

How to be a (great) content creator



Thoughts
Yvonne Mtengwa

Thanks to the internet and the options it's presented us, anyone can be – and is – a content creator. But how do you make your content stand out above the rest? It starts with some research. It's time to step up your content creator game with these tips from Yvonne C. Mtengwa

We can all agree that Millennials brought about a form of disruption to the conventional marketing landscape. Out with the overuse of printed brochures and in with social media posts, filters, hashtags and super-captions.

Surveys across the globe illustrate the generalised disdain that Millennials carry towards advertising and hard selling. Today's consumer has the internet at their fingertips and can pretty much find out everything good, bad or downright ugly about any product or service on the market. Who is out there looking for billboards anyway when there is so much information and imagery available to connect us with the brands and personalities that interest us?

Enter the push for quality content. You've heard the term "content is king". It is. Authentic messaging, experiential sharing and product reviews have been on the scene and trending for years now, birthing a new wave of blogging opportunities for writers who would otherwise have been overlooked for not possessing qualifications in journalism or mass communications. This, friends, has changed the game for many of us who always craved visibility and credibility in the writing space, but weren't sure we had what it took to author books or write White Papers.

When making presentations, I tell my story all the time of how I "stumbled" onto the PR scene. Having trained in sales and marketing, my return to Southern Africa from America in 2007 led me to continuing on with conventional marketing methods; you know – the sales calls with printed brochures in hand, the road shows and such. A relocation to the UAE brought about a whole new shift for this marketer with a desire to elevate her skillset where communications and consumer engagement were concerned.

Joining a PR agency brought with it a dimension in content distribution I had never seen before. It was all about content and lots of it. PR agencies here were nothing like what felt like press offices and advertising houses back home. If you didn't know how to write, then PR wasn't going to work for you. You could talk a good game and negotiate your way into securing coverage for a client, but you still needed to know how to write the content you would then distribute to the media fraternity.

Talk to food or travel bloggers and they'll tell you more about what keeps them excited to share their experiences with the world. Ask yourself how many of your friends are YouTubers and bloggers if you aren't one yourself? What I'm saying is there are more opportunities today than ever before for any wordsmith to take their words beyond their laptops and pictures beyond their phones.

Fact is, we like to share information, some more than others. But before I begin to sound like it's all very easy to write and curate great content for yourself, brands and personalities, understand that it isn't. You'll need to adopt a good combination of the below habits in your bid to rise and garner acclaim as a writer or content creator.





1. Be well versed in the topics you intend to write about

Engaging content is factual, educational and entertaining. You'll want to position yourself as an expert in your subject matter at all times. It's for this reason that you end up managing client portfolios within specific sectors when working in PR. You'll find few people that enjoy writing about the different types of Biryani as much as they like to draft op-eds on the next pandemic or rising gas prices. Oil and gas writers can't tell you the first thing about Legos or Caesar Salad dressing. See where I'm going with this? You've got to know your stuff so your writing doesn't come across as pointless fluff. Focus on the content and industry you want to be known for and enhance your knowledge in that area.

2. Consistency always wins

The reason why companies pay PR agencies to curate content and employ effective media relations strategies is because they need their brands visible to their audiences all of the time. The more stuff you are churning out on the regular, the greater the chances audiences will see and engage with your content. Keep blogging, posting or press release-churning. It all aids you in garnering the visibility you are looking for.



3. Network, network, network

Hard one this, especially if you are one of those introverted writers or camera shy social media users. Whether you enjoy being the center of attention or are quite happy with a growing word count from a corner in a café somewhere. They will always come a point where you have to talk about what you write about. Writing is a skill. Don't be afraid to show it off. For those looking to venture into the PR space, it's a given – networking is a must.

4. Identify your differentiator

There is so much content out there vying for attention from the same people. What makes what you have to say unique? How do you present your visuals? What is your tone of voice? Always bring it back to this question – what is your differentiator?

5. Offer tips that answer question

We wouldn't spend so much time online if we weren't looking for answer to some of life's questions. From "what to wear with blue denim jeans" to "vegan options for beginners", the internet is rife with content that addresses just about every question out there. Ask a mom with the arduous task of working on a school project on "Roman helmets" or "climate change for 10 year olds". It's all there. In your writing, provide tips or solutions. These will keep your readers coming back for more.

Content marketing will be around for a long a time people. Businesses are on a perennial hunt for quality content that will convey messaging which converts to sales of goods and services. Entrepreneurs, community leaders, executives and more — all want the work they are doing spotlighted in a delicate and non-pretentious manner. That friends, spells opportunity. There is plenty of it for those looking to break out into the world of PR or be a part of the fast-evolving community of bloggers, e-book writers, infographic designers and more. Fortunately for me, I had joined the millions of bloggers that played around with WordPress and Tumblr platforms a few years before and so writing was, in fact, something I had grown to love, which created the ease in transition for me as I navigated the PR and Marcomms landscape upon moving the UAE.

What about you? Do you believe you have what it takes to starting putting together contents audiences want to connect with? Are you ready to join the millions of writers out there that are putting out great blogs, social posts, e-books and webinars?

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