In my last column, I asked the question: Is your business reaching its digital marketing potential? I suggested that today’s digital marketing channels can help level the playing field, often giving small businesses an increasingly greater number of opportunities to compete successfully in the online marketplace. Cost-effective, targeted, measurable, and scalable, digital marketing allows you to help analyze your efforts quickly, and adjust accordingly to help achieve optimal results and a higher ROI.

I gave some suggestions of how to implement this type of marketing advantage by starting with social media. I need to tell you that the secret to all of this is that **Content is King.** CEOs must develop a strategy for your business’ content. Let me explain.

**Content strategy is the process of planning and developing content for your business.** Whether your content consists of articles, press releases, blog posts, infographics, videos, white papers, images, web pages, case studies, social media updates, or reports, the strategy behind it should take into account your audience and industry.

Effective content is valuable, timely, share-worthy information and, most importantly, help reflects your brand’s positioning and aligns with your business goals.

**Why is this important?** There is a constant influx of information online. Good, useful content breaks through the clutter, helps give your credibility, and establishes your brand as a thought leader. It can attract new customers and engage current ones. When shared through social media, your content will aid in the expansion of your digital footprint. Even more important, being thought of as a relevant content provider in your category can have a very positive impact on your search engine rankings – helping you to appear above your competitors, driving clicks to your site.

Any company that creates and distributes online content on a regular basis should probably have a content strategy. It gives your content focus and direction to help you reach your short-term and long-term goals. A content strategy often forces you to define your customer and their needs and develop content topics that can give them what they want, in the way that they want it.

**How do you do this?** Start by planning. Once you have established a content strategy, it is time to create a content calendar. This calendar will help you organize and schedule the production and publishing of all your different forms of content.
Whether you use a list format or spreadsheet, your calendar should include areas for topics, article titles, keywords, development deadlines, distribution due dates, social channel and any other information that is important to you and your team. You can start by creating a calendar for blog posts, and then repurpose the content across other channels such as social media. By planning your calendar at least a month or two in advance, you should have enough lead time to adjust your content accordingly to industry trends and new business developments.

Watch for my next columns on how to take this to the market place.

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