Compelling Content for Blogs and Newsletters

When small business marketers are thinking about creating a regular newsletter or blog, one of the questions that often comes up is "what kind of compelling content do I have to share?"

This might stem from a concern of wasting time in writer's block or from a concern of your audience not caring. Whatever the reason, there is a lot that people might be interested to know from you.

Instead of sitting around wondering what to write about, it helps to have some categories of content as a starting point so you can keep yourself and your audience interested and regularly thinking about you.

In this exercise, let's look at some of the different content options you have for blogs and newsletters and start to brainstorm what might work for your business.

BLOG CONTENT

Let's go back through the list of ideas from my "Blogs Don't Have to Be Articles" blog. As I prompt you with the different categories, think of any specific ideas, content, people, or topics that come to mind for you.

Process

What would people want to know about HOW you do what you do? How you got to this point. How you make your product. How you create your art. How you come up with a new idea. How an average day looks for you. How you source your raw materials. How you find committed clients. The "how" can be represented as a written blog, a video blog, a photo blog, or anything that documents the process. If you like this category, write a few things that you could talk about:

_____ _____ _____

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Art

Is there a creative way to pair art with what you do? This is an opportunity to showcase your own talents or to collaborate with others who may help bring the right type of audience to your website. What would pair well? Poetry? Paintings? Comics? Music? Interpretive dance? Comedy? Songwriting? Photos? If you like this category, write a few ideas on the lines below:

_____ _____ _____

Rebuttal Blogs

Is there something out there in the world that relates to your industry that you don't agree with? This is your chance to document your counterpoint. It could be someone else's blog or article, a book, a speech, a podcast, or anywhere else their opinion was shared. You can use that base material, reference it, and make your counterpoint. If you like this category, what comes to mind?:

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

Recipes

If what you do is food-related, this is an obvious one. But when it is not food-related, the use of recipes could be even more interesting! I think of the movie "Waitress" where the waitress invents pies that fit her mood. Or using food to convey situations. Or using it as backstory to describe people. Food is a part of our lives and can be woven in like the art category above. If you like this category, what comes to mind?:

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

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Interviews

Who has an outside perspective that would be of interest to your audience? Your clients? Your donors? Your team? Your vendors? Your attendees? Your VIPs? Your top customers? Your partners? Community members? Anyone you interview is not only validating you, but they are providing an outside perspective that others might connect to. If you like this category, what comes to mind?:

_____ _____ _____

Props

Is there anything you can USE to send the message of your business. Something that represents your business like a mascot and gives your audience another way to look in on your business? Perhaps something that is part of your logo? Or a recurring theme? Or some prominent décor you have? If you like this category, what comes to mind?:

_____ _____ _____

Video Blogs

What if you could just talk instead of write? Is that a more comfortable medium for you? What would you want to talk about? It could be a weekly rant. Answering questions from your audience. Instruction. What to do vs. what not to do. Current events of your industry. This section also pulls from all the previous sections if you want more ideas. If you like this category, write a few things that you could talk about:

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

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Guest blogs

Lastly, do you want to open up your website to guest bloggers? Bring some of their traffic in and give them the opportunity to have a backlink and the credibility you provide for them? These can be featured on your site and in a newsletter. Does anyone spring to mind? Write some names in the lines below:

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

NEWSLETTER CONTENT

When it comes to newsletters, you have a variety of types of content you could include. It helps to identify different buckets of content you want to try and then experiment with them. The only way to know what is really working is to try the content, look at the analytics, and then make decisions if you want to experiment with other material.

So, let's help you generate some ideas for buckets of content to pull from.

Blogs

Going back to the previous section of this worksheet, do you have blogs – your own or guest blogs – that belong in the newsletter? In a perfect world, you will use a teaser to bring everyone back to your website. If one of these types of content belongs in your newsletter, check it below.

Your Blogs: _____

Guest Blogs: _____

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Features

Why not use your newsletters as an opportunity to feature the important players in your world? Top fans, clients, donors, partner businesses or influencers, vendors. Shine a light on them and make them proud to share it! Do any of these ideas work for your business? Write the ones you like below:

_____ _____ _____

Tips, Infographics, and Helpful Resources

Do you have any inside knowledge or advice to share that could be of use? This could be something that you write on the fly as a tip or something that is already packaged as a resource. If education is something that your audience would value, this could be a good option. Do these ideas work for your business? Write the ones that spark your interest on the lines below:

_____ _____ _____

Photos and Videos

Do you have visuals that would represent your business well? Images and video capture attention quickly and could be a great way to get people hooked on opening your newsletters. Do you have content that would work in this format? Write your ideas on the lines below:

_____ _____ _____

Milestones, Welcomes, and Exciting News

Are you celebrating anything? What about your audience? Spotlights on anniversaries or accomplishments are a great way to make your audience feel good! What kind of dates and special events are you tracking that could work for this? Write your ideas on the lines below:

_____ _____ _____

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Testimonials

This is another way to feature individuals and also to add a little social proof to your newsletters. Those who worked with you in the past or purchased something are examples of what you do. Does this work for your business? Write some ideas below of how you could package the testimonials!

Notes From You

Do you want people to get to know your personal voice? This is a chance for you to include some words from you that are more anecdotal, more human, and have a bit more free form. Is this something you are comfortable to do for your business? What type of updates could you share?:

Industry News and Current Events

Are there new developments in your industry that your audience would care about? This could be a regular feature to keep them aware of changes that may impact them. If you have content that falls into this category, what is it? Write your ideas on the lines below:

Caption Contests or Surveys

Do you have something interactive you can do with your audience? A question or a game that they can look forward to? This is a great opportunity to include it, and this is the kind of feature that will keep them coming back to open your newsletter. Write your ideas on the lines below:

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Promotions or Campaigns

Whenever you have a special promotion, discount, or campaign you run, this is a logical place to share it. Do you have campaigns you plan to run this year? Write any special promotions you have coming up on the lines below!

Upcoming Events or Engagements

Where else can your audience find you? What else is going on in your world that they can take part in? What other chances are there for your community to get together around your business? What do you have going on that you can share?:

Interviews and Behind-The-Scenes Looks

We are often compelled by curiosity and by getting an inside view to what is really happening. Whatever it is we are learning about, the opportunity to get deep inside a world we only knew a little about is something that attracts many of us. Who could you interview or what could you pull back the curtain on? Write your ideas on the lines below:

Product or Service Feature

You can also mention your products and services without running a special or a bonus on them, but just spotlighting them to make your audience aware of what is available. What makes the most sense for you to feature of your offerings? Write your ideas on the lines below:

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Now that you have done this work, you have all kinds of ideas for content that could eventually end up in a blog or newsletter.

Although you want to be as consistent as you can, you may find that strategically playing with the content you share helps you get data that can show you what your audience is interested in. You may also find that certain people are interested in certain things, and that is where you can begin to segment your audience to show them more of what they love.

Once you know what buckets of content you want to try out, you can start creating the material with your end goal in mind!