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### A Few Words from the Author



There's no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you. –Maya Angelou

I like Maya Angelou. I can relate to her story, and think that this quote sums up beautifully the "agony" that many feel in being unable to tell their own stories, whether because of time constraints, an inability to communicate in the way we want, or out of fear.

Over the course of two years, I have had the opportunity to work with a number of businesses and individuals to share their voices with the world. This e-book is the culmination of these experiences.

Those who I've worked with span industries: payment processing, translation and interpretation, tech, and transportation and logistics, to name a few. In spite of these differences, the one thing that they all share is the need to communicate industry-specific information and who they and their businesses are to others.

Whether a press release for a news site, an infographic for a Twitter feed, or a 500-word blog post, these businesses utilize content to communicate. Through this communication, they build authority, nurture relationships with their existing customer base, and gain exposure to new clients.

This e-book will share six of types of content that I have had the pleasure of writing since starting Turns of Phrase in 2015: web content, blog articles, infographics, press releases, newsletters and e-books.

My goal is that by the end of this book, you will understand the basics of these types of writing, and the power that they hold to share your voice, and grow your customer base. Thank you. Happy reading.

Obinna Morton
Obinna Morton

# Introduction: Content, your business, and ROI

Did you know that content can be used as a tool to grow your business, and yes, make money?

Take a look at two examples of companies that did just that, used content to capture leads and gain more business.<sup>1</sup>

Demandbase is an account-based marketing firm based in San Francisco that used four pieces of content—a white paper, webinar, infographic, and Slideshare—to create an education campaign to inspire B2B marketers to utilize the best content technology platform. The campaign resulted in 1,700 new leads and more than \$1 million in business.

This second company is a juggernaut, but no less different than any other business in that it is still in the *business* of profit.



Through a targeted campaign, Xerox wanted to connect with its top accounts and created a magazine that included business tips to do so. 70% of the company's top accounts interacted with this content, and ultimately, this campaign resulted in 20,000 new contacts and more than \$1.3 billion in business opportunities.

Yes, billion.

Demandbase and Xerox both understood the

power of using content of value for their audience, and in this case, educational material that drew more prospects and, subsequently, dollars into their orbits.

In this e-book, I'd like to share some of the types of content that I've created for businesses to not only tell their stories, but to also build their businesses, that you can use to do the same for yourself.

The types of content are: web content, blog articles, press releases, infographics, newsletters and e-books.

Let's start now, shall we?

<sup>1</sup> Lehr, Andrea. "How Content Marketing Impacts Your Bottom Line [Infographic]." *TopRank Marketing Blog,* 13 Oct. 2015, <a href="http://bit.ly/1iy6FcD">http://bit.ly/1iy6FcD</a>. Accessed 29 Aug. 2017.

# Website copy

Be a voice, not an echo.



An Entrepreneur came to a fork in the road
One sign was labeled "Your Voice"
The other, "Generic, but Safe"
Which path would this Entrepreneur choose?

Websites should **establish credibility and develop trust** in a world where one Google search easily nets millions of results. You want to be the voice that stands out among millions for its authenticity, ability, and identity.

Also, text should be written in a quick, easy-toread, and scannable format to highlight key points fast.

Here are three tips for writing copy for your website:

- **1. Add visual variety.** Alternate between short paragraphs and numbered and bulleted text. Also consider experimenting with bold, italics, or underlined text.
- **2. Add images.** According to a 2011 study conducted by the content marketing platform

Skyword, content with images receives 94% more page views.<sup>2</sup> Also, consider adding an image of yourself to allow people to connect with you.

**3. Add your unique voice.** Let's take this hypothetical situation. Say that two highly successful tech companies exist. The website of the first company uses colloquialisms in its text to market the idea of "cool and edgy." The language of the second company's website, however, uses straightforward, technical text with a philanthropic bent. Both ways of communicating are valid because each business is speaking to its audience.

The *ethos*, or spirit, behind the product or service will influence the messaging, and will therefore attract particular types of people. So figure out your tone of voice, and maintain consistency in your messaging. This voice will be one of the things that attracts your "tribe." It is a component of the story you tell (the way that you tell it.)

Common website pages include an About page, Services, Portfolio, Contact us, and sometimes a Blog as well. Use this 24-7 marketing tool to nurture your customer base with industry expertise, and a voice to call your own.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Aragon, Kathryn. "High-Quality Content: Not without High Quality Images on Your Blog." *Kathryn Aragon Media*, 16 Dec. 2013, <a href="http://bit.ly/2y8EZsD">http://bit.ly/2y8EZsD</a>. Accessed 17 Sept. 2017.

# **Infographics**

The Royal gazed into the mirror and said 1,000 words I have not But alas, I look great

If a picture is worth 1,000 words, then an infographic represents this phrase exquisitely.

From the hieroglyphics in Egypt to the wall paintings.

From the hieroglyphics in Egypt to the wall paintings in Lascaux, France to emoji in a text message, image is yet another form of communication for the human species, or us *homo sapien sapiens*.

The expert in anything was once a beginner.

#### Quick! A statistic.

Did you know that a person retains only 10% of information three days after hearing it? Yet if this same information is paired with a complementary image, this same individual will remember 65% of the information? The findings are from noted research called the Pictorial Superiority Effect.<sup>3</sup>

Use the power of image to ensure that a person remembers more of what you say or write.

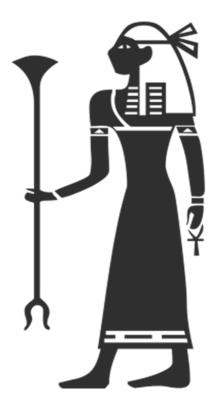
#### Three tips for creating infographics are:

- **1. Keep text concise.** Write the most useful information. The use of images in addition to text eliminates the need for extra explanation.
- 2. Select images and a template that correspond to your message. If you are creating an infographic

called "6 Tips for Forklift Safety," and one of the tips is to understand the hazards associated with using forklifts, then a corresponding image might be a yellow triangular hazard sign.

**3. Develop a headline.** Come up with an informative title that summarizes all of the information of your infographic. Consider reviewing a few infographics to get ideas for titles.

Once you've developed this image-heavy piece of content, it can be shared with subscribers of your email list or social media followers. It can also be used as an "optin" tool to build an email list. Why write 1,000 words, when pictographs can do much of the work for you?



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Medina, John. *Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home, and School.* Pear Press, 2008.

# **Blogging**

To blog or not to blog?
'Tis the question I ask
Value, o' value, I will add
The answer? To blog

Look in the mirror...that's your competition.



Blogging is unique in that it lends itself to connecting in a less formal way. While we are generally taught never to write how we speak, blogging gives more permission to break these rules and create your own.

A well-curated business blog can humanize your company while building authority. "During a period of uncertainty with EMV, we used blogging as a way to nurture relationships and share industry expertise with our clients," says Nelda Mays, President of A-AAccess OnLine Payment Systems Inc., a Point of Sale company based in Atlanta, Georgia.

Three tips for telling your story through blog writing are:

1. Be yourself. Because of the less stringent writing guidelines for blogging, you have more freedom to experiment with your voice. So start sentences with a coordinating conjunction. Make pop cultural references—or don't. The platform is yours, but should nevertheless still provide a healthy dose of vital information.

- **2. Think from the point-of-view of the customer.** What types of posts would customers find interesting? What information would be helpful to them? Are you a business in a field that utilizes technical terms a customer would have no idea about? Why not consider developing a blog post featuring an industry-specific glossary of terms?
- **3. Brainstorm topic ideas.** Before writing a blog post, develop a list of ideas that you want to cover. Develop a calendar to schedule posts for each article—once a week or once every other week, for example. Then start writing.

The choice is yours. To blog or not to blog, is it really a question?

### Press releases

Extra, extra

New developments I have

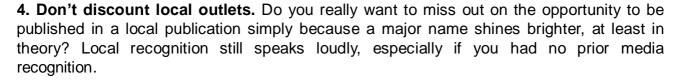
The media will be my conduit

To build a brand that lasts

A press release can help a business to gain more exposure through the media. Results from sending a press release include having an article written about the company, having the press release published in a publication, or being invited to a be featured on a radio show or podcast.

#### Here are a four tips for writing and distributing a press release:

- 1. Know your angle. Be clear at the outset that what you are sharing is information worth knowing. Did you win an industry award? Maybe you have signed a deal with a major distributor, or will be a speaker at the premier tech conference in the nation.
- **2. Be truthful.** Hyperbole has its place, but not within a press release. Share relevant facts, figures, and quotes, and the press release will sell itself.
- **3. Skip the generic email addresses.** When distributing the press release, find the specific email address of the journalist or contact person you want to reach.



Market important business news with a press release in order to gain recognition from a third-party source and build your credibility in an organic way.

**Great things never came from comfort zones.** 



### **Newsletters**

# Do something today that your future self will thank you for.

A monthly newsletter Time after time Sharing vital information To stay top-of-mind



Newsletters help to keep your name on the radar with clients when you're not working with them.

According to the Data and Marketing Association, 66% of consumers made a purchase online after receiving messages from email marketing.<sup>4</sup> And newsletters are currently the **most popular form of email marketing**, according to the Salesforce 2016 State of Marketing Report.<sup>5</sup>

With a plan, much of the content you already use can be repurposed to create a newsletter that requires little time or money to create.

#### Here are three tips for writing newsletters:

- **1. Repurpose content.** As noted, use pieces of writing you've already created prior, reworking it to fit the space allotted in the newsletter. Examples include rehashing key points from a previously published blog post, or from your company website.
- **2. Brainstorm.** Before starting to write, come up with a list of topics that you would like to include. In this way, you can divide up topics between newsletters and develop a more organized process.
- **3. Add your business's unique spin.** Use visuals, formatting, colors, and topics that best represent the mission, values, and identity of your business. Use the newsletter as another way to build your brand with customers and prospects.

Consider incorporating these ideas into your next company newsletter: client profiles, information about special dates, testimonials, product and book reviews, news about upcoming industry events, special promotions, and of course, news about your company.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Hampsey, Casey. "Saturday Stat Series: The Influence of Email Marketing Messages." *Data and Marketing Association*, 3 Aug. 2013, <a href="http://bit.ly/2giRf5y">http://bit.ly/2giRf5y</a>. Accessed 17 Sept. 2017.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Salesforce Research. "2016 State of Marketing Report." 2016, <a href="http://bit.ly/1X0a4VK">http://bit.ly/1X0a4VK</a>. Accessed 17 Sept. 2017.

### E-books

Is that knowledge, what say ye?
Industry expertise
Long-form content—10,000 words
A limitless journey

Businesses can use an e-book to provide further insight into a particular topic. The benefit of an e-book is that like a white paper, it is a soft sell for your services. You're not directly saying, "Buy from me," but are instead positioning yourself as a thought leader within your field, sharing expertise that allows people to trust you and subsequently buy from you.

The cycle is reciprocity at play. You provide value, and in exchange for the value people know that you provide, they give you money. It is value for value—the math is simple.

#### Here are four tips for writing e-books:

**1. Choose a topic.** As the saying goes, write what you know, particularly if you have had success with something specific in your business.



- **2. Find a quiet place.** Write in a place where you can't be distracted by friends, family, roommates or pets, and allow yourself to focus entirely on writing. The space may be at home, or it could also be at a co-working space, library, or office.
- **3. Make an outline.** Develop an outline that includes all of the points that you want to cover. Then start writing after you have developed a strategy.
- **4. Do your research.** Add statistics and examples to prove that what you are saying can and should be believed. Cite all information from outside sources that you use.

Now start. Writing a book can seem intimidating because of the patience and skill required to finish. However, by writing what you know, you have won half the battle. 3-2-1-GO!

## Conclusion

After all is said and done, one question remains: How can you use content to illustrate the bond between your product(s) or service(s), and your customers?

This is the bridge that we are building, that every business owner is building.

So whether a novel by a celebrated author, an app, rental equipment, one-on-one coaching, or software, developing relationships by showing people that they can trust you, that you know what you're talking about, and that you are human (and not a robot) is one way to establish the value that people will pay you for. Content is simply the medium.

If you would like to see how real-world businesses used content to tell their stories and nurture their customer base, **turn to page 14.** 

If you are world-worn and weary, and wish to set back home, turn to page 18.

Which path will you choose?

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. -Lao Tzu

### Case Study: Newsletters

#### **Memorial Square Properties**



Memorial Square provides commercial office suites and salon suites to small business owners.

Business name: Brantland LLC (Atlanta, GA)

Business owner: Terry Brantley, Managing Member

Website: www.brantland.com/memorial-square

The project and purpose: Brantland LLC was in need of a newsletter that highlighted news and information about tenants to build a sense of community for the company property Memorial Square.

**Results:** Tenants provided positive feedback to Managing Member, Terry Brantley, and were able to use the material for their own marketing purposes. It connected the stories of tenants to create a sense of community to encourage them to continue to rent space from Memorial Square.



"A newsletter helped us to create a sense of community and make people feel like a part of something larger." —Terry Brantley, Managing Member of Brantland LLC

### Case Study: Infographics

Galindo Publicidad Inc.



Galindo Publicidad Inc. provides certified translation and interpretation services to businesses looking to reach a global market.

Business name: Galindo Publicidad Inc. (Coral Springs, Florida)

Business owner: Martha Galindo, President and CEO

Website: www.translationsandmore.com

The project and purpose: Galindo Publicidad Inc. needed infographics that developed a shorter, dynamic to the point type of graphic approach to reach multilingual US communities and global markets to showcase their various services.

**Result:** Infographics served as a more direct and visual way of communicating with customers and prospects; pages of useful information were converted into a one-page graphic document with icons.

#### Click on the box to view the infographic.



"Obinna's grasp of the concept and needs helped us to produce a flexible and modern set of timeless pieces in an infographic type of style." –Martha Galindo, President and CEO of Galindo Publicidad Inc.

### Case Study: Blog Articles, Web Content

A-AAccess OnLine Payment Systems Inc. dba COCARD



A-AAccess OnLine Payment Systems, Inc. dba COCARD is a Point of Sale provider with services that include processing solutions, point of sale systems, and payment gateways.

Business name: A-AAccess OnLine Payment Systems Inc. dba COCARD

Contact person: Nelda Mays, President

Website: www.cocard.net/

**The project and purpose:** A-AAccess OnLine Payment Systems Inc. dba COCARD utilized a series of blog posts to share with current merchants in the company portfolio how to prepare for EMV-chip cards and what to expect while engaging them and making the company available if needed.

The result: Companies in the portfolio stayed with A-AAccess OnLine Payment Systems Inc. dba COCARD during a period of industry uncertainty because blogging was used as a way to share industry expertise to assuage the fears of clients rather than scare them into buying unnecessary equipment. In addition, the website copy helped to successfully brand the conglomerate of COCARD, a group of 90 independent sales offices that work under the name COCARD.

Click on the animated image to view the blog article.

THE EMV FILES: A CONVERSATION WITH CHIP AND TERMINAL

Admin | Advice, Business, EMV, Industry, New Product, Tech, Uncategorized



"The most popular post was the conversation with Chip & Terminal. It was exceedingly popular and one of our biggest hits!" –Nelda Mays, President of A-AAccess OnLine Payment Systems Inc. dba COCARD

# What people have to say

(in order of appearance)



"We hired Obinna to develop blog posts and web content for one of our websites. Through her content strategy, she presented a variety of articles on EMV and also simplified a complex concept into terms that were understandable for our customers. We definitely recommend her and would gladly work with her again." –Nelda Mays, President of A-AAccess OnLine Payment Systems, Inc. dba COCARD



"Obinna created a white paper for us, and she did a great job. We used it as a tool for job seekers to help them in their job search. It is a part of our library of tools and has been used by well over 500 job seekers." —Bridget C. Lewis, Professional Development Consultant with Workplace Learning Solutions, LLC



"Have been working with Obinna for a little while now. Extremely impressed with her professionalism and the quality of her writing!" –Alex Hoff, SEO Account Manager with Visiture



"Obinna's grasp of the concept and needs helped us to produce a flexible and modern set of timeless pieces in an infographic type of style." –Martha Galindo, Founder and CEO of Galindo Publicidad Inc.



"As the Content Committee team lead at Startup Atlanta, I had the pleasure of working with Obinna as we volunteered our time to serve the Atlanta startup community and entrepreneurial ecosystem. Her passion for writing and editorial work is apparent through the interviews and stories she told during our time together. Obinna took on each new endeavor in stride and I'm incredibly proud of what we accomplished as a team." —David Ahn, Former Content Lead of Startup Atlanta



"Over the past two years, Obinna has become a reliable and significant contributor to my PR and communicating needs for my companies and professionals boards. Her work ethic is insatiable and the content is always clear, concise and commanding—always appealing to the audience. My work reads well because of Obinna. She complimented my team and what we needed very well. I would recommend her to anyone within my network." -M. Cole Jones, Managing Partner of RIISE Ventures



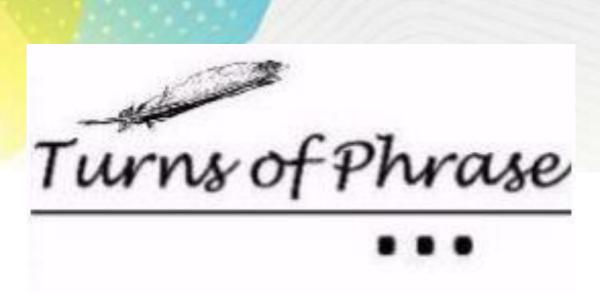
"Obinna has worked with us on developing blog articles, transcript summaries and case studies for both Convergent, our digital signage company, and Digital Ignition, our tech incubator. She's been an engaged and dedicated professional who has provided a high level of service. She's been very pleasant to work with, and has been a good communicator throughout each project. Give her a shot—you won't be disappointed." -Tomasz Nowakowski, Digital Marketing Manager of Convergent



"Obinna is incredibly detail-oriented and hard working in her assistance with growing our social media presence and managing our content. She's able to translate brand voice extremely well and I loved that she could make a boring topic personable and entertaining. Obinna is truly talented in her transformation of stories and interviews into words for content management and social media." –Sheffie Robinson, Founder of Bantunium Labs

### l've also been published with:

Business.com
Women on Business
Hub Magazine with the Technology Association of Georgia
Bold Favor Magazine
Living Northside with the Atlanta Journal-Constitution



#### **About Turns of Phrase**

Turns of Phrase is a writing services provider that uses content to tell the stories of businesses and individuals to connect with the people on the other side—their customers and prospective customers.

#### So, what's your story?

Learn more at www.turnsofphrase.com.

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