



Check These Boxes to Make Sure Your Content Is Worthwhile

By: Trevor Fennesy

Pity the lone marketing manager—a department of one or two trying hard to spread the fund philosophy gospel to any and all who will listen. We hear it all the time—the lamentations of a new content campaign. The pushback from the CEO who doesn't see direct ROI, the Portfolio Manager who can't be bothered, the CCO who's nervous to publish anything. We also hear pleas from the wholesalers, "We need more than pitchbooks to give our prospects."

Most marketing managers know they want to engage in some form of content, so before we jump into what will make your content valuable, here are three quick points to counter "No one reads it anyways, why should we waste time and energy?"

1. SEO – you're generating more content and links on your site, ideally, you're generating a few new links to your site from other places, and you should be hitting important keywords that are relevant to your business in order to rank better for those terms as well.
2. Relationships – you're working to build your customers trust and to nurture a relationship. You're showing them that there are people behind the corporation and that these people understand their goals and their struggles.
3. Necessity — you can't win a game you're not playing. You may run the best liquid-alt fund around, but if no one hears from you, it doesn't matter.

Now that you've convinced your higher-ups to greenlight your campaign, you'd better make sure it's effective.

Here's a checklist to guide you through development:

- Is it OC?

You *need* original content. You don't need to try and spin your firm's take on dividend growth as revolutionary, but there better be something novel in your blog post about it, otherwise you're wasting everyone's time. If you're writing on a topic that has been done several times before, make sure that your piece offers something that others don't. Even if it's graphics/animations, or a unique, hilarious, incomparable brand voice that keeps your readers engaged—just make sure you're adding something of value, or those readers won't be coming back.

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Is it relevant?

Understand that if you're looking to reach a broad audience with your content, your content needs to be relevant to a broad group of people. If you're writing an article called "Tax tips for individuals with \$1m+ annual salaries" you can guarantee you'll see less traction than "5 tax tips most people don't know." And recognize, your current audience will be largely responsible for recirculating your content and that won't happen if they're turned away by just the title.

Is it useful?

Does your content provide your readers with any useful information, actionable items, or thought-provoking ideas? No? Well, the next time they see an e-mail from you they're going to remember that two-paragraph sales pitch you sent last time and send you straight to the trash. If you must sacrifice volume for consistent substance that's typically the way to go, especially for the clients we work with.

Here's a pro-tip the capital markets consistently provide an avenue for new content that also lets your audience get a glimpse of your company's thought process. Use the capital markets to tell us how you think about a security, a sector, or a macro trend. No one is expecting you to predict the future, but that gives your readers a worthwhile look into your process.

Is it consistent?

We hear it all the time, getting your PMs and partners to write more than 2 paragraphs is like pulling teeth, *but* consistency is vital. You'll never see yourself become a thought leader in the industry without consistently being in the conversation. Some tips to make your life easier...

- Start stockpiling timeless articles before you launch your content strategy. Even if it means delaying the start of your content strategy by a few months, it's better to have a stockpile that you can send out when your PMs go dark rather than make your readers wait several weeks/months between posts.
- Write the bones yourself. In writing, the hardest part is often getting started. We've seen a tremendous amount of success in sending PMs the skeleton of an article and having them just fill in their insight from there. It's difficult to try and write on behalf of your PM since you can't read their mind, but this helps coax it out despite their disdain for content creation.

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- Interview the Portfolio Manager. Set up a regular meeting with your PM so they can prepare. Once this becomes regular, it becomes consistent and easier. Your PR firm or external writer can help with this.
- If you start something that reads Part 1, have Part 2 drafted and publication date ready. Don't be the Hanging Chad of content.

Once you're able to publish with consistency it is much easier to build your audience, leverage your content, and get in front of the people who are key to growing your AUM.

Content is arguably one of the most important and effective sources for garnering earned media in the future. Once you have several pieces of quality content it becomes much easier to leverage your blogs for placement in larger national publications. If you find yourself stuck or in need of help, make use of your PR firm. These placements then benefit your credibility, your SEO rankings, and your emergence as a thought leader.

If you can check these boxes, you're probably off to a strong start in writing something people will care about enough to read. While there are other steps you should take while determining which content is most important to your readers (past open rates, recent trends, etc.) this should act as a starting point to determine whether or not it's worth putting in the time developing an idea into new content.

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