

Content Generation Strategies for Small Businesses

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While large corporations have locked on to the power of content to generate leads and exposure, small businesses are still struggling to understand why and how content can help their business succeed. Many owner-operators produce their own content, and if you're not an experienced writer or videographer, you may find yourself floundering.

In a recent Inbound Now podcast, Ricardo Bueno of Diverse Solutions explains his content generation strategy for small businesses. "You need to create content that not only engages with your audience, but shows them you know what you're talking about—that you're the local expert."

Ricardo specializes in niche blogging and lead generation for businesses based in a specific location. He works with real estate agents, restaurants, consultants and retail spaces to put in place content generation strategies any small business owner can follow.

Content as Customer Education

Ricardo advises clients to make two lists. "On the first list, write everything you know about your industry. So if you're a real estate agent, brainstorm everything you know about real estate—from how to price your home for sale to all that technical jargon." These ideas provide the basis for blogs, articles, videos and social media updates that inform and educate your audience.

Lisa Horn, Founder and Chief Content Officer of Why Content Matters, stresses the importance of creating content that helps people. “When blogging, resist the temptation to sell. While blogs are useful marketing tools, they shouldn’t be filled with marketing copy. That’s a huge turnoff for readers. Instead, posts should be informative, educational, even inspirational. And again, they must be written with what your audience needs to know, not what you want to say or sell.”

Lisa suggests profiles of case histories that demonstrate how your company solves customer problems. This is a great way for readers to understand the application of your products and services—and is much more persuasive than any marketing copy.

Personal Content to Engage, Entertain and Build Community

On the second list, Ricardo suggests business owners write down some of their hobbies and interests—the things that you’re passionate about. “You don’t just want to be a press release—you want to share things you might have in common with your readers.”

“For example, a real estate agent in the Vancouver area created a unique idea—for 365 days he shared something different to do in his local area. Instead of sell sell sell, he videoed himself giving café reviews and went to local events and blogged about them. At Christmas time he drove down one of the streets and pointed out the unique Christmas lights on display. He was selling the community before he sold the houses. By the end of that year he had tens of thousands of followers.”

Ricardo’s real estate agent is a great example of a content strategy that’s highly engaging without getting too personal. “You’ve got to create a balance between personal and professional content. Before you begin writing content, ask yourself ‘what sorts of things am I willing to write about? What do I not want to write about? To what extent do I want to divulge my personal life?’”

You have to maintain some of that professional posture, and since anything you say on the Internet will remain there forever, it's good business practice to ensure you're not alienating or offending potential leads.

Content generation isn't something you can just dive into without a plan. You need to devise a strategy that not only gives customers and clients valuable information, but engages them on a personal level. By using your own interests and experiences as the basis for content, you build likeability and trust with you audience. And in business, that trust is vital for success.

Do you have a content strategy in place for your business?

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