

How Providing Compelling Content
Increases Retail Sales.

Digital Content Management Made Simple for Retailers and E-tailers eBook

Tips to Stay Current with Digital
Content Marketing Trends



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Compelling Content Management

“Marketers believe that companies should share 10 or more pieces of content daily, and that’s just to stay relevant.” - Trapit

Content management is vital in today’s media-driven world for retailers and e-tailers alike. Buyers look for detailed information about products long before they connect with a retailer. In this age of impulse buying where instant gratification rules, the buyer wants content they can consume quickly and easily.

Compelling text is just the starting point. Digital content in the form of video, images and multimedia have become essential elements in helping increase a brand’s online presence. You can then attract more visitors through search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine marketing (SEM), and by doing so, improve customer service and more. Effective content management gives your customer a seamless shopping experience, allowing them to better understand your products so they can choose the right one for them, which can ultimately increase sales.

With a number of accessible media outlets, many small to medium-sized businesses are feeling pressure to produce more content just to keep up with customer demands. “Marketers believe that companies should share 10 or more pieces of content daily, and that’s just to stay relevant,” according to a study by the content-curation application Trapit.

As you attract more customers to visit your website, you want to be sure the content provided catches their eye, informs them, and keeps them shopping. In order to accomplish this, it is essential to learn how to create engaging content, optimize the changes through SEO/SEM and incorporate relevant multimedia.





Content Creation Breakdown

When creating content for your website, it is important to be honest and transparent. Be sure your message is clear so you attract the right audience to your specific business. If you can find a balance between creating informative content that is also self-promotional, you are already one step ahead.

Many SMB's fail to incorporate their specific value proposition as differentiators to their website. Why is your product unique? How does it stand out from the pack? In many cases, customers can access a wide variety of similar products virtually anywhere, so it is important to make your business stand out on a variety of mediums.

The Power of Storytelling

Consumers are constantly bombarded with advertising messages, which makes them more prone to wade through hard pitches that add no value to their lives. When your company's personality gets the consumer's attention, it can inspire and/or trigger emotion, which can lead to more purchases.

Without the message, your content is not as distinctive. A crucial element to content marketing is the story, according to Director of Product Marketing, BrightTALK, Cameron Jahn. To produce the most effective content, focus on your business narrative and how you can lead the way among your competitors.

If you can incorporate digital storytelling through humor, personal examples or exciting information, your consumer is more likely to share it. The ultimate goal is to make your product relatable, which can build trust and loyalty. In order to succeed in doing this, you must make your content visible across a number of mediums, including social media, videos and more.

Since small businesses generally have a closer relationship with their customers, you're at an advantage, as you have the power to market yourself through social story telling. Follow these simple steps to better establish your business with successful storytelling.



How to Make Your Content Stand Out

Power Your Story

Standing against or for something larger than your brand can give your business a stronger point of view. Have an opinion about something relevant to your brand and your audience. For example, selling eco-friendly products help to preserve the environment.

Be Purposeful

Always engage your customers with a high demand or need. Never bury your product's key points in nonsense words or ideas. Instead, get to the point fast. Also, having a higher purpose allows your brand to create a unique angle. For example, if you started your business to help support a certain cause of personal importance to you, make it known. Consumers want to see you have a purpose that reaches beyond profit.

Show, Don't Just Tell

Telling the story is just a piece of the puzzle, as consumers learn about a brand through imagery, actions and feelings as much as words. Instead of stopping after text, work on getting your message across with pictures, videos, etc.

Involve the Consumer

Cater to your customer, not the mass consumer. By focusing on their specific needs, you provide a more personalized business approach, which can make them repeat customers. Also, consider a customer loyalty program, or some way to provide tangible benefits to your customer in the long run. By doing this, you keep your customer engaged throughout their researching and purchasing process.

Maintain Your Audience's Attention

Going back to our opening statement about instant gratification, work to keep your audience engaged on your story, so they keep coming back. You can do this by sharing your powerful and unique story across social media platforms, giving your customer the opportunity to promote your brand even further.

Takeaway: By creating the right content specific to your business, you will be on your way to boosting your SEO/SEM performance, building your reputation and growing your brand.



Content Marketing Tips and Trends

“Content marketing is a marketing technique of creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action,” according to the Content Marketing Institute.

Quality content through storytelling is not the only aspect to consider, as research shows the amount of information on the Internet is expected to grow by 500%, between now and 2020. This can make it more challenging for SMB'S to compete with storytelling alone.

Here are some other tips to consider to drive customers to your website.

Incorporate Visuals

As video is expected to become the content medium of choice this year, it is vital to keep your customers engaged with visuals. Consumers are more likely to connect with pictures and videos, according to co-founder and CMO of the influence marketing agency TapInfluence, Holly Hamann. The ever-growing popularity of social media outlets, including Instagram, You Tube, Pinterest and Vine are expected to be the top platforms for small businesses this year. Even if you think your business might not be a good fit, there are ways to incorporate visual media.

Take a quick video illustrating how your company makes your products, or you can even provide a teaser on a social media platform to draw more customers in for a full view. Your videos don't have to look like a Hollywood production. In fact, the simpler the better.

Since **“64% of consumers are more likely to buy a product on an online retail site after watching a video about it,”** according to experts at Adelle Studios, including them will only help your business grow.

For example, PulseTV.com has been a pioneer in eCommerce since 1998, but after the discount merchandise retailer started using online product video demonstrations, they saw a 50% increase in conversions.

PulseTV.com was recently ranked #648 in the top 1,000 U.S. and Canadian online retailers by Internet Retailer Magazine. PulseTV.com uses both a product image and a short video to explain their products. By using just a picture and a quick description, the focus can be taken away. However, since there is a short video provided as well, consumers are more likely to purchase.

Which would you click first to learn more about the product?



You can even get your customers into the act, as videos taken with a smartphone are reportedly easier than writing a review. Another way to make your content stand out is to incorporate a SEO/SEM campaign through Google analytics. Before setting up one or both of these campaigns, make sure you:

Check Your Website

Making sure your website is up-to-date is vital before digging into a SEO or SEM program. If your website is old and outdated, turning it around is priority one. Make sure your website content contains the keywords you plan to use in your SEO or SEM campaign.

Pay Attention to Your Online Presence

By focusing on where the bulk of your consumers interact online, you can then support more social and visual content. Once you can figure out where your customers are gathering, make a presence on those specific platforms, because that will then connect with consumer behaviors.

Understand Digital Content Marketing Possibilities Never End

Know that within digital marketing, there are a number of different opportunities, including email marketing, display, video, incorporating Quick Response (QR) codes and more. Looking for any possible business-relevant opportunities will be beneficial to your brand in the long run.

Promoting Your Content with SEO

As social media continues to grow, promoting your content with SEO is key. SEO is the constantly-evolving process of attaining traffic in a search engine's unpaid results. It is commonly referred to as natural, organic or earned results. Utilizing content marketing will make your content more indexed in search engines, leading to increased SEO performance.

"Content Marketing will help you kill it on the SEO front, as search engines get smarter at delivering the right information to users, content marketing needs to be at the center of any SEO strategy," according to Social Media Today.

Content curation is another aspect of content marketing, which helps collect, organize and display the most relevant information for your specific business. By incorporating curation, along with social media distribution, you will be on your way to enhancing your brand and turning readers into potential customers.

For SEO purposes, "Don't fill your site with low-quality content, instead work on making sure that your site is the absolute best of its kind," Google Webmaster Trends Analyst John Mueller suggests. Here are a few steps you can take to further enhance your web presence.

Optimize Videos

Since implementing videos has become increasingly popular among online retailers, it is important to not only post your video to YouTube, but also to other social networks like Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr to rank higher in SEO.

Embrace Mobile SEO

Your site will rank higher on Google if it is completely mobile-friendly. We are past the days of incorporating a responsive website design or serving the right URL. Mobile compatibility is more important than ever, as Google is taking a closer look at your websites user-accessibility.

Focus on Social Media

Developing a strong social media presence on Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, etc., will make your brand more significant for SEO purposes.

Increase Your Mobile Audience & Keep Content Concise

Baby boomers and older generations are using smartphones more and more. Attracting millennials is no longer the only need. Making your content accessible to all age groups is essential as the older demographic is likely to continue to use their mobile devices, eventually expanding to retail usage.

With your mobile presence, keeping content concise is a must. Consumers spend a very short time clicking through websites on their phones, so keeping the content to one minute or less is strongly advised. This is due to the outside distractions consumers face, such as Facebook notifications, emails, etc. Make an offer they can act on fast, and consider incorporating QR codes as well.

Partner With People Who Know Your Business

There will be much more consumer-generated content this year, so it is beneficial to build relationships with those familiar with your business. They will then influence the purchase behaviors of their peers.



Implement Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

SEM is gaining website traffic through ad purchasing on search engines. A number of small businesses do not pay to promote their content on social media, but that could be changing. Paid content distribution is expected to become a much more standard practice this year.

There are a number of different components that go along with SEM, but you do not need to implement all of them to succeed. Although, incorporating some form of digital marketing is vital to compete among businesses today. Taking advantage of SEM depends on your specific marketing budget size. If you have a low budget, you want to focus primarily on SEO. However, if you have a medium to high budget, SEM is an important component.

SEM is beneficial to implement for SMB's as another way to boost traffic for your website. It gives potential customers the accessibility to find similar products to yours, eventually bringing them to your business. With SEM, you can also control your advertising budget, and directly track your marketing and advertising campaign results.

The crucial aspect to grasp about implementing SEM is paid search. Unlike SEO, paid search advertising can help enhance your brand with immediate results. With this, the size of the company is no longer relevant, as you can bid on relevant keywords for your brand and products.

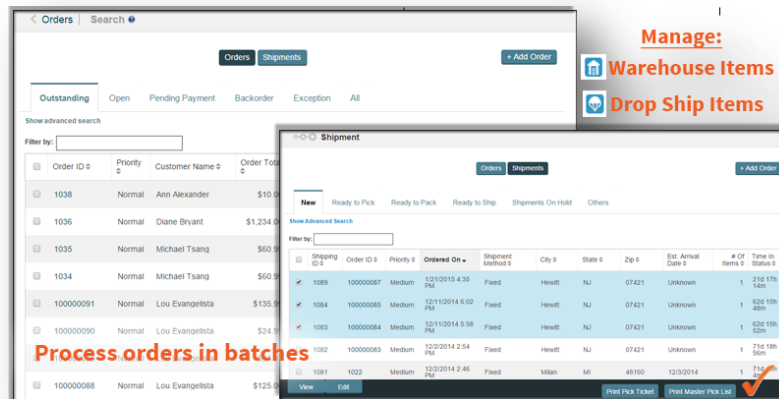
To incorporate SEM, you must first familiarize yourself with Google, Bing and Yahoo, with the primary focus on Google. Google AdWords is the most popular paid search platform, followed by Bing and Yahoo ads. Each platform has accessible beginner guides and helpful tutorials to get started.

Takeaway: By engaging in these SEO-friendly and SEM tips, you will gain a competitive advantage for your brand by standing out among your competitors.

By having a strong social media presence, you can improve customer service by being one step ahead of their questions, as well as pull in unexpected customers from new platforms.

What to Do Next

After implementing these content marketing techniques, you will be able to connect with your customers on a variety of different mediums, giving them the quick access to purchase products faster and more efficiently. With the always-changing online world today, it is necessary to keep up-to-date with competitors through content, social media, SEO and SEM. As you continue to grow your brand with these new techniques, and promote your business across multiple sales channels, you will see how an inventory and order management system can help your business grow.



Why Use an Inventory & Order Management System

For customers, it's all about their order. Reduce your manual operations and automate your order fulfillment processes to ensure fast delivery and happy customers with our online order management system. Spend less time picking and packing orders, and more time focusing on selling and growing your business!

An integrated order management system will give you the visibility into orders and inventory across channels and let you provide instant responses to inquiries. Customer service teams can use the information to deliver the best possible customer experience by having immediate access to accurate order, inventory, shipping and customer information when needed.

In order to operate effectively across multiple sales channels, you need to differentiate yourself in the market to consumers. More and more merchants are now using an automated order management system to solve this need.



Ready to Freestyle?

Our solutions put everything you need in one place.

Freestyle Commerce® enables online retailers to grow faster by expanding their eCommerce presence & automating back office operations to manage critical aspects of their business: multichannel order management; inventory visibility & control across multiple channels; drop ship management; rapid, reliable order fulfillment; customer management; integration with Magento, Amazon & more.

"With the help of Freestyle Commerce, we were able to improve our business processes and position ourselves for future growth. The improved visibility allows us to accurately manage inventory, issue and track purchase orders, as well as forecast sales." CEO, Online Retailer



Freestyle Solutions is changing the way that the industry thinks about order and inventory management. Freestyle Solutions is dedicated to providing growing multichannel retailers,etailers, catalogers, fulfillment and distribution firms with best-in-class inventory, order, and customer management software solutions that help them increase sales and grow their business.

Freestyle Solutions' products integrate easily with eCommerce platforms to drive efficiency, productivity, insight and growth. Freestyle Solutions' proven on-premise & cloud-based solutions enable small to medium sized retail & fulfillment businesses to grow faster by expanding their eCommerce presence & automating back office operations to manage critical aspects of their business: multichannel order management; inventory visibility & control across multiple channels; drop ship management; rapid, reliable order fulfillment; customer management; integration with Magento, Amazon, Bigcommerce, eBay & more.

The Freestyle Commerce cloud-based solution is tightly integrated with leading third-party eCommerce platforms, including Magento and Amazon, providing users with the smartest order management dashboards for the always up-to-date business insight they need to grow sales.

Over 2,000 multichannel merchants rely on Freestyle Solutions to automate their back office operations and drive business growth. Freestyle's clients engage over a million shoppers daily, generating nearly 10 million in gross merchandise sales every day. For more information, visit www.freestylesolutions.com and follow us on Twitter @freestylesOMS.