

— SOCIAL MARKETING — ADVANTAGE



GUIDE 4:

ENGAGING CONTENT ATTRACTS
CUSTOMERS

Engaging Content Attracts Customers

Content is what makes the web go around. Content is what makes people visit your website, it's what encourages people to follow you on social media and it's what eventually turns your visitors into *fans* rather than just followers.

Your social media strategy should largely be about sharing content. That means directly posting images, videos and text to your social media accounts but it also means posting to your blog or website and then *sharing* that on social media.

But this strategy will only work so long as the content you are providing is top quality and highly engaging. So now the question is: how do you ensure that this is the case?

Quality Blog Posts

In a future report, we will be talking about the importance of providing value. We discuss the difference between generic content and content that makes people want to come back, makes them want to share and generally keeps them engaged.

But what's also important is that the blog post itself is high quality. The aim here is that when someone clicks on a link you share to Facebook, or to Twitter, they can rely on themselves getting a certain level of quality and having a certain experience.

So how are you going to ensure that this is the case?

Here are a few tips:

Writing Quality

Your writing quality *needs* to be top notch. Poor English can actually seriously undermine your message and even if the content of what you're saying is good, you'll risk losing the trust and losing the authority that you need to build that audience and gain their trust initially.

So how do you write well? What makes written content 'good' in the first place?

The tip is to remember what the purpose of writing is in the first place: to convey information (value). And that means you want to do this as quickly and efficiently as possible so that the reader is getting the maximum ROI (return on investment, with the investment in this case being *time*).

This means you shouldn't fill your pages with jargon or flowery language. Forget showing off and forget demonstrating just what a great writer you are. Instead, focus on delivering that content efficiently.

The purpose of using a larger vocabulary or jargon should only be to provide additional meaning with fewer words. In other words, you might choose a different word because it implies a subtly different meaning and thereby makes your text more nuanced. Only when it serves this purpose, should you get 'fancy'.

You also need to make sure that your writing is arranged in such a way that it won't put off your visitors. That is to say that you shouldn't make your blog posts consist of a single wall of text, as this will put your visitors off of reading and many of them will be instantly driven away.

Break your text up with lots of paragraphs and headings. Make sure that you use a large and easily readable font and think about your site's mobile friendliness. Remember that a lot of people are going to be reading this content on their mobile devices rather than on a computer!

Making Your Posts More Sharable

Having done this, your content is now going to be more readable and people who visit your pages will now stay on them for longer. This is a good start!

But you also want to make sure that as many people as possible see that content to begin with. Remember that if you share something through your Facebook page, only around 10-20% of your audience will see that come up in their homefeed and only a small percentage of *them* will pause long enough to notice!

So, you can't rely on your followers – you need them to share with their larger network and bring in even more visitors.

And you do this by making your content more sharable.

Some ways to achieve that include:

Using the Right Meta Descriptions: A good meta description can go a long way to bringing in more visitors. This should outline why people should visit your blog post and it should provide a brief summary so that it's clear who the post is for. This is the text that is going to appear underneath the headline when your content is shared, so make sure that it does its job and really reels in those visitors!

Using the Right Title: Using the right titles for your posts is incredibly important if you want to ensure that you get the most clicks possible. The aim here is not to create clickbait (meaning that your articles ‘trick’ people into clicking them) but to create content that is genuinely click-worthy and then *sell* that content in the title. You do this by explaining how the article provides value in a subtle way and by making sure that people can see how and why it is different from other content on the web. At the same time, you need to make sure that the content has some kind of emotional hook and gains an emotional response – it’s emotion that makes people click, not logic!

As an example, I recently wrote an article discussing the diet of a top athlete. When researching the article, I learned that this athlete also used supplements that had a ‘nootropic’ effect – a smart drug effect. That is inherently an interesting angle and it’s something that isn’t often covered in similar posts. It also has a very emotional gut-punch of a reaction because the words ‘smart drugs’ conjure images of drugs (which are illegal!) as well as success, superintelligence, science fiction... it’s a powerful combination!

So instead of a generic title like: “NAME’S Diet and Supplements Revealed!” I made something more interesting: “How NAME Stays Lean, Strong and Mentally Agile Using a Unique Diet and Supplements and Smart Drugs Regime”.

Now anyone with an interest in that athlete is sure to be interested in reading the article! Always tell your story, find the unique angle and look for the emotional hook. And if you want to see an example of a social brand that does this *very* well, then check out ‘IFL Science’.

Using the Right Images: Using the right images is also crucial if you want your social posts to really stand out and get clicked. The reason for

this is that your images are going to appear alongside your link and the title and this is going to be one of the first things that people see.

Images are content in themselves on social media – especially on Instagram or on Pinterest. So, I'm not going to go into detail on the how just yet. But the 'what' is important.

To sell your content and get people to click, your links should include images that are high definition, that are the right dimensions (ideally 16:9) and that manage to stand out and get attention. The way that an image stands out and gets attention is by featuring something that naturally draws the human eye.

The very best thing for doing this? Human faces!

Creating Great Images

Okay, but what if images are the main thrust of your content? What if we're talking about an Instagram profile here?

In that case, you need to know how to create truly stunning images that are going to really stand out and get attention. And to do that, you need to know how to create an image that offers value.

Value through images is a little different however. You don't convey information or provide 'entertainment' as such. Instead, most images should provide value by being inspirational in some way, or by being attractive in and of themselves.

This starts with the right technology. If you're going to run an Instagram account as a major aspect of your social media push, then you should make sure that you have a great camera to back that up. It *is* possible to

have success on Instagram with a smartphone, but you'll have significantly *more* luck if you use a camera such as a DSLR or a mirrorless camera with a good lens. The results will be much crisper, more dramatic and better quality all round.

You should also take time to think about lighting and composition. Try to learn what makes a good photo. Very often this means taking images that tell a story in some way and that are dynamic and exciting.

In other words, your images shouldn't just be squarely focussed on the 'subject' with that element right in the middle of the frame. If you have a square photo with an image of a product or a person in the middle, it will be dull and unexciting. On the other hand, having a photo of the subject in the foreground off to one side with something more exciting in the background infers some kind of link. This creates depth by focussing on multiple levels and drawing the eye in and it suggests that the foreground element in some way *created* the background element.

Likewise, instead of having a photo of someone working out, you might show a dumbbell that has been thrown to one side with a pair of weight lifting gloves. Again, this tells a story in a more engaging manner.

And ultimately, this helps to 'sell the dream'. It sells the lifestyle and the ideas that you're hoping to promote, and by doing that, it helps you to make your content more interesting *and* helps to promote your brand and the value proposition of your products and services.

Create Video

Want a type of content that is *inherently* high value and that is perfect for social media?

Then create video. Videos allow you to convey more information in less time, and require less attention and effort from the viewer. Not only that, but videos allow your viewers to feel as though they are really getting to know you and getting familiar with your values and your persona. This helps to inspire more trust.

Video takes a lot more effort to *create* however and this means that you can actually raise the reputation of your brand. Anyone can make written content, but making video is significantly more challenging – thus simply by producing video, you demonstrate your organization to be professional and capable of offering high value.

Content On Social Media is Two Way

If you want to create great content for social media, then it is not enough to think of it purely in terms of what you want to sell, or what you want to say. You also need to engage with your users and viewers by responding to what *they* have to say and by inviting them to contact you or get in touch.

This is important because it is what will drive a sense of trust and it can greatly enhance your brand's appeal and engagement.

So how do create content that is two way?

Here are a few suggestions:

- Use Facebook Live and go live on Instagram, Periscope – this lets your viewers interact with you directly and can be highly transformative in terms of the way it engages people with your brand.

- Start polls, questionnaires and competitions – or even run AMAs. Answer questions and *invite* your followers to converse with you rather than just watching and reading
- Seek out your followers – follow others, comment on their videos and pictures and respond to their comments
- Post in social communities and get involved in the discussion

There are many more ways you can do this, but just try to get out of the mindset of ‘set and forget’. Social media is an ongoing discussion and you need to be constantly vigilant in order to maximize the engagement.

The more time and effort you invest in creating *quality* and consistent content, the more your brand will grow! It might sound obvious, but you’d be surprised how many people think they can get by simply by posting the same generic, low quality content.