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Content Marketing Blueprint for Online Service Companies



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Introduction

Online service companies are faced with a unique dilemma. They need to find ways to connect with prospective clients without having a physical location to meet with them or attending local events to network. Some online service companies try to find clients the same way that local brick-and-mortar companies do, only to find that they are not the most effective ways to successfully get new customers.

Content marketing is a highly effective way for online companies to reach new customers. It costs less than many other advertising channels and can create a lasting stream of new business opportunities for your company.

If you are looking to create a content marketing strategy for your online service company, use this content marketing blueprint as your guide.



Marketing for Online Service Companies vs. Online Product Retailers

While content marketing is beneficial for all businesses, what works best for online product retailers does not always work as well for online service companies. Most online product retailers target customers directly in a B2C environment. They might simply be able to make a large group aware of their product, and a certain percentage of those people may just impulsively buy it.

Since most online service companies charge more than a one-off product would and many want recurring revenue streams (like subscriptions or ongoing service commitments), online service companies need to find better channels for their content marketing efforts.

Consider how the following content marketing channels work differently for online service companies and online product retailers.

Facebook

When an online product retailer posts a picture of a cool product on Facebook, that might be sufficient to create enough customer interest to buy it. For instance, if you see one of your friends rave about a fantastic charging cable, you might just buy it because it is relatively inexpensive and your friend recommended it. If it isn't as amazing as you had hoped, you're only out \$14.99 and you still end up with a charging cable for your phone.

As a seller, you have a product that attracts a wide audience. You could spend time creating a Facebook Pixel to narrow down your market even further to get a higher sales conversion rate, but there's a good chance that you'll still see some conversions without it.

For online service companies, most customers won't simply sign up on an impulse just because they saw something online. If you charge a monthly fee for your service, customers will want to consider if the recurring expense is something they want. They may want to read through your cancellation terms and check out reviews first just to be sure.

If your online service company sells to other companies or has a more complicated service, it can be difficult to tell customers on Facebook what you want them to do next. You could have them "Learn More" about your company, but customers won't often be motivated to do that. One answer is to have a tested sales pipeline in place, though creating one takes trial and error, resources, and time.

Additionally, you don't want to **waste money advertising to people who aren't interested in your service**. With Facebook, it can be very difficult to narrow down who will see your ad to only these individuals. According to an industry report, **62% of small business owners said that Facebook ads didn't work** because they didn't target the right group.

Twitter

Twitter isn't an effective way to reach the target market for an online service company because it isn't targeted enough. Even if you use hashtags, there are so many users on Twitter who aren't your target customer. You'd be spending time crafting short messages that get lost in the sea of tweets.

According to **this article** in Forbes, content marketing has an incredibly high ROI. This is because you can keep reusing the content, especially if it is evergreen, and it can help your business for a long time. How are you going to reuse your Twitter content effectively over the long term?

Google AdWords

Google AdWords campaigns work well for local service businesses (i.e., "Auto repair shop Tampa"). However, getting an AdWords campaign to work for an online service company capable of serving many different groups takes thorough testing and is less effective than other strategies. In part, this is because you don't build your company's **marketing equity** with paid campaigns. When you stop paying for your Google AdWords campaign, it stops working. As you spend time and money testing out different strategies, you are essentially throwing this money away.

Forum Posts

Forum posts are an outdated method that many services businesses still try. It's easy to rationalize that if you position your company as experts through answering a forum post, prospective customers will see that and pay for services.

However, you are counting on customers to go on to a certain forum, read a certain post, and scan through all of the answers. It would be much more effective to post this information directly on your blog to boost your company's website.

Content Marketing Strategies that Yield Results for Online Service Companies

These strategies help to position your company in the market, connect you with quality leads, and cost relatively little. You can launch your own content marketing plan by starting with blog posts and working your way toward additional strategies, if they are applicable to your business.

Blogs

Blog posts are the perfect way to start using proven content marketing strategies on your company's website. When prospective customers search for content related to your business, ideally your company's blog post would come up in the search results. According to the Content Marketing Institute, content marketing (such as through your blog) gets **three times the leads** over paid search campaigns and has lower upfront costs.

Start your company's blog by answering common questions customers have. For instance, if your company sells computer malware protection, some blog posts could cover "how to buy computer malware protection" or "how to secure your computer from malware," just to name two examples.

You should aim to post new blog posts at least twice a week to keep content fresh. You can measure the blog post's impact by monitoring website traffic. By looking to see what posts perform best, you can start to tailor your company's content strategy.

Online Newsletters

Online newsletters are the perfect way to remind customers about your service, especially if it isn't a recurring subscription service. You can highlight a promotion, a service of the month, and anything exciting that's happened in between newsletters. You'll want to establish a regular pattern that customers can expect, such as a monthly schedule.

You can measure success by how many people open your email and how many of them click on the links you include. Marketing expert **Neil Patel** says his email marketing list is his number one free distribution method. Even if you have to pay to use an email management platform, you can experience a higher ROI from this method.

Nurture Campaigns

A nurture campaign is a series of emails that go out to email subscribers once they sign up for your email list. The first one should thank them for signing up. Then you should provide some educational and sales emails. This keeps your email subscribers more engaged with your brand and more likely to buy from it.

Autoresponders

Autoresponders are predetermined emails that go out automatically, set for certain events. For instance, you can have one set up to send out an email to customers who email you after hours. The message should mention when someone will respond to the email and include some sales information the prospective customer can look at. You can send out autoresponders for customer birthdays, service anniversaries, and for any other email you write routinely.

Lead Magnets

Lead magnets are short written guides or free material your company gives away, usually in exchange for a customer's email address. Create a lead magnet on a topic that your customers want to read – one they'd be willing to give up their email address for. Since lead magnets are longer and for a specified purpose, it is worth having at least one. You can measure success by how many people download your lead magnet and sign up for your email list.



Case Studies

Consider two scenarios that we frequently encounter when working in content marketing. The example in Company A is an incredibly common problem we face as a content marketing company, which is when a client tries to use marketing options without considering which strategies would work for their specific company. Company B, on the other hand, is an example of what typically happens with companies that utilize content marketing the right way. Company B saw better results because it relied on proven content marketing strategies for online service companies.

Company A

Company A is a website development firm located in Chicago. It has invested heavily in a Facebook Ad campaign that encouraged Facebook users to click on a button to learn more about the company's offerings. The company paid for a large number of impressions each day. However, the ad wasn't getting any response.

The company didn't target the Facebook Pixels to reach only their target audience (ex. business owners of small to medium-sized companies earning a certain amount of money). They paid for each time someone saw the ad instead of how many clicks the ad got. Without a concrete call to action or a sales pipeline to move leads through, the Facebook ad didn't engage with prospective customers.

Instead of trying a different content marketing strategy, the website development firm poured more money into the Facebook ad, rationalizing that maybe the budget was too small to see an effect.

Company B

Company B is a graphic design company located in Orlando. The company created a lead magnet about the importance of graphic design for business documents. People had to join their email subscription list to get this, and when people signed up, they were thanked with an autoresponder that delivered the PDF copy of the short guide. Each month, the graphic design company sent out an email newsletter with an enticing promotion.

This strategy worked well for the company. It didn't start with a hard sell, so prospective customers gave the company an opportunity. Also, the people who joined the email list to receive the lead magnet had an interest in graphic design for businesses, which is the company's target market. Over the course of a few months, the company was able to increase its website traffic, email subscriber list, and sales.

Conclusion

Content marketing doesn't have to be complicated.

By understanding what types of content marketing strategies yield the best results for your online service company, you can spend more time creating content that works.

ContentWriters is a leader in the content marketing space. ContentWriters produces thousands of pieces of content every month, ranging from eCommerce product descriptions to white papers for clients across dozens of industries.

