

PROFITABLE PRINT RELATIONSHIPS

The Successful Print Sales Circle

Video 25: Creating content

Hello and congratulations. You've completed your first year in The Successful Print Sales Circle. Along the way, you've achieved so much. And you're also well on track to launching your new products and service and to having a really powerful email newsletter that will help you drive business. So with that in mind, let's get straight on and talk about the right sort of content for your email newsletter. Content is so important. It's a lifeblood of any newsletter and it can make or break engagements with your audience. Put out the right sort of content and people are going to eagerly await your next email, they're going to want to read it, and they'll probably take action from it as well. Put out content that's all about you and all about your company and all about selling, and people are going to get fed up sooner or later. They're going to unsubscribe and actually they're far less likely to become valuable customers. That's why it's so important that we think about content from your audience's point of view. You've really got to be in their shoes to make sure that you engage with them in the right way.

So you really need to be thinking about the sort of content that they want to read. Not that you want to provide, but that they are going to value. The good news about creating content is you don't have to write it all yourself. And as you'll find out in today's video and on the worksheet, there's a number of things that you can do to make sure that you can link to other people's content and share it. And it's perfectly okay to do this. As long as you give the author of other content credit, and as long as you link through to their original content, and it's not behind a paywall or anything like this, then it's absolutely fine to share other people's content, to comment on it, and to use it as the basis for your own emails. And that makes it so much easier to create a regular stream of content without having to make sure that you are spending all your time sitting there writing, or you're spending a lot of money outsourcing the content to somebody else. You should also remember, there's lots of different types of content.

So the five types of content that I'd like you to think about are first of all, educational. This is where you're teaching someone how to do something. And remember, many printing companies focus on how to set up a file correctly, which to be honest, many buyers have seen tons of times before, and don't really care about that much. Tell them how to do things that will help their business, how to increase sales, how to get more customers through the door, how to increase the return on investment on the marketing they're doing. Next, resources. What can you share with your audience that will really help them? It may be something that you've created like a case study or a white

paper, or it may be something that you can link to on another site that you feel people would value. As long as it's not your competitor's site, they will enjoy getting that information. And they would appreciate the fact that your newsletter is giving them industry information that they might not otherwise be aware of.

Next, fun information. It's great sometimes to be a little lighthearted and to share some amusing content that is perhaps associated with the reader's industry. So I've sometimes shared design fails, for instance, for the design industry, some of the worst posters that I've seen around, and it always gets a laugh. I don't do it very often, but it helps create a mix. Next, information. Are there some industry statistics that you would like your audience to know about? And by industry statistics, I don't mean the printing industry, I mean the industry in which your buyer is involved with. And finally, sales. It's okay to send the odd sales email. Don't do it every week because then you will get everyone unsubscribing. But every now and again, people accept that you need to promote your business. You need to promote your services and products and that you want them to become customers.

Now, whatever type of email you're sending, it is important that the bottom of each email you have a call to action or a CTA. You want to tell your readers what you want them to do next as a result of reading your email. And later on in the video and the worksheet, you'll find out a number of powerful calls to action that you can use to make sure that you're getting your audience to be active. And that's so important as well. But, right now, let's dive in and let's start creating content right from the beginning. Now, step one is a vital part of the process. And that's to decide who is going to write your content. Basically, you have three options here. Number one, you can decide to do it all yourself. Number two, you can delegate it to a member of your team. And number three, you can outsource it. And if you are planning to outsource it, please do talk to me because I offer content writing as a service.

If you're deciding to outsource all or any of your content, it's also important to make sure that you decide what you're outsourcing. Are you outsourcing all the planning of what content to do? Are you outsourcing the planning of the emails? Are you outsourcing the actual writing of emails? Are you expecting your writer to provide illustrations with it? And are you expecting your writer to upload the content onto your blog? All of these things will vastly change the scope of what you're doing. And if you are outsourcing, do think about things such as do you really want to pay a writer a skilled rate just for uploading content onto your blog? So I've put out some options in the worksheets to help you work through these decisions. Once you've done that, then it's okay to move on to the next steps. However, even if you're planning to outsource everything, it is so important that you watch the rest of this video and you read the entire worksheet because it will really help you to outsource your content in the right way.

Step two is to create your content plan. Now whether you outsource or not, I think you should be involved at this stage to make sure you get things right. There's four things that I want you to think about during this step. Number one is how frequent are you going to make your email newsletter? If you send out too many emails, people may get overloaded and unsubscribe. If people hear from you too infrequently, then they forget about you and all the hard work you're putting in has been wasted because perhaps they've read the newsletter from a competitor instead and decided to go

with them because they were front of your prospect's minds. So I would recommend sending out an email probably every couple of weeks. But I've given you some different options in the worksheet.

Number two, are there any events or happenings that you want to base the content of your newsletter around? Now, this can be one of two things. Firstly, it can be industry events. So do you need to create a lot of content around an event that's happening in your customer's industry? Are there leads up to it where you need to remind them to do things? But equally, think about what you're selling as well. Do you have certain times of the year when you need to promote certain products or services? Equally, other times of the year when you have certain products or services that don't sell so well, and maybe that's a good time to promote them rather than the normal busy times?

Thirdly, I'd like you to think about what sorts of content you want to send to people. It's actually a lot easier to plan your content if you have a revolving time type of types of email. So I've given you an example of this in the worksheet so that you can create your own, but I like to make sure I'm sending people certain types of content at certain times. If you look at my LinkedIn feed, for example, as a simple example, every Monday I post a new blog post. Every Wednesday I give a shout out to people in my network, and every Friday I post my weekly takeaways. And it makes it much easier to think about, "What am I going to write this week?" The same applies to your email newsletter. Once you've worked through these three steps and made some decisions, it makes the fourth part of planning your content so much easier because that's to create your content plan.

Now there's a whole load of software out there that'll help you with this. Personally, for me, I think a lot of it's far too complicated. I have a simple Excel spreadsheet. I have a date when I'm going to send the email out and I write my email topic. Now, clearly, if you're outsourcing, you may need to add some other deadlines in there and I've given you some examples of these on the worksheet. But I'd really encourage you to plan ahead. So always have the next few emails ideally written and loaded up a couple of weeks at least before they're due to be sent out. And then make sure you know in your mind, for the next following couple of months, what sort of content you're going to be creating. Just so that it's all there, it's all planned and it's never a rush. Your newsletter will become so much more effective if you don't have to scramble for content at the last moment.

Now it's time to move on to step three. And effectively, we're still at the planning stage because step three is to create a resource list. Sometimes it can be really hard to think of something to write for your newsletter list. That's why I recommend planning a good few weeks in advance. But even then, you can be sitting there thinking, "What am I going to write today?" So a resource list can be really helpful. I like to collect a whole load of websites that post news and useful articles around the industries that my customers are in. And you can do the same. And then as I read these articles, sometimes one will spring out at me and think, "Actually, I've got something to say about that topic, or that's really relevant to my audience, or here's some useful information I want to share." And suddenly it's so much easier. I have all that inspiration of what I'm going to provide in my blog for the next few weeks.

Now I don't spend my days clicking through lots of different websites. I use a content aggregator called Feedly. You can use it at a basic level for free. And, basically, what it does is it collects the feeds from all the websites that you've chosen to connect to it, and it publishes all the article headlines. So it's very easy to log onto Feedly, say, once a week, scroll through all those headlines.

And a whole load of them will be irrelevant to you, but every now and again, you see an interesting headline. That's when you can click through to the article and have a further look. But it allows you to see what's going on with all your favourite websites very quickly, without having to go through all the news pages, without having to scroll through and finding it hard to find all the right content. So I thoroughly recommend using that as a basis for your resource list.

There's one other element that I would include on your resource list as well. Who could you work with where you can help each other? Who can you work with where you might share each other's contents and give each other a helping hand? If you're focusing on the local retail environment, for instance, are there other organizations where you can share what's happening in the retail environment and they may be prepared to share helpful articles on how to do things from you? It's worth building a list of these now, adding them to your Feedly feed, or however you're going to have a look at that content, and having perhaps a conversation with them as well, to see if they're open to doing something in a slightly more structured way. But even if that's one step too far, make sure you've got them up there and you're ready to share their content and help people in the industry that you're in.

Now, it's time to start creating content. So let's move to step four. And step four is to plan your content. So have a look at last month's worksheet and video because I covered content planning then as well. And it doesn't really change. What I've done this month is I've given you another email template for you to use. This template is all about making sure that you share resources and links and other information in an effective way. So I've given you an outline there that you can use for all sorts of emails along those lines. And I've given you an example of how I'd write one of those emails. The other thing I'd like you to do this month when you're planning your emails is to think about your CTAs, your calls to action. There are five different types of calls to action I've outlined in the worksheets. You might ask people to contact your company or a salesperson to find out more information about a product or service you're offering.

You might be able to offer a straight online buy link or you might offer a link to a resource where people can download more information. And naturally at the end of that resource or that webpage, then you will potentially have a buy link or a contact a sales person link as well. There's one other type of call to action I think you should also think about. And that's a very simple one where at the end of the email, you ask a question and ask people to hit reply to the email and send you their answer, or for them to send you any further questions they have on a topic. This doesn't necessarily obviously move people along the buying line, but it shows engagement. They've taken a next step forward. And sometimes that's a great way to start a dialogue with someone. And from there, business can be made.

Once you've planned your emails, it's time to move on to step five. It's time to start writing again. Again, I'd like you to go back to last month's worksheet and video because I shared a whole host of tips for writing there. Now, naturally you may be outsourcing at this point and you may not need to be involved in this step. However, even if you're outsourcing, I do think that you should think about the tone of your newsletter list. And whether you're writing or someone else is writing, this is something that should be discussed. How are you going to get the right tone for your audience? Clearly, if you're writing for big corporates, then you may need to be fairly formal. Alternatively, you might be writing for much smaller companies or individuals. And in that case, you might want to

come over in a much more personal way. You may want to come over as you, rather than your company. And you may be much more informal in the way that you are talking and writing and sharing your content.

In addition, think about what phrases, what words your target industry uses. Is there a vocabulary that you should be using when you're writing these sorts of emails? And be sure to share that with anyone you're outsourcing to. But you'll also find it useful to create a list of phrases and have them by you if you're writing your own content, just so that you remember to use the right ones fairly frequently in the content that you're creating. Do remember to use the editing process that I suggested last month as well. You'll find that really helpful when you write your content. Step six is to load your contents. You did all the hard work for this last month, because by now you'll have a template created. This time, however, you'll be sending out emails at specific times. And every now and again, you may want to adjust these for special offer, last minute sales and things like this. But in your email software provider, you'll set a scheduled date and time for each email. This allows you to plan ahead.

I sometimes have emails set up for several weeks ahead, but they're all scheduled. I don't have to press a send button at the time. I just know that they'll happen no matter what I'm doing when the time to send the email happens. So make sure you set up the right schedule for sending your emails. And you'll set this up for each email. And as last month, do think about replicating your emails and then all you have to do is change the content. You don't have to create the settings for the email all over again. You'll find this makes your content loading much, much faster. Step seven is to publicize and shout about your content. Now you've spent a lot of time and resource creating some really powerful content. You want to get it seen by as many people as possible. And that means you should go outside your email newsletter list.

What I recommend is that for any content that isn't pure sales contents, you add it to a blog page on your website as well. This will allow casual visitors to your site to see the content. But more importantly, it allows you to drive traffic to that content. And you can do this in a number of ways. So first of all, you should be including links to this content in social media activity. Secondly, you can do it by adding a card with a link in any delivery that you make as well. And thirdly, add a link to your email signature and you can change it every couple of weeks. People will have new content to click through to. Finally, you could even consider creating a printed newsletter of the best bits of your content to share with people so that those who prefer to have something physical to read can get engaged with what you've created as well.

Now, when you're creating your blog page on the website, the call to action is nearly always going to be to sign up to your newsletter list because you want to have those people subscribed to your list so you can send them more content. So do have a look back at the previous worksheet where I've covered this. That was in step three of the month 10 worksheet, video 20. But you'll see there that I covered all the places that you should add to your website for sign up. Make sure that it's on the right-hand column and at the bottom of your blog page to make it as easy as possible for people to sign up to your newsletter list.

The final thing to think about is how you'd attract people to click through when you're posting on social media or even from your email signature. Hopefully you've designed a really snappy headline that's going to make people want to sign up. But you can't keep reposting that. So do take some

bite-sized excerpts from your content, typically a subheading would work very well as well, and share those on social media so that you mix it up. If someone isn't grabbed by your headline, they may well be grabbed by a subhead instead. Or think about writing some little bite-sized pieces that are teasers as to why people should read your content.

Right, by this point you've done so well and you've created lots of content, you've got lots of ideas, and you've got all the basics there to help you do this on a regular basis. So step eight is to set a content diary. Now, way back in month five, we talked about a sales planning diary, and you used it to make sure you'd never forget to ring another sales prospect again. And I hope you're still using that regularly right now. And it's time to use it for other things as well, because a sales diary can be the perfect aid to really good regular content activity. So what I like to do is I like to create my content in batches. I find that I'm much more efficient if I can write a few emails in one go, and then if I can do my planning in one go beforehand, and afterwards do my loading, the emails in one go as well.

But what I like to do is I like to set each of these as tasks in my sales diary and I like to make sure that I've set these so that I can't forget to do them. So again, they become a never-ending task. I maybe decide that next Wednesday is going to be my content morning and I'm going to plan my content. And then when I've done that, I'll move that onto Friday when I'm going to write some content. And maybe the following Thursday I'll load it. And then I've got maybe a month before I need to do any more activity on it again. But I make sure that I'm constantly reminded at the right time when I need to take action to make sure that my newsletter audience is receiving their content on a regular basis. If you need any reminders about a sales diary, then do be sure to look back at the video and the worksheets from month five.

Now we can move on to step nine. And step nine is to share your success. So this month you've really taken a step forward to making sure that you haven't just got a newsletter list that's going to be a powerful attraction to subscribers and is going to onboard people in the right way. But you've moved forward to creating the right content so that you're going to engage people on a regular basis. Your goal for this month is to make sure that you've got the first four emails in your system. So in order to do this, make sure that you've decided who's going to be writing your content. Make sure you've got your content plan and timetable set up. Make sure that you have a resource list, that your content is outlined, written. And then finally uploaded to the system and that you're shouting about it, and that as many people as possible are seeing it. I'm looking forward to seeing it as well.

Next month, we're going to start taking all this great work you've done and turning it into sales results. So what we're going to do next month is we are going to look at measuring the success of your emails and looking at the right report so that you know who's a warm prospect. And then in the sixth and final month on this project, you're actually going to start creating all the right follow-up activity to those people that you can count as warm prospects. In the meantime, I've got a brand new podcast for you next week, and we're going to talk all about sales phrases. You're going to find this really useful as we build up a whole tool set of different phrases that you can use in conversations at all sorts of different times to make sure you've got a much better chance of getting the right results. And then we move on to launching our service or product. And this month we're going to create an elevator pitch and the sales letter.

So I look forward to seeing you in that video and then in our monthly call, when we can talk through how these projects are going for you. One last thing, if you have a newsletter that you'd like me to subscribe to, let me know.