



Arlington Research Study:
creating credible content

From gut feel to gravitas: creating credible content that hits the mark

In our highly competitive world, effectively engaging with your customers, stakeholders and staff can make a huge difference to your business — and to your bottom line. For example, a recent study from PwC¹ shows that businesses increasingly understand how the use of customer data and analytics, to support evidence-based decisions and improve customers' experiences, can help them.

In order to gather customer and stakeholder data however, businesses must move beyond the superficial and into the detail, drawing audiences into dialogue and keeping them engaged.

Content is still king

35% would like access to more information/data in order to make decisions

High quality content drives every element of a business, from sales and customer service through strategy and estate planning to HR and marketing. The right content builds productive interaction between a business and its staff, partners, prospects and customers, regardless of the medium used. It lets you tell the story of your brand, reveal your company's true character and build dynamic, two-way relationships.



Use insight, not intuition

For content to be great, it has to be authentic; that means it must be based on something real. Of course, your content should be creative and presented in an engaging form, it should be written with an awareness of the audience – but above all, it must be credible and rooted in experience, understanding and data. When your customers believe that you truly understand their concerns and what makes them tick, you become a credible and authoritative voice on your subject – only then will they sit up and listen.

However, our research suggests that currently, relatively few businesses are achieving that. For example:

- Over a third (35%) of respondents felt that business owners relied on their intuition more than data to make decisions
- 41% agreed that business owners make decisions based on 'gut feel', without taking account of the thoughts or feelings of staff
- An overwhelming majority (70%) of respondents believed that the possession of accurate information about customers will become increasingly important to businesses
- More than a third (35%) would like access to more information/data in order to make decisions

The key message for content creators is this: content is the interface between your business and its stakeholders. No matter how good your intuition may feel, unless your content can be backed up with quantifiable insights, it will not resonate with the intended audience. That can not only lose you customers and investment, but can also undermine the credibility of your brand in general and for the long-term.

Yet, almost every company understands this now¹. It is increasingly hard to find a business that **doesn't** have a blog or social media presence, or that doesn't issue press releases.

So, in a connected (and noisy) marketplace, how can you make **your** content stand out? We had that question in mind when we decided to survey **more than 1,800 UK-based, employed people about their experiences of corporate and customer engagement**; the results make very interesting reading indeed.



Add credibility to your content

Our research suggests that better engagement with both staff and customers would help UK businesses to add crucial insight to their content, and this opportunity is currently being overlooked by many firms. For example:

- Just 38% of respondents agreed that their business regularly set out to gather the views of staff
- 42% believed that businesses could increase profits if they had access to more information about (i.e. data points on) their customers
- Just a third (33%) of respondents knew how to access business insight
- 35% of respondents said their business ‘rarely’ surveyed its customers and prospects

In this context, knowledge (expressed through content) is power. But while businesses know that, our findings suggest that all too few of them are seeking out the relevant knowledge and using it to create great content.

Is that a gap in the market, an opportunity that **your** business could exploit? Now is the time to differentiate your content from that around you.

Top tips for credible content

- Adding insight to your content doesn’t need to be expensive, time-consuming or cumbersome. You already know a great deal about your sector — how can you work that expertise into your content?
- Refer to credible sources to support your assertions and show that you use reliable information; this is particularly important in an era of ‘fake news’.
- Your own research can make content valuable and underline your status as an authority in your field. It adds gravitas, power and relevance for your audience.
- Asking customers or prospects for their views on a topic deepens your understanding of their needs, and you can reflect this in your content.
- You must understand the culture of your company and the views of staff; how else can you produce content that describes your business honestly? Regular staff surveys and ongoing engagement all help content to hit the mark and build strong relationships.
- The credibility and authority of your content (and the resulting links from credible websites) can greatly enhance your search engine visibility.

Content is where your business and stakeholders meet

In summary

Content is where your business and stakeholders meet, so it is hard to overstate its importance. Content decides where you stand in the search engine ratings, thus whether customers and prospects can find you easily, and it affects your brand value in a host of ways, quantifiable and otherwise. Getting your content right is very, very important.

At the moment, content creation also presents an opportunity. We know that customers are often willing to pay more for an enhanced customer experience, and more likely to stay loyal to a firm that clearly implements their feedback¹. We also know from our own research, that currently only a minority of businesses are wholeheartedly acting on this knowledge and tailoring their content in light of it. However, this situation won’t last long, so now is the time to seize the day and implement an evidence-based content strategy.

References:

¹ <https://www.digitalpulse.pwc.com.au/infographic-customer-research>



Arlington Research

100 Longwater Avenue, Green Park,
Reading, Berkshire, RG2 6GP

t +44 (0) 118 334 8134

e enquiries@arlingtonresearch.global

w arlingtonresearch.global

