



Before You Spend One More Second on Content

By Susan Saldibar

How's your content? Fantastic? Or not? Is it a pain to produce, or a pleasure? Maybe it's time to take a fresh look at your content.

First of all, here's what it should be doing:

Provide information and insight that is useful to your customers.

Be conversational in tone (and sometimes entertaining), drawing in the reader.

Cover trending topics in your industry.

Be honest and factual, citing references where appropriate.

Amplify your "voice" as a subject matter expert.

Support your unique brand and positioning.

Build long term engagement and the desire to connect with you.

If you're not achieving these things, odds are your content hasn't caught fire.

Dave Beltramini, VP of Digital Performance for G5, a Senior Housing Forum partner, understands how challenging it can be for those who struggle with developing content that hits the mark every time. Here are his thoughts:

1. Know Your Buyer "Personas"

Who are your customers and how do they think? In senior living, you have more than one. Make a list: residents, their adult children, other family members or close friends. You may also want to attract professionals seeking a career in a senior living community. Many have relatively common goals but may be motivated differently. What are their issues? Where do they go for information? What motivates them and what turns them off? What will attract them most to your community? "Be as specific as possible," says Dave. "A precise identity helps you understand your prospects better, including what they talk about and engage with online."

2. **Brainstorm Ideas Together**

Only after you have clearly defined your buyer personas can you start outlining topic ideas. “Once you’ve done the ground work with your personas,” says Dave, “topic ideas should flow more easily. You’ve already done the hard part.” Now it’s time to let others in on the process. Caregivers and other staffers often are able to pinpoint attributes that make your community brand stand apart from the others. They’ll come up with some great ideas, if you encourage them. Use their talents and be sure to give them credit in your content when possible.

3. **Publish and Track Response**

There is a tendency, once a blog or article is complete, to just push it out on the spot. Dave reminds us not to. “Take time to review your content critically before publishing,” he suggests. “Consider whether what you’ve written will truly resonate. Does it capture your brand voice? Does it address the questions your buyer personas will have? Not to mention,” he adds, “finding out that you’ve misspelled a word in the title after you’ve published feels terrible. Taking the time to edit and validate your content now will save you grief later.”

There are many ways to track the engagement of your content. Number of shares, likes, tweets, and downloads will help gauge success. A deep dive into your website traffic and other analytic tools available will lend even more insight.

So why is there so much awful content out there?

- Here, according to Dave, are the most common mistakes (to avoid):
- Creating content before you’ve identified your goals and objectives.
- Not fully understanding your buyer personas and their journeys as customers.
- Lacking purpose in your content or strategy.
- Developing a strategy that doesn’t match your brand voice.
- Not using an editorial calendar to outline what is being produced and when.
- Talking too much about yourself rather than focusing on your customers.
- Remember, it’s not all about you. It’s all about them.

Talking too much about yourself is an easy trap to fall into. When you are passionate about your own brand, there is a tendency to assume others will be as well. So the focus shifts to you, over and over again as you focus on all those features that (you think) they will find as amazing as you do. What happens? They’ll quickly lose interest. But if you flip that thinking around and approach all your content from the perspective of the persona you’ve worked so hard to develop, you’ll notice the difference. And so will they.

If “taking the time to get it right” seems like too much work, consider all the time you take writing and publishing your content. If it’s not calibrated for success from the start, you may be spinning your wheels and wasting time and money doing it. “It may seem like more work on the front end,” says Dave. “But once you build a strong foundation for your content, everything you write will be working in your favor because it will have purpose.”



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