

Lesson 1: Website Content - Finding Your Voice

There has been tons of material written on the importance of content to your digital marketing campaign. It all starts with finding your voice. All individuals write in a particular way and it is sometimes easy to recognise one writing style from another. To represent your company you need to have a team, or one individual, that will have one writing style and be communicating one voice to your audience.

This is often harder to accomplish than it sounds and it comes down primarily to how well that individual knows you, your business and how you would like your business to be represented. In the video I talked about the five key pages of any site that need maximising. In reality the best digital marketing campaign will extend this quality across their whole site.

So, how do you find your voice?

The best place to start is with a simple mind map. Take an A4, or if you are particularly creative, an A3 piece of page and write your company name in the centre of it. From there I want you to link to it words that represent you. These words could be anything like:

- The industry you are in
- The reason you started your company
- What defines you as a person – what qualities are your strongest?
- What are your ambitions?
- What do you want people to connect you with – what people, businesses, characteristics, accomplishments?
- What are your core service priorities?
- What do you sell?
- Why do you sell it?

There is massive scope here to get down a ton of information about what it is that your represent in a massive market. To get to the knitty gritty, what you are doing here is explaining yourself to yourself. Once you have a page full of words that are connected and combine to form the bigger picture for you and your company, you can draw out your story from it. If you can explain what you are doing to yourself then you have a much better shot at describing it to your audience, your potential buyers.

Take all of those words and pick out some core principles and objectives that felt significant to you as you were creating your mind map. These are the steel rods of your online persona. The more genuine and real they are to you the easier it will be to market yourself and your products to a captive audience. Those words tell a story. One of the strongest moves in marketing over recent years is to draw out those stories to give businesses a unique voice and something tangible for customers to relate and connect to. It is very simply called storytelling.

That is your ultimate goal here. You started with a mind map of words. From there you connected those words into sentences/core beliefs/objectives. Now you need to add your personality. Why is your company ethos that little bit different to everyone else's? Ecommerce sites that sell exactly the same products will still have very different stories because their journey to market, entry to business and personalities will be completely different. So what makes you unique?

Once you have your story you have your voice. Here is what I mean about voices based on companies I have encountered. Are you:

- Customer focused and happy to bend backwards to deliver astonishing service because you saw an issue and provided the solution
- Passionate about your product to the extent that you buy it, use it and swear by it yourself
- Driven and energetic to the point that you now give ecommerce webinars on how to follow in your successful footsteps
- All about quality and the integrity of your product
- Knowledgeable about your industry and always looking for opportunities to share your wisdom and enhance people's lives
- Unique in the way you approach problems and deliver solutions with a quirky, trendy and original product
- Just a grafter through and through and only too happy to make your customers' expectations a reality
- A showman with multiple business enterprises and big ambitions

You do not have to fit into one of the above, those are just some examples of company voices that I have come across. Hopefully, you get the idea. This is your opportunity to put your stamp on your ecommerce site and give it something that customers will relate to.

If there is one thing about a winning digital marketing formula it is that the creator knows how to express themselves. Once you have your story and your voice you can get to work on populating your About Us page correctly. From there you can create blog biographies to reflect your team's qualities, amplify that voice and story with social media, connect to your email subscription base and channel it through every piece of content you create.

Your task for this lesson is:

1. Create your mind map
2. Draw out four core beliefs/principles/objectives that define you and your company
3. Write out your story – what makes you unique and what your journey has entailed to date
4. Re-write your About Us page to express what you have discovered about yourself, if it doesn't already
5. Write down the ingredients that define your voice: the characteristics, the energy, the past/present/future, your talents, your core beliefs
6. Draw up a document that states how you want content on your site to be written: quirky, educational, casual, formal...
7. Think of 10 ways that you could tell people about your story

You have now documented your story and have captured your voice. Content moving forwards will be written by people who have your writing style documented in front of them as a guide. This will result in a consistency of message and unity of branding with voice.

Go and express yourself!