

Content is King

Ever since Bill Gates declared Content is King two decades ago, the Internet has seen a deluge of content, much of it completely ineffective. Nevertheless, for every business today, content marketing is an essential part of marketing strategy. What is content marketing exactly? It is everything media that publishes content for sales, to secure customers and to promote a business or service, be it blog posts, videos, pod casts, social media and everything in between.

Why do some businesses succeed at content marketing while others, particularly small businesses, fail? Let's look at some of those reasons.

1. **Know your objective.** As with any endeavor, you have to have your objectives clearly defined. Many businesses make the mistake of being vague and overly generalized in their content efforts. Ask the question, are you trying to sell a product? Are you trying strictly to expand your customer base? Are you trying to introduce your business or service? Be clear and let your content writing convey your specific message. Being a generalist does not generate the success you need.
2. **Do you know your audience?** Many businesses begin a media marketing campaign without knowing who their actual market audience is. This makes such a campaign ineffective. Once you have your objective clearly in mind, you must be clear about who your audience is. A targeted message is not possible without a target audience. Learn who your customers are as well as those whom you wish to reach and tailor your message accordingly. Once again, scattering your fire does not hit the mark.
3. **Secure quality content writing.** Because of the explosion of content on the Internet, there is much bad copy, full of typos and incorrect grammar. Many businesses try to write their own copy when writing is not their forte. It pays in every way to make the investment in a professional writer, one who will be responsible for correct spelling and grammar usage. Though many businesses may think they are economizing by doing this writing in house, bad and incorrect copy is much more harmful than the money saved. It gives a bad, unprofessional impression of your site and drives customers away rather than drawing them in. If writing is not your business's forte, make the investment to have your content professionally written. It will more than pay off.
4. **Use good SEO practices.** If they do write their own copy, many businesses do not know the principles of good SEO writing, a factor so essential in people finding your business or product on the web. A good professional writer does have these skills and, upon becoming familiar with your product or service, can help drive sales and customers to your site. This expertise is not to be overlooked and is one of the most important factors in content marketing. A business's content marketing effort easily fails without it.
5. **Be consistent.** Many times in businesses, small ones in particular, there is the occasional blog post, the sporadic Tweet. This does not establish a customer following which businesses need. Blog posts and other media presences need to be posted consistently in

order to establish a reliable following, something your customers can count on as well as look forward to. Mark your calendar and make sure you post regularly, something many businesses fail to commit to thus losing their following.

6. **Vary your content.** Failure to keep content interesting and appealing to their customer base also results in businesses losing their following. With millions of options to the consumer for their time and attention, business content has to be outstanding and fresh. New products, new ways to use your products, all can be used to keep your customers interested in your site and coming back.
7. **Understand Social Media.** Not all social media are alike. How your business communicates on Twitter should be significantly different from how it relates to LinkedIn. It is a different language for each. Social media marketing is a skill and requires practical knowledge of the field. Very few businesses can survive today without solid use of social media. If your business is adept at it with proven results, that may work. Otherwise, hiring someone with these skills can be well worth the investment.

Many businesses excel at content marketing and at the points mentioned above, usually because they invest in the long term haul. They commit to quality content writing, consistent and varied postings and to a strong presence. But why, in summary, do some businesses fail?

There is no short cut to establishing an ongoing Internet presence. Many businesses think that, given the overnight sensation nature of the Internet, that sensational, sometimes poorly written copy can bring attention to their site. As mentioned, this does more harm than good. Building an established presence, even a profitable one, on the Internet takes planning, execution and follow through, as well as monitoring, something few businesses are willing to invest in for the necessary success.