

# Marketing

*Tools and tactics for the business-to-business expedition*

## Content marketing: A holistic approach to business health

### **Content marketing:**

- Validates the brand message
- Supports the marketing strategy
- Positions your company website as the go-to industry resource
- Helps build brand awareness
- Asserts thought leadership
- Breaks down resistance and augments salespeople's efforts
- Builds trust and credibility
- Speaks to your prospects' pain and what matters most to them
- Is valuable to the reader
- Pre-qualifies your organization and its products and services
- Includes a call to action
- Is measurable
- Captures data when possible (e.g., identifies web visitors, popular downloads, returning visitors)
- Pulls with relevance vs. a one-size-fits-all push
- Differentiates your company and its products and services
- Offers readily available resources/content for your social media program
- Provides a base of information, not just for customers and prospects, but for your entire organization and sales channel

*You've got a pain that just won't quit. Where do you turn for relief? Odds are you won't pick up the phone book. More likely you'll choose the healthcare provider whose website has inspired your confidence by providing expert, relevant information.*

*Your prospects and customers have various professional pains they want to alleviate, and they're looking for relevant, trustworthy guidance. How can you ensure that you'll be the one they turn to for help?*

### **Cure what ails 'em**

More than ever, buyers across all product/service categories conduct independent research before making decisions—on their own terms and their own schedules. They're constantly seeking out content that will provide them with expertise and solutions to make their jobs easier.

Content marketing is the strategy of developing and distributing information that's valuable to your customers and prospects. When administered correctly, content marketing can increase mind share, brand awareness, leads, and ultimately, sales.

### **Diagnostic techniques**

Before you develop a treatment plan, you'll need an accurate diagnosis. Examine your prospects' symptoms, and determine where they're hurting. Business buying decisions are often made in an effort to solve a problem. To identify it, review up-to-date keyword and market research, concerns heard by customer service and sales reps, and industry association news.

Let your prospects know you understand their pain. If your product, service, technology, lead time, or expertise addresses the customer's problem, make sure you communicate

that. You'll build credibility, thought leadership, and relationships.

### **New age hoax or proven treatment?**

If all this sounds familiar, that's no surprise. In the old days, 'content' took the form of press releases, printed case studies, or a PowerPoint delivered at a trade conference. The cost and time required for printing and distribution limited what and how much information could be disseminated.

Due to the broad reach, speed, and ease of use of the internet, there are almost no restrictions on publishing information. Bring those proven, old-school remedies up to date: post those articles on your website (and elsewhere) and turn that PowerPoint into a YouTube video. All of a marketer's content should be available online, with appropriate pieces also available as downloads and/or printed as sales tools, direct mail, or handouts.

### **Effective delivery systems**

So you've reached a diagnosis and need a treatment plan. At this stage, you may want to consult with specialists for help. Look to sales, product development, customer service, and the C-suite for information about specific solutions. If interviewing, writing, editing, and search engine optimizing copy aren't your strengths, consider getting help from a pro (e.g., Borns B2B's wordsmith).

It's worth investing in the development stage to create content that's engaging, intriguing, valuable, and relevant. Effective content will keep your audience coming back for more. Create content for a variety of formats, making it appropriate for various audiences and messages. Repurpose

content to save time and money, and ensure consistency across mediums: re-create a PowerPoint as an FAQ page, a white paper as a news release, product-specific brochures as a website section, and so on.

Here's just a sampling of the formats you can use to deliver your content:

- Case studies
- White papers
- Newsletters via print, online, PDF
- FAQs page on website
- Market/application web pages
- Downloadable brochures, sell sheets
- Trade show exhibits and handouts
- Dealer/distributor locator on website
- Product usage guide
- Market-specific literature
- Online, interactive, print catalog
- 3D renderings and animations
- Website calculator tool
- Social media
- YouTube channel
- Videos of demos or a virtual tour
- Podcasts
- News releases/news section on web
- Articles pitched to trade journals

### ***Targeted treatment***

Provide informative, engaging content so readers will opt in to receive email and other media from you. Use direct marketing (snail mail followed by HTML email) to lure qualified prospects to start a conversation that eventually moves them to inquire, request a quote, and place an order. Effective content gets your prospects in the habit of reading your direct mail (and scanning your QR codes),

opening your emails, clicking through to your landing pages, and looking forward to the pain relief your content provides.

### ***A spoonful of sugar***

Effective content shouldn't be hard to swallow. Don't force a blatant sales pitch; instead, create content that's engaging and relevant, that cuts through the clutter and speaks to the customers' point of view. Effective content subtly positions your organization as an expert while helping relieve the prospect's feelings of risk, all without coming on too strong.

Address each stage of the buying cycle and different audiences. Purchasing wants to know price and ROI, engineering needs technical specs, and executives need to hear how you'll help their bottom line.

### ***Positive side effects***

As an added benefit, fresh, relevant content makes your website a darling of the search engines. The best meta tags in the world can't yield results by themselves—they need copy that backs them up. Search engines reward pages with copy and meta descriptions that include the same terms. When you search engine optimize (SEO) your content with commonly searched keywords, you further improve your rankings.

### ***This won't hurt a bit***

Your organization has a healthy dose of knowledge and expertise to share. If you need help with packaging and delivery, contact Randy Borns at 616.502.2213 or [randy@borns.com](mailto:randy@borns.com) to learn more about Borns B2B's content marketing services.



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