

LET IT GROW

5 Better Content Habits for Growth in 2019



From Madera Labs and Grass Fed Content



Here's a secret.
No one wants your
newsletter.

Secret's out. If you are looking to expand your business, reach more people, and be found, providing premium content for folks to download is your meal ticket. Sounds easy enough right? The reality is creating net new content consistently can be a challenge. In this piece we'll talk about why it's hard, we'll give you some specific recommendations on what you can do to slowly work up a stable of valuable content that people want, and show you how that can translate into greater reach, sales, and growth.

Let go of your Newsletter

I can't believe I'm saying this in 2019, but distributing valuable content via pdf is one of the fastest, easiest, and most effective ways to extend your message and build your audience. Also, here's a dirty little secret, no one wants your newsletter. Why? Because it's all about you. Then why would they want your PDF? Because it's all about them.

The key to providing valuable content that not only informs but is a valuable lead generation tool (more on that a second), is that this focuses on the core problems or needs your audience is concerned about. The great thing is, it's easy to come up with ideas for this type of content. They

key to creating this type of content is to look at your work and think through some of the problems you are actively helping your customers solve.

For example, recently we were working on a project with a long list of approvers creating a cumbersome editorial bottleneck in which content updates were slow to make it to the website. Now I could write up a case study about the problem and how we overcame it, OR we could spin it to



make it more about our audience. See below:

Case Study: Helping Achieve Editorial Balance Within an Enterprise Organization

Yawn

Premium Content: Unblock your editorial bottleneck with these simple steps.

Yes

By focusing on your audiences, rather than you, you are able to provide useful information and put your audience at the center of the story. As Donald Miller says in *Building a Story Brand*, let your customers be the hero.

Buddy Up


At 43 I still implore tactics I learned as a Boy Scout many many moons ago. Like any habit changing effort, the buddy system is a highly effective method of creating incremental change through small habits reinforced by a friend, colleague, spouse, or pet (OK, maybe a stretch there). Whether you are trying to hit the gym, grow your career, attain healthier eating habits, or be better with your money, establishing goal setting and accountability with someone is a tremendous and sustainable method for imparting positive change.

Having a buddy when you are creating content not only reinforces the positive habits listed above, it has the added benefit of sharing the workload. Let me explain. Writing your resume is hard right? Have you ever tried to write your own bio? Even more difficult. However, it is much easier to write a bio for someone else, especially if you know them well. The same applies to writing content for your own business. For most of us, it's inherently difficult to write about our work, or the specific talents we have.

We recommend the following: Find a colleague, peer, mentor, friend, family member and offer to help them with...well writing anything they need. Could be a bio, newsletter (it's OK, they haven't read this article yet, feel free to share). The point is, by coming to them with an offer to help, they will invariably hit you back with a way they can help. Bam, you now have a content buddy. It may take some trial and error to find the right person, but it'll be worth it, when you have your monthly or weekly check ins to track progress.

This process can be as stringent or casual as your schedule permits. After all, only you know how much content you need to create in the new year. The key is to work with someone to make you more accountable. While the buddy system helps for most, you may need a differently level of accountability to keep your content production humming. Let's look at the gym. Some folks are great self motivators. They are able to get up at 5am, work out alone, get one with their day. Others need a class in order to keep them on schedule, while some may need a personal trainer to keep them on track.

We're all different when it comes to own accountability in creating content. However, we like the buddy system because it's built off a peer and shared experience. Also, the buddy system can scale where you can



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have a group of buddies (within or outside of your organization). However, to start, keep it small, it doesn't have to grow, but it can.

Split it up

How many articles, case studies, best practices, or listicles have you started, but not finished? Until you find a buddy, you may find some of those content pieces remain unwritten and sitting in the dreaded draft folder. A short term answer is to create a two, three, or ten part series and tease out your next piece of premium content. The bottom line, some of us are good at starting things, but not finishing them. Others are the opposite, they simply can't get started (see above and find a buddy). For those who can't finish a good content piece (cough cough, looks at the mirror), I recommend getting to an appropriate stopping point and publishing the piece, teasing out subsequent pieces that continue the thought you initially raised.

Breaking your content into two or multiple pieces allows you to not only double up your assets, but creates a critical nurturing step in your marketing efforts. For example, if someone downloads and reads part 1 of your 2 part premium content (let's go with "Tips for Applying Wax to Your Furniture (Part 1)", but doesn't follow up with you, there is now a second piece of content to follow up with them on, and create a harder sell, or at the very least a more pointed CTA.

32 Flavors and Then Some

Ani Difrancio is one of my favorite artists and her song title above interestingly enough presents a valuable opportunity to create multiple premium content pieces centered around a core thought, principle, or solution but extend them to varied audiences. For example, if you're selling air conditioners for large buildings there are multiple people who will be involved in the buying process. You can dramatically improve your reach with language they can relate to by creating premium content for all audiences involved in the buying process.

So how do we create premium content that speaks to multiple audiences without creating an editorial headache? Easy peasy. Say your article is "5 ways to cut costs on cooling your office". If you break the content into three sections, your introduction and conclusion can be the same for all 4 audiences. However, your central paragraph can speak directly to your target audience. In the air conditioner example, your audience could be the technical staff, and the purchase staff. For the technical audience, your central paragraph could speak to ease of installation, and upkeep, while for your financial conscious audience, you can speak to the low cost of ownership, and how the energy efficient unit will save the organization money over time.

By simply swapping out a paragraph, you not only create a more pointed connection with a specific audience, you can double, triple, and even quadruple your premium content and outreach efforts.

Give it a Home

Damn, look at you, it's not even Q2 and you've already created a stable of premium content that not only validate your position in the market, but help answer core questions and concerns that your audiences have. And your audiences love you for it. However, between email, slack, their desktop, and carrier pigeon your audience has misplaced your premium content that is valuable to them. Enter the premium content library.

Your premium content library is the one stop shop for your audiences to grab the content they care about. This library also serves as a valuable landing page where you can drive audiences who either have misplaced the piece of content that is relevant to them, or who have perhaps not engaged with a specific piece of content you have shared with them.

The design and layout of this landing page can be as nuanced or as simple as your time, schedule and budget permit. However, if you were able to create a location that created contextual calls to action, and a clear page hierarchy, you better track that information and use analytics to better track which pieces of content get the most attention.

So where do we go from here?

Whew, that was a lot. But remember, you're not alone (you are already thinking about who your buddy is aren't you?). When going through and looking for tiny wins to help with your content efforts, it's important to remember things you shouldn't be doing.

Don't:

- Say you're going to write a blog post everyday
- Put all your efforts into a newsletter
- Think it has to be perfect before hitting send

Do:

- Find a buddy
- Grow that email list, that precious, precious list
- Think about all the different audiences you are trying to reach
- Start laying out that landing page

Still at a crossroads? Give us a call or click and let's chat, even if it's just to unblock you, we're always here.

About Madera Labs

We help create experiences users crave.

Our passion is helping others to better understand their customers and design usable and delightful experiences for them. Whether you call it user research or experience design, the effect is the same: you'll be creating products your customers absolutely **love**.

Visit us at maderalabs.com

About Grass Fed Content

We help create content that works.

Creating engaging, compelling content is hard. We're obsessive about creating content and content processes that aren't just another set of words, but a meaningful asset for your organization.

Visit us at grassfedcontent.com