** Testimonials and guarantees are essential.

- **Always review your facts.**

- **Proofread, proofread, proofread!** Always proofread your content three times, and have someone else check it too if at all possible.

- **Put your content aside for a day before you post it.** That way, you'll have a fresh perspective on it when you make your final revisions.

- **Get someone else to read what you've written to make sure it flows well.**

- **Avoid "advertorial" and repetitive copy, especially in blog posts.**

- **Add a P.S.** People pay special attention to a P.S.

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Web Writing Considerations

Opportunity: The web makes it possible for the reader to respond instantly.

Ask yourself these three questions:

- **What do I want the visitor to do on this page?** Tell the visitor, as clearly as possible. Highlight it visually, if you want.
- **What does the visitor need to be persuaded to do the action?** Give him the reasons, evidence, or (gentle) emotional push he needs.
- **What does the visitor need in order to actually do the action?** Make sure you provide it, and make it as easy to find and use it as possible.

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Web Writing Considerations

Challenge: The computer screen makes reading uncomfortable.

- You should compensate for this discomfort by making your website as easy to read as possible.

- Your readers will see your headline first and pay the most attention to it.

- The first line of text should convey your primary message

- Paragraphs should be brief (1-4 sentences).

- Use bulleted lists whenever possible.

- Highlight important ideas in bold.

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Keys to Successful Blog

- Update the content weekly
- Allow for tool downloads
- Use catchy headlines and branding
- Use quick buttons to let people save your blog to any social bookmarking tool they use
- Add tags to each to post so there posts can appear in the search engine results
- "claim" your posts first by bookmarking them in del.icio.us
- Display comments on your blog
- Add links to your blog
- Syndicate your content in RSS
- Allow visitors to subscribe via RSS
- Submit your own blogs to Digg or Marktd
- Tell other bloggers about your blog

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Content Updates

How can a company help you update your content?

- Have an easy-to-use Content Management System (CMS) that makes it simple to update your site regularly.

- A user-friendly blogging software makes it possible for even non-technical employees to post regular blog entries - ideally every day, but at least once a week.

- **If you don't want to write and post new content yourself, you can outsource it!**

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What is Social Media?

- Social Media is a way to communicate online with various groups of people

Types of social media:

- Blogs

- Social Networks: MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn

- Wikipedia

- Bookmarking sites: Delicious, Digg, Sk*rt

- Yahoo! and Google Groups

- Message Boards/Newsgroups/Forums

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What Should I Do?

- Go online, read what consumers have said about you, reply to questions and negative comments

- Create profiles on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn

- Post your TV ads on UTube, announce new marketing campaigns via Facebook, post feeds to Twitter, create a blog

- Make sure to give customers tools to communicate with you (survey, contact form, blog)

- Engage in conversation on your blog. Post on other blogs

- Be Patient. You must use combination of multiple communication tools to be successful

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Social Media Best Practices

- Use it as another tactic to communicate your message
- It cannot be controlled, bad pitches are exposed and ridiculed
- Social media is about sharing information that is important to your audience
- Social media is about relationships and friendships
- Make sure to respond to any comments in a timely manner
- Always include relevant links to more information about your blog
- Use it to promote your brand by launching online marketing campaigns
- Entice your customers to join your social network

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What Results Should I expect?

- Generate more website traffic by connecting with people and inviting them to your site

- It helps you build brand awareness

- It allows you to better manage your brand

- It helps you generate more leads and sales

Why Should A Company Care?

- 73% of active online users have read a blog
- 45% have started their own blog
- 39% subscribe to an RSS feed
- 57% have joined a social network
- 83% have watched video clips
- Only 18% of TV ad campaigns generate positive ROI
- 90% of people who can skip TV ads, do

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Why Should a Company Care?

- 91% of people trust the recommendations of other consumers

- The new communication is via dialog that is more authentic, transparent, consumer driven

- Social Media is and will be a critical factor in the success or failure of any business

- It doesn't cost your anything!

http://econsultancy.com/us/blog/3982-10-superb-social-media-presentations

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Why Should a Company Care?

Consumers are talking about your company right now

- 34% post opinions about products and services on their blog

- 36% of people think more positively about companies that have blogs

- 32% trust bloggers opinions on products and services

  Consumers read blogs and share them with others

  You must participate in social media for a better control of your brand

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ROI through Social Media

- Define relevant success metrics (# of leads, total $$ sold, new subscribers, satisfaction, loyalty)

- Set campaign goals based on these metrics. The return is to meet or exceed these goals

- Implement campaign, review metrics and goals

- Eliminate those strategies that didn't work

- Repeat the campaign

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QUESTIONS????

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