

Organic Audience Development Strategy

68 Audience Development
Strategies for Building a
Robust Audience
Development Plan

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Introduction

The Internet has become a friendly place for digital publishers and online business owners.

With the help of technology like tablets and smartphones, the use of the Internet isn't stationary anymore. Users are accessing on the go, socializing with friends and learning about the information that is most important to them.

Due to this increase of online activity, the opportunity to develop an audience through is great. With the help of targeted writing, search engine optimization, and social media, you can organically grow your audience. The costs associated with these strategies are much less than constantly paying for advertising, and audience members seem to appreciate them more than blatant ads.

Through this 50-page report, you will discover dozens of tips for developing an online audience with the help of organic audience development strategies.

The Best Audience Development Job Description We've Seen

See how Anne-Laure Oaks has embraced her position as Audience Development Manager, and now Director, at Interweave

Audience development personnel have a very specific, and incredibly important job within an organization.

Finding the right audience development staff can mean the difference between thousands of email subscribers and tens of thousands of dollars in additional revenue.

The best audience development job description I've ever seen comes from our colleagues at Interweave. Anne-Laure Oaks, recently promoted to Director, Audience Development at Interweave, has filled the aforementioned job described later on in this article. Before we see the actual job description, here are three aspects that make it the best we've seen.

#1. The best audience development job description is strategic. This job description has detailed for Anne how her role is important to the larger organization and the key metrics she is responsible for, and thus, how she can define her own success. These components are strategic and measurable at the same time.

#2. The best audience development job description is tactical. This job description is incredibly detailed and serves as an owner's manual for an audience development manager. It includes a list of all the everyday tasks that Anne is responsible for.

#3. The best audience development job description defines key relationships. This job description defines all of the people inside a fairly large and complex publishing organization. These are the people that Anne works with on a day-to-day basis to get her job done accordingly. In particular, audience development is dependent on online editors and an array of content producers – including event producers, app producers and product producers – at an organization as fully developed as Interweave.

Above all else, Anne is required to leverage all of the premium content the organization is using.

Without further adieu, here is the best audience development job description I've seen:

Job Title: Audience Development Manager

Summary of Responsibilities:

This position is primarily responsible for facilitating the accomplishment of Interweave's vision and values by maximizing the size of Interweave's Community site Email lists, utilizing SEO campaign development, registration process optimization, PBS TV viewer conversion to registered members, partnerships, contests, promotion, social media presence and list segmentation management.

Values inherent to success in the position:

-Demonstrating warmth, personality, directness, voice, vulnerability and care with customers, co-workers, and vendors

-Creating high quality, innovative work product that enhances the lives of customers and/or co-workers

-Remembering and acting with the knowledge that customer satisfaction encompasses both external customers and co-workers and is our highest and most important objective in completing and accomplishing our daily tasks

-Leveraging technology, personal development, and organizational skills to continually enhance productivity

-Setting and attaining measurable objectives in your day-to-day activities

-Gaining trust and respect by working with integrity, openness, unity, honesty and balance

-Putting common goals ahead of personal interests

-Sharing ideas and best practices to foster an environment of mentoring and encouragement

-Understanding that change is inevitable and embracing it with positivity and openness

-Continually seeking to improve oneself and business practices to facilitate a nimble and creative environment

-Respecting yourself and others

Organizational Relationships:

Team: Consumer Marketing and eMedia

Reports to: VP, Consumer Marketing

Relationships: Internal: Marketing managers (eCommerce, Consumer Marketing, Product Marketing); Enewsletter editors; emedia production External: Market Group Advertising partnerships

Essential Functions of the Job:

Includes the following and additional duties may be assigned depending on the needs of the company:

SEO:

1. Develop, Execute, Analyze and improve SEO campaigns for all registration-focused sites

(BD, KD, Spinoff, AA and others as they are implemented) following the Mequoda freemium-based SEO campaign process.

2. Oversee Search engine penetration in major search engines; ensure we have optimized search engine site maps to facilitate speed and depth of search engine indexing.

3. Guide editors and marketers on top terms to use to maximize search rankings.

4. Track SEO effectiveness using GVR process, SEO referrals, Search Engine Penetration reports and other available resources.

Registration:

1. Optimize the registration process for all community sites. Regular testing of member joining offers. Track conversion rates through each step of the Conversion

process funnel.

2. Develop effective registration process for the PBS TV sites to convert viewers to Newsletter members.
3. Develop and execute viral marketing contests and strategic partnerships to increase newsletter lists in conjunction with key Market Group executives.
4. Manage the process to add any Bulk List Adds to the newsletter list – including source coding them to track their performance.
5. Manage the process to reactivate members based on inactivity period reporting.

Reporting/Analysis/Other:

1. Reporting/Analysis: produce or work with others to produce the activity and trending reports needed to track all above job responsibilities including providing necessary metrics to EVP, EMedia for Corporate reporting.
2. Develop a Social Media program for all communities for all key existing and new social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, RSS, etc.)
3. Promote all Community newsletters using house print and web product channels and Corporate Publicity.

Skill Set:

General: Strong combination of creative and analytical skills to both create promotions and analyze them; strong project management skills to achieve program implementation schedule adherence while working with internal groups. Ability to develop mutually beneficial strategic proposals and implement programs with market group partners.

Subject matter knowledge: 2+ years on-line direct marketing experience developing new member newsletter registration and retention programs, demonstrated experience to develop and execute SEO campaigns. Strong understanding of list development, management and segmentation. Knowledge of special interest craft or niche markets in a multi-platform media company.

Communication skills: Excellent interpersonal, written and verbal skills. Ability to communicate programs, strategies and results internally. Ability to

communicate effectively with Market group partners and prospects.

Education and/or experience: B.S. in marketing, communication or a related field and/or 2 or more years of experience in direct online marketing.

Technology: Intermediate experience with Microsoft Office (emphasis on Excel and Outlook) and experience with web analytics software. Basic HTML experience a plus.

Short job descriptions were an industry trend for a while. As you can see, Interweave does not pay attention to this.

These lengthy job descriptions are not unique inside Interweave, since the company as a whole is strategic, tactful and organizational. Most job descriptions I've seen, regardless of the specific position, fall far short from the bar Interweave has set in this regard.

One of the key tactical skill sets for an audience development manager or director is SEO campaign management, and Anne is a master at this craft. In fact, my first introduction to Anne was learning that she had taken the SEO campaign management deck Mequoda created and completely revised and updated it using Knitting Daily as the case study. At the time Anne was a brand new employee from a different company, yet she got it all right and expanded on the detail, depth and examples in ways that our research team had not.

3 Ways to Increase Website Traffic for a New Site

Three or four times a year I get to help launch a new website. Given that we use organic sources like search engines, links from referring websites, and social media to drive qualified traffic, getting those first visitors to a new website is an interesting challenge.

Jumpstart number 1: SEO Campaign management

Every website I work on will ultimately use free downloads as the nexus for each organic marketing campaign. But it probably won't surprise you that I tell all my clients that this is the primary jumpstart program for a new website. Ideally, we'd like to have three to five free downloads ready to go when the website goes live. Then we start a new SEO campaign every week to get things moving. Most publishers will then move into a maintenance schedule launching a new campaign every three to four weeks. If you're new to SEO campaign management, [download our free report](#) or check out our 90-minute [webinar](#).

Jumpstart number 2: Affiliate marketing

Perhaps the safest way to build circulation with paid media is to partner with an affiliate who has similar demographics and a large opt-in email subscriber base. For most markets, affiliates abound who will charge you a dollar or less for every new email subscriber they send you. Choosing to work with a publisher who uses email newsletters to drive traffic to your rapid conversion landing pages guarantees that your first subscribers will be responsive to email newsletters. You'll want your first subscribers to be email responsive so they can open, click, and forward your emails to others.

Jumpstart number 3: Google AdWords

I like leveraging work I've already done. A Google AdWords campaign designed to promote my free downloads leverages those downloads and all the keyword research built into my Google Visibility Report. All the keyword research I've done for organic marketing identifies the same keywords I can use in a Google AdWords campaign. In the testing I've done over the years, Google responders all look the same. Whether they're clicking from an organic listing or a paid listing, they are high-quality users who are simply looking for information.

Of course, all three of the above programs can be part of an ongoing audience development program. SEO Campaign Management is the backbone of organic

marketing. Pay programs like affiliate marketing and Google AdWords can also be a permanent part of your audience development program if they represent sources that allow you to buy low and sell high.

The following two chapters discuss 13 audience development tips and seven tips for building a community of active, engaged users.

13 Audience Development Tips

Tip #1: PR – Public relations on the net has taken off in popularity. Not only is it more public, press releases can be distributed to search engines, journalists and news sources. Many of these sites offer free distribution, and a paid option that sends the press release to even more locations.

Tip #2: SEO – Search engine optimization will help your content get found in search engines. This way, audience members from all over can find your content whenever they are looking for it. Due to this, your content can be attracting and converting visitors while you sleep.

Tip #3: Link building – Do you know websites that cater to a similar audience? If you are able to build a relationship with them, asking for links could greatly benefit your visibility.

Tip #4: In-house ads – Promote for additional products or content throughout your website with in-house ads.

Tip #5: Affiliate marketing – Allow companies to sell your products that have a similar audience. These companies will take a cut of the profit, but you'll still generate revenue and gain more visibility.

Tip #6: TV – Since not all online publishers have the option to use television, online videos are a great alternative because they are media-rich and incorporate a personal feel. Nowadays, video recording equipment like the Kodak Zi8 and similar devices are affordable.

Tip #7: In-house editorial – Great online editors write and think like marketers and know the topics they cover, but communicate in an informative, indirect promotional manner.

Tip #8: Social media – Social media is a great way to engage your audience members and establish relationships. Selling products can also be possible through this medium, but you must tread lightly with that process or you'll likely anger your social media subscribers.

Tip #9: Learn how to search using the tilde (~) – If you include a tilde in your search query, it will retrieve results that are common to the community surrounding your keyword. For instance, I search the term “~content”. Google retrieved related words that I could further research as relevant keywords if I was

building a cluster off the term “content”. The related words were bolded and the most relevant websites came up first in the search results. These are terms that you will need to focus on if you want to rank on long-tail results.

When I search “~content” the first three related keywords that were retrieved were:

-Knowledge

-Concentration

-Document

As you can tell, there is some relation between the term “content” and these three results. They won’t be the most important, relevant keywords to focus your attention on, but they will likely help to gain additional audience members if you do end up using those terms in your written content.

Tip #10: Consider Behavioral Keyword Research. It is often overlooked that Google remembers prior searches made by a user. This is done to remove the ambiguity of single searches. If you want to rank well in Google, think about what the population of your users might have already searched for, and what terms they will search for next. Covering these topics in SEO will help you better serve the community and likely provide content the user is looking for. Remember, in Google’s mind, audience development is about the aggregate search, not the single search.

Yahoo Clues is a tool that can help you find examples of prior search queries for a term, and queries that are likely to come next.

Tip #11: Include clarification words for proper audience development. Tell Google the intent behind your site. For instance, if you are an informative website that interested searchers can use for research purposes, it’s valuable to let Google know that. Terms like “tips, advice, help, free info” will help to do this.

If you are a retail site, you can use a term like “free shipping” and still satisfy both your customers and Google.

Tip #12: Use a linear distribution of keywords. There have been times when other online editors have asked me where keywords should be used throughout the page. You do not want to have your keywords only at the top of an article. To be most successful with SEO efforts, you should distribute your keywords throughout

the entire article by using it at least once in every paragraph. Words like “it”, “them” or “that” typically hold the place of where a keyword can be inserted.

Tip #13: Reuse and recycle content. Publishing frequently can make it easier to gain market share and ultimately increase your audience development efforts. It is OK to reuse and recycle content and most online publishers do engage in this activity often. When doing so, make sure you have at least 20% new content, or Google will filter it as duplicate content.

7 Steps for Community Building

Community Building Step #1: Define community goals – It's important to begin with a focus. Many content marketers and online publishers want to attract more website traffic and experience more conversions of casual visitors to email subscribers. Is this the goal you have for your community? Perhaps you want to enhance the quality of your community by building upon visitor's time on site and the frequency in which they share your content. All of these are respectable goals that can lead to stronger, more engaged communities.

Community Building Step #2: Profile your target community – Using analytics can help you determine the content that brings the most people to your website. Is this content what your main focus is about as an organization? If so, you are on the right track. If not, you should work on targeting your community differently. Think about what keeps your audience up at night – the pressing questions that they seek answers for. Then, do extensive keyword research to see what keyword terms are associated with this content.

Community Building Step #3: Identify influencers – Do you know of individuals who like your content and have a lot of loyal followers? These are the type of community members you want to reach and stay in content with, so they can endorse your content to their list of followers.

Community Building Step #4: Create social media-friendly content – The importance of creating great content should not come as a surprise to publishers. However, some forget to promote other great content that isn't their own. Use social media to share great content, both yours and from others, and work to start conversations around it. Give opinions, ask questions and show the passion you have for the subject.

Community Building Step #5: Optimize content for sharing – The [article](#) from Poynter lists five great questions to consider while optimizing content for sharing:

- Are buttons for sharing on every post?
- Are tweets short enough that followers can retweet with your name intact?
- Do articles have strong calls to action for sharing?
- Are headlines shareable on their own?

-Is the content strong enough to share?

Community Building Step #6: Create interaction guidelines – It's important to have consistency and an understanding on addressing issues that may arise for your organization. All community managers should have a list of best practices guidelines for addressing issues. This list can be update anytime a new issue arises.

Community Building Step #7: Monitor the community, then improve – Beyond tracking statistics with analytics programs, it's important to listen and ask questions of your audience. This will help you determine ways to improve upon your community.

Writing Tips for Audience Development

Writing, audience development and digital publishing all go together quite nicely.

What's even more impressive is that how specific writing strategies can be used to build your online audience.

The next few chapters discuss how to use writing for audience development efforts, including how to write headlines that get found and the strategies associated with blogging a bestseller.

How Much is an Audience Development Blog Subscriber Worth?

For consumer marketers, there is perhaps no better audience development program than one anchored by a well-run audience development blog

I almost never meet a publisher who tells me their audience could not be larger. And for the most part, they are absolutely correct. Most niche media publishers never reach more than three to five percent of their target audience on a regular basis. And couple that with the fact that audience size is a direct driver of publishing revenue, you fuel the never-ending quest for audience development.

While many publishers are content to gain visibility by simply repurposing magazine, newsletter, and catalog content onto their websites, a growing number of savvy online publishers are taking the next step by adding an audience development blog designed to repurpose premium content in the form of tips, reviews, summaries, and other derivative formats.

A few of my favorite examples include Knitting Daily, HR Daily Advisor, Bible History Daily, Business Management Daily, and TSI Network. Each of these audience development blogs follows the four open content principles that define them as Mequoda Systems. They are content-driven, Google friendly, subscriber-centric, and part of a larger multi-platform marketing system.

Having helped build more than 100 of these systems, I've noticed that their operating economics are incredibly similar. Like most economic systems, there are two simple factors that predict revenue. The first is blog subscribers, and revenue per subscriber is the second. Unlike many legacy marketing and publishing systems, which involve print, it's pretty easy to quantify audience size and revenue per customer. To avoid giving away any proprietary data and still give you an idea where your audience development fits in the overall scheme of things, I asked Laura Pittman to prepare a simple chart that shows all the possible combinations we seen over the past decade.

If I average the data for all the systems I've seen over the years, it comes out to around \$10 per subscriber on a base of about 100,000 subscribers for total revenues of \$1 million per year.

Increasing total revenue

Most of my consulting and teaching practice centers on helping publishers improve revenue per subscriber by testing content formats, product offers, and sponsorship programs – which are part of the 12 Internet business models we've seen work again and again. Driving revenue per subscriber is the hard part. Building blog circulation has never been easier. We catalogued dozens of ways to increase website traffic using organic partners like Google, Twitter, Facebook, and so many others. Here are a few free white papers that will help you with the optimization process:

[SEO Copywriting Handbook](#)

[SEO Press Release Guidelines](#)

[SEO Campaign Management Basics](#)

[Landing Page Handbook](#)

Audience development blogging

You may have noticed that I didn't call this process editorial blogging; I called it audience development blogging. Over the past decade, it has become lucidly clear that this process performs best when it is part of the audience development or consumer marketing departments. Audience development blogging is not an editorial function. While some may think it is because the blogs that anchor the process must be high-quality service journalism, this is not the deciding factor. An audience development blog is measured using direct marketing metrics that include total circulation, revenue per subscriber, Google visibility, and a myriad of conversion and retention statistics. Further, each blog post and its related e-mail, RSS, Twitter, and Facebook derivations are exercises in repurposing premium content from books, magazines, videos, and other premium sources with the goal of gaining visibility, audience, and the sale of premium information products.

One of my clients has moved their audience development blogging program from editorial, to marketing, to editorial, and back to marketing over a period of four years. The results have been as hard and clear as gorilla glass. Every key metric from visibility and total circulation, to retention and revenue per subscriber has been much higher when the program has been part of the consumer marketing department. Put simply, audience development blogging is marketing, not editorial.

How to Write a Headline that Gets Found

5 Advanced Google Search Tips for Editors

Google is a great tool to use for writing headlines that will get found and bring you new traffic.

Furthermore, Google Analytics is a great tool for an in-depth drilldown on your keyword strategy. Utilizing it will help you determine which keywords demand more attention through added content and optimization.

If you don't take the time to dive into your Google Analytics, you may be missing out on top content that searchers are looking for.

Some of the top content terms we've paid more attention to generate upwards of 10,000 page views each year... and that's typically from one article targeting a phrase we originally expected to be a long-tail keyword.

I believe many online publishers are neglecting top content terms because they aren't familiarizing themselves enough with their Google Visibility Report and their analytics data.

One key to generating more website traffic is to pay closer attention to terms in your Google Visibility Report (GVR), or Keyword Universe, that have a high Keyword Competitive Index (KCI). After doing so, advanced Google search tips will help editors focus on providing relevant content about the keyword while offering a solution to unanswered questions.

If you want to start writing headlines that get found, try using these 5 advanced Google search tips. In fact, I used this exact same method to write this article, as the term "advanced Google search tips" was unacknowledged by other webpages in Google.

Five advanced Google search tips for editors

Advanced Google Search Tip #1: Refer to your Google Visibility Report to find unanswered questions. Begin by sorting your terms in descending order by KCI. Scroll through your list and select terms that have some relevance to your audience and a high KCI.

Advanced Google Search Tip #2: Enhance your content. Use the Google Keyword Tool to find four-word variations of the keyword phrase.

Advanced Google Search Tip #3: Use the exact match to see direct competition. To do this, go to Google and search the term with quotes (“”) around it. This will give you an exact idea of the competing websites that have the term optimized within their content. The top content keyword phrases may be dry by themselves. As an editor, it’s your job to jazz it up with an intriguing headline and personalize it to your audience.

With this article, we added “for editors” into the subhead so our audience would know we are providing information of value to them.

Advanced Google Search Tip #4: Create a modified headline, write the article, optimize and publish.

Advanced Google Search Tip #5: Use Google Analytics to track your results. After a month or so, your traffic on that term should be higher if you properly optimized the content and was able to rank on the term.

3 Ways to Blog a Bestseller

The art of audience development blogging requires great service journalism wrapped around a best-selling product

While audience development blogging can take many formats, I teach my clients three basic templates to begin a new blogging program. A typical blog calendar might go for as little as four weeks to as many as 26 weeks. It might involve just a handful of best-selling products, or as many as 50. The process of developing an audience development master calendar always starts with identifying the organization's bestsellers, or potential bestsellers. Most of my clients are selling information products: magazines, newsletters, website, videos, books, event and dozens of other lesser used formats. Some are selling other people's products: travel, investing, and even consumer-packaged goods. Content marketing, the art of using content to sell products and services, can be used effectively to sell anything from Pampers to jet planes.

My three favorite blog formats

The news alert is always the anchor effort in any audience development blogging program I develop. The research is simple: we identify the core topics that are tied to our bestsellers, create Google alerts for each of them, and use that research to create a value-add news story that is both "ripped from the headlines" and directly related to the best-selling product I ultimately desire to sell. Whether the topic is negotiation, the brother of Jesus, or knitting socks, I can always count on Google alerts to give me a news peg to start my cycle.

Next, I go to the tried-and-true product review format. Because I will promote the same product many times over the course of a year, I will always niche down and choose some part of the product to review for a given blog post. If I'm reviewing a book, it might be a chapter. If it's a magazine, I'd review one of the articles. If it's a how-to video, I'll focus in on a particular technique or tip and support it with a video clip.

For my third effort, the gloves come off. Now it's time for some bare knuckled selling. Using any number of classic direct marketing sales letter formats, I am now going to write a blog effort designed to convince the recipient to take action and buy my product or service today, or to complete a lead generation form for a more complex sale.

Characteristics of Top Performing Content

Discover content tendencies found in our top performing article posts

Do you know what your top performing articles are?

If not, and you have an analytics program, you can easily figure out which article posts receive the most traffic. After discovering this information, you can analyze the content to determine similar characteristics top articles share. Additionally, you will understand the topics your audience values the most. Creating more content on these topics will further help satisfy your audience.

How to find top content articles

For users of Google Analytics, it's quite easy to find your top content. To begin, go into one of your reports and select the Content category. While there, select the option for Top Content.

During this stage of the process, go to the bottom of your content performance results and filter the results for pages containing /articles. This will retrieve the top ranking articles and show all the associated statistics for them.

Consistencies in content

After retrieving this list of top content, I went through each page and discovered traits that were shared through most of the articles.

First, I noticed that many of the articles contained numbers in the headline and lists of content within the body copy. This type of article has been successful because it clearly outlines in the headline what will be found within the article. The list format also provides the opportunity for strong SEO.

An example of one top content article that fits this description is: [Email Marketing Tips: 10 Email Feedback Loop Lists](#).

The next component shared by top content articles is the word “best”. This word is intriguing to audiences by boasting strong, relevant information.

An example of one top content article that includes “best” is: [The Best Audience Development Job Description We've Seen](#).

The last component of our top content articles is member comments. The inclusion of user-generated content furthers the conversation surrounding the article and is rewarded in search engines. Some of our most trafficked articles have over 20 comments from users.

An example of one top content article that has a lot of user comments is: [Subject Line Spam Trigger Words](#). Note that this article has 28 comments.

Overall, it's important to delivery the content your article's headline promises. If you say you'll provide eight best practices, do so. If you are offering the "best" tips, make sure these tips are reputable and tested.

Audience Development for Online Editors

7 job responsibilities and strategies for online editors that help develop a larger, more targeted audience

In today's digital landscape, online editors have a hand in developing a brand's audience, even beyond the written content they produce.

An article from eMedia Vitals once stated the role of an online editor well. "...Increasingly we are, directly or indirectly, charged with creating content aimed to maintain and attract an audience – a.k.a. audience development".

This role of attracting and maintaining relationships has expanded as digital strategies become more developed. Editors create great content, share it with their social networks and form conversations around the information.

Below, I have listed three of the audience development techniques online editors engage in.

3 audience development techniques for online editors

SEO: As Ellie Behling, senior writer at eMedia Vitals, put it "SEO has been one of the biggest drivers to get journalists and media companies thinking about their audience." In turn, this has made SEO a necessary part of developing an audience through the keyword phrases that they search.

[SEO campaigns](#) continue to help online editors attract new audience members by targeting the topics of interest to them.

Keyword Research: Good online editors will be able to perform keyword research to focus on specific keyword phrases that are underserved. Understanding metrics associated with keyword research helps online editors monitor search behavior and while tracking competition data.

For an array of information on keyword research, check out [Mequoda Pro](#), which offers the webinar [Keyword Research Step-by-Step 2011](#).

Social Media: Online editors build audiences through content and engagement. Social networks have given editors the opportunity to interact directly with audiences. For online publishers, social media is a way to spread editorial while

carefully marketing aligned products.

Discover how content marketers are using Twitter with this free report: [Twitter Advice For and From Content Marketers](#).

Four strategies for online editors

Beyond the techniques of audience development, it's important to have tools in place for online editors to maximize their time.

These four strategies will help online editors streamline their days better.

Google Alerts: Online editors should set up [Google alerts](#) on terms that are relevant to the content they produce and publish. Google alerts can be customized to inform you every time an article containing your keywords is published.

Google Visibility Report (GVR): The [Google Visibility Report](#), or GVR, is a document Mequoda Group began creating to keep all your keyword phrases in one centralized location. Online editors should use this document to determine the keyword phrases worth targeting in their copy.

Twitter Search: The [Twitter search](#) allows online editors to find Twitter users that are talking about relevant topics. These individuals can be followed and monitored with the expectations of developing a repertoire and building a larger following.

Editorial Calendar: Online editors should develop an editorial calendar each month so they can properly align their content with associated products. It helps plan daily content creation and makes the task less tedious.

Going forward, online publishers will be looking to hire online editors who understand the new requirements in the digital age. All editors should become acquainted with these skills if they expect to remain desirable to online publishers.

3 Tips for User Generated Content

Are you harnessing the power of your audience?

If you were to brainstorm all the words that describe a product of yours, do you think your audience members would think of the *same* words to describe the product?

At the 2011 SES Conference in New York City, Michael DeHaven, SEO Product Manager at Bazaarvoice, presented an example that did just that.

DeHaven's slide showed the terms a company used to describe a product, and then showed the terms the audience used to describe the same product.

For instance, he showed 153 descriptive words used by a restaurant. The employees of the restaurant used the terms "Pacific", "selections" and "steak" the most. These words serve as a description of the menu and the location.

The consumers used words like "great", "special" and "view" the most. These user-generated comments appear to describe the experience more than the restaurant itself.

It's no surprise that people have different perceptions on the same thing. Business professionals, who are selling a product, will tend to look at it from the standpoint of trying to sell the product. Their opinions, although true, may slant towards a promotional aspect so that a product will be purchased.

Users, on the other hand, will tend to describe the experience associated with a product or service.

This differing in opinion can be great if properly utilized.

User generated content fills gaps

With businesses describing products or services and consumers discussing experiences, there is a lot of content associated with the conversation. When conversations are active, and user generated content is present, Google will be more interested in picking up the conversation.

In other words, user generated content will help build credibility within Google, which can lead to better page rank.

Three E's of User Generated Content

According to DeHaven, user generated content can help your online business in three main ways:

-Enrich: By adding user generated content to your website, you will be adding freshness and a rich feel to your existing pages.

-Expose: An interactive archive of user-generated content may end up increasing long-tail traffic as users may use associated keywords. Flowing content in and out of the page will keep it frequently updated. Do this process every 2.5 days if you have a lot of content; if not don't have a lot of content, do it every 2.5 weeks.

-Engage: Turning users into contributors will help increase the amount of content within your website while facilitating conversations with your audience.

How to get user generated content

During this session, DeHaven mentioned three ways of obtaining user generated content. These include:

-Leveraging user generated content in promotional pieces

-Draw attention with inline user generated content

-Invite users into the conversation

The article pages that receive the most traffic at the Mequoda Daily all have comments from users. We believe Google rewards publishers for engaging their audience and having a conversation based around the content. According to the session, user generated content like product reviews increase search traffic by 23%.

One final piece of advice: never moderate your user generated content. An occasional negative comment will show credibility behind the content.

5 Tips for Content Aggregation

Are you aggregating content for your audience appropriately?

In the digital world, aggregation is an interesting thing. When done properly, it helps you provide your audience with a large amount of content that you typically couldn't create yourself; unless, of course, you have a massive staff of writers.

Since most niche publications don't have a large enough core of writers, aggregation is used to adequately supply the audience with relevant information from an array of sources. However, if aggregation is done improperly, it can look more like content theft. No writer wants to be associated with plagiarism, so let's take a look at some ways you can go about properly aggregating content.

Five tips for aggregating content

#1: Add value to aggregated content. While aggregating content, add context and commentary that adds to the piece. This suggestion comes from Kimberley Isbell, the author of “[The Rise of the News Aggregator: Legal Implications and Best Practices](#)”.

#2: Link to the original articles used. This is hopefully a no-brainer, since you should always source your sites.

#3: Be accurate. If you're covering a topic that has multiple sources, use each in your article so you can show accuracy while highlighting some of the nuances between each article.

#4: Aggregate worthy information. Don't just aggregate to generate a lot of content. Remember, quality over quantity when it comes to aggregation. Make sure you are aggregating the best quality content that your audience will benefit from.

#5: Empower sources and readers. Jeff Sonderman wrote a great [article](#) on aggregation for Poynter. The tip of empowering sources and readers comes from that article. After you've proven your ability to aggregate content appropriately, news sources and readers might want to help you out. News sources may want to send you articles in advance and readers may want to send you content suggestions. I'd recommend being open to these relationships as it can help you provide more, beneficial content while building your audience further.

A Checklist for Marketing to Millennials

6 elements of engagement for better content marketing to a very important demographic

The American writer Carl Sandburg once said, “Nothing happens unless first a dream.” In today’s digital world, many Internet marketers and audience development professionals would paraphrase this differently by saying: “Nothing happens unless engagement exists.”

That’s what we are all looking for online – engaged audiences who will contribute to a mutually beneficial relationship. We, as digital publishers, develop an audience by providing the information they want, through a multiplatform approach. Our audiences then have the choice to support us further, through spending money with us, if they like the content we offer.

The transformation to digital has been confusing to some online business owners. Many do not understand how to communicate with demographics that grew up with the Internet. Since engagement is the focus for digital publishers, let’s take a look at six elements of engagement, presented by [Razorfish Liminal](#).

Elements of audience engagement for content marketing to millennials

Content marketing to millennials tip #1: Value – Who doesn’t want to be feel appreciated? When consumers spend money with your company, they want to know you value their business. Help make this known by offering appreciate campaigns. This could be as simple as a “thank you” email or a discount for future purchases.

Content marketing to millennials tip #2: Efficiency – No one wants to waste time, especially when they are spending money in the process too. Make Internet activities easier for audience members, including signing up for content updates and finding content within your site.

Content marketing to millennials tip #3: Trust – An interesting quote from Razorfish’s survey states, “I’ll take chances with [trusting a company] so long as I’m sure they are there for me to correct any problems.” Online businesses need to be transparent, and willing to help their customers if they want to keep them engaged.

Content marketing to millennials tip #4: Consistency – Your most devout audience members will realize it if you present conflicting messages or policies. Staying consistent helps lead to elevated levels of trust.

Content marketing to millennials tip #5: Relevance – Create high-quality content that aligns with your audience's needs. Stay up-to-date with industry news, and don't deviate from the practices that you've used as a publisher.

Content marketing to millennials tip #6: Control – In today's connected world, the consumer has a lot of power. They have the ability to control conversations and relationships. Realize this, and show your audience members that you recognize this too.

What is Relationship Marketing?

3 steps to relationship marketing

There seems to be some confusion about relationship marketing, its focus, and how to go about the process. We've seen the question, "what is relationship marketing?" asked around the Internet. For those seeking an answer, it's important to realize that relationship marketing focuses on the long-term goal of retaining customers. How this is done seems to be up for debate.

Relationship marketing could be considered as a mix between direct marketing and audience development. You have to make connections with your audience members as you are actively marketing products to them. I've read articles claiming that it isn't about relationships, it's about marketing; I think it's about both.

Creating connections, being transparent, striking up communication, and being authentic relates to the emotions of your audience. In today's extremely social online world, these can set a business apart. While using these traits, you still need to realize that promotions and sales need to happen.

While developing relationships, consider these three marketing components, so you stay focused on making the relationship equality impactful.

Relationship marketing tip #1: Talk about features and benefits – Features of a product or service are the concrete facts that may help a sale take place. The benefits are the components that will appeal to the emotions of your audience members. Communicating both features and benefits makes it harder for a potential consumer to say no.

Relationship marketing tip #2: Use calls to actions – Every web page should have at least one call to action, if not multiple ones. We use inline text ads, order forms in navigation and editorial, and floaters. Many companies use big red buttons so people know where to go to make purchases. Show your audience where to click and how to order so they are completely aware of the process.

Relationship marketing tip #3: Unique selling proposition (USP) – What makes your offerings different than others in your market? Expressing this information to potential customers can make your company the focus over others in your space. This [article](#) from CopyBlogger has some additional tips on developing USPs.

Social Media for Audience Development

Over the past few years, the value of social media has been noticed. Millions of people of all ages are interacting with friends, family members, and people with similar interests.

This popularity gives audience development professionals the chance to build targeted audiences with through Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google+.

The rest of this report discusses how you can use social media in your audience development efforts.

The #1 Quickest Way to Fail at Audience Development

Want to drive customers, subscribers and readers away? Follow these examples!

Sometimes you want to drop a love bomb on someone.

For me, this was recently a restaurant I discovered in Boston's North end called Davide. About a month or so ago, I'd tuned into Gordon Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares and saw Davide go through the gut-wrenching transformation that all of the restaurants on that show go through.

Most importantly, the cook and co-owner Frank, was burned out. By the end of the episode, Frank had started rocking out new recipes and got his spark back. The food was delicious.

As a foodie, I knew I had to go pay them a visit, and I did. The dinner was excellent. Frank even tested out a new dish on us that still makes my mouth water to think about. I was excited and couldn't wait to share my experience with everyone so that they could start getting more customers.

I left Davide ready to shout them out from the rooftops.

As a savvy social media user, I immediately went to their @DineDavide Twitter account and stopped in my tracks when I saw these tweets:

How could a restaurant hate the word "foodie"? Even more, how could they tell their foodie audience that they hate the word "foodie"? And he hates the restaurant business? People in general?

How in the world could I ever give a shout out to @DineDavide, when I knew that my other foodie friends would see this type of customer hatred? Note: Frank doesn't run the Twitter account, his brother does.

Think about audience development before you tweet

You probably already know about all the renegade tweets that have been popping up, when businesses choose to let the wrong people tweet from their accounts.

In some cases, it's an accidental slip in their Twitter app where someone tweeted from the wrong account. In other cases, it's just plain ignorance.

We're a little luckier in the publishing industry where most of what we push is content and not opinion. However, it would be very easy for a publisher to allow someone behind the Twitter wheel who doesn't use a filter.

What if *@PeopleMag* called *@LindsayLohan* a drunk?

What if the *@NYTimes* made a tasteless joke about Japan?

What if *@ColonelTribune* said he hated Chicago?

What if *@Mashable* said that they hated Mark Zuckerberg?

Giving access to someone on your team should be a bigger deal than it is.

The team at *@MarcJacobsIntl* got a swift kick in the butt recently when they left their Twitter account in the hands of an intern. An intern? How is it possible for an intern to be familiar enough with your brand to tweet about you in the first place?

Recently Chrysler even got their motors running when someone dropped the F-bomb on their Twitter account. The tweet was posted by someone at an external marketing company.

So what I'm getting at? Make sure you give them a license before they get behind the wheel of your Twitter account. A single tweet these days can either make or break a company. Pay attention to what "you" are saying to people.

How These Publishers Are Using Video For Audience Development

Use video to reinterpret, not repeat your content

I watched a great video on YouTube that was a fantastic example of audience development through content marketing.

In the video, a homeless man with a sign that reads, “I’m blind, please help” is collecting barely a dollar in his change can on the sidewalk. A woman walks by and rewrites his sign for him and suddenly people are filling his change can. When the woman comes back, she simply says, “I wrote the same, just in different words”.

This video was made by a web content development company called Purplefeather. The goal is to get their potential customers thinking about content marketing.

So after watching this video, I thought about how publishers may be doing the same thing — talking about their product in a new way. No video salesletter, no big-headed guy on the screen telling you to buy a product, no moving graphics with a rotating magazine cover or collage. Just a great video that tells a story and *inspires* someone to buy your product, rather than *telling* them to.

For another non-publishing example think of BlendTec’s Will It Blend series. At no point in the video does the guy tell you to buy a blender. He simply blows your mind by blending things like laptops, iPads and iPhones into smithereens.

I’m particularly fond of Dwell’s YouTube channel. Their high-quality videos highlight sponsors without telling anyone to buy a product. Their Phillips “As You Light It” series, shot in a documentary style, is especially impressive.

ELLE Magazine also does a fantastic job of using magazine content to create videos. They have tons of behind-the-scenes videos from their photo shoots with models and celebrities, similar to Seventeen’s YouTube channel. They also produce these “60-second style” videos where ELLE’s Fabiola Beracasa talks about new fashions and also shows you how to wear them.

Orlando Attractions Magazine uses video to tour all of the different attractions that they list in their magazine. They do everything from interviews to tours to grand openings to week-in-reviews.

Make: magazine, like most craft publishers, has no trouble coming up with content for their YouTube. The channel features how-to videos for making tons of projects featured in their magazine as well as featured projects and news.

So take a look at these publishers. Maybe they have more resources than you, or fancier cameras, or a better looking staff (just kidding), but that doesn't mean that you can't use video to increase website traffic and subscription sales. It's all about the content. If it's useful and interesting, it doesn't matter if it's shot on a Canon 5D (responsible for that great looking depth of field) or the recently deceased Flip.

Social Media Impact on SEO Increases As Inbound Links Decrease

Is Google giving more credit to social media because people are linking less?

If you haven't seen the results of the following SEO Social Media research, this might be the swift kick in the pants that you need.

According to this article from Rand Fishkin, CEO of SEOMoz, many more factors than just Twitter Tweets and Facebook Shares are accounted in the Google Algorithm. According to SEOMoz, Google is now paying closer attention to:

- How many times an article gets shared
- How many comments a shared article gets
- How many times someone "likes" a shared article
- How many tweets (including retweets) an article gets

In fact, if I read the article correctly... they were able to find Facebook share activity for 61% of the queries they ran. Here's how Fishkin puts it:

"Link data was present for nearly every result we examined (99.9%+), which is to be expected, but social data? Of this magnitude? Even for plenty of weird, uninteresting queries? Shocking. If you had asked me to guess, I would have said we'd find Facebook share data on maybe 5-10% of the results – 61% is mind-boggling."

This all makes perfect sense, considering how much Google is focusing on "quality content". An article that isn't interesting or helpful isn't going to get shared, commented on, liked or retweeted. This strategy even helps out the little guys because you don't need to be someone huge like *The New York Times* to get "liked" on Facebook, since you're generally sharing articles with your friends and colleagues.

The results also showed that Facebook may have a bigger impact on rankings than Twitter, which was very unexpected. My thought on this is that Twitter may have less of a long-term impact. Not being a terribly technical person, what I do know is that tweets are removed from Twitter Search after 11 days or so. Does that mean that "tweets" themselves are not indexed after 11 days, or maybe a longer but still shorter period?

We already know that Google pays Twitter to index their tweets, so maybe there's a time limit on the contract. So in that case, maybe it's possible that links from Twitter help in the short term, but don't offer any long-term benefits. Except for the initial exposure, which might help with inbound links from other blogs that decide to quote it.

With that said, I wonder if the reason why social media is gaining such prominence in the ranking, is because people aren't linking to other articles as much anymore? Now that it's so easy to hit "share" or "retweet", there's less of a need to write a blog post that links to another article, unless you have commentary that's longer than 140 characters of course.

3 Audience Development Tricks You Might Have Missed

Giving people what they want is the best audience development strategy

It's fascinating how people react to different forms of marketing. For example, by simply asking people to retweet you on Twitter, you can increase retweets dramatically. Another example is how Etsy.com sellers can increase sales of a dress by calling it a bridesmaid dress, or simply suggesting it's used as a bridesmaid dress by adding a bouquet of flowers to the hand of the model. Or how about the fact that you're more likely to get comments on an article by starting it and ending it with a question.

The point is that people need probing. Your customers literally *need* you to tell them what to do.

They *want* you to SEO your articles. After all, if you don't, how will they find your amazing article?

I know how tempting it is to write a catchy headline, I do. After all, that's what we've been trained to do in print. We want someone to see our headline on the magazine rack, stop, and buy our magazine. Unfortunately, these types of hype headlines generally disappoint readers in print and will disappoint online readers even more quickly.

Try pretending that nobody knows your URL. You don't have anyone subscribed to your RSS feed. Nobody goes directly to your website. You're non-existent. How well will those catchy headlines work in this less visible container? You're invisible, even if you start writing amazing content. Why? Because a search engine is the only way for people to find you.

Now imagine that you start adding keywords to all of your blog posts. Some of those blog posts bring in hundreds and thousands of visitors every month (this is not uncommon). Now you have tens of thousands of visitors every month.

Optimized blogs and periodical publishing sites bring in *more than 60%* of their website traffic from search engines.

Now add those regular RSS and blog readers back into the equation. You've got a pretty solid web audience now, right? The people who were already reading your blog posts aren't going to care if you start using keywords, so you might as well

start building that extra 60% of readers right away. Existing readers and customers are great, but SEO is your greatest strategy for bringing in *new readers*.

Two blog posts you need to read right now to start implementing this strategy:

The Absolute Simplest Way to Find an SEO Keyword
VIDEO: Using the Google Keyword Search Tool for SEO

They want you to tell them what to read, and who to love.

No recommendation works better than a personal or professional one. How often do we praise other companies or experts in our niche without even letting them know? I personally recommend a product or a person on Twitter or Facebook almost every day, and those tweets and posts generate more commentary than anything else. As for myself, I've bought countless products online based on recommendations from the people I trust on the social networks that I follow.

That's why it's so important to recommend experts and products in your blog posts. Giving testimonials in your articles gives the other person or company a reason to re-tweet or share your post. Even more, when someone shares your article on their Facebook wall or on Twitter, it will give you a giant SEO boost.

Possibly the most effective social media and SEO hack I've tested yet is this one right here:

- Facebook SEO Tips: A Rank-Boosting Hack That We'd Really Like to Keep To Ourselves

They want you to meet them on their platform of choice.

Some people just don't join email lists. These people may very well prefer to get their information from you with less commitment via Facebook and Twitter. While we've spent so much time in the past talking about building your email lists, we're finding that building your social media lists is just as important.

Building your following on Facebook offers many of the same benefits as building your email list. In fact, social media claims 60% "market share" on click through rates. Email only accounts for 31% (source: FastCompany). Imagine if you could build a Facebook list as large as your email list?

Asking for someone to “like” your page before they get access to a free white paper is a low-risk transaction for most consumers; Much less threatening than asking for them to give up their email address. Promising more free white papers (or other free products) when they stay subscribed will ensure that they stay on your list in the same way that people stay on the lists of their favorite retailers— for the sales!

You're Doing it Wrong: 5 Social Media Mistakes You Can Avoid

Social media mistakes that even the biggest publishing companies are still making

Social media isn't as easy as it sounds. Social networks are updating and upgrading their platforms faster than lightning, and as the managers of our social accounts, we stay on top of it all. The one thing that hasn't changed since the social media river started flowing in, is how you interact with your new type of subscribers. Yet, many publishing companies are still hanging back on launching a full social media strategy. Here are some mistakes to avoid while doing just that.

1. Don't hide your social media accounts: Sometimes when you try out new media, you might be embarrassed of “jumping on the bandwagon”. Especially when you're starting out and you don't have a big following yet. Well, don't. You're regular readers are your biggest fans, why not invite them to the party? They can serve as a great base to show your new audience that you have people out there who like you. Post the links to your social media accounts on your homepage, blog posts, in your email newsletters and even in your direct mail.

2. Don't go corporate on everybody: It's easy to stand still, publishing headlines and avoiding human interaction on an RSS feed. Fortunately, social media sites like Twitter and Facebook are *social* networks meant to provoke conversation and build relationships. A website is like your office, and your social media accounts are like the water cooler.

But even if you have fun, entertaining, and smart people behind your social media accounts, it's *still* difficult to establish business transparency with a solid “personality”. I've worked with companies to identify their social media image, many who struggle with this identity. Many professional media companies don't want to appear too laid back, or anything less than professional. I recommend using the same voice in social media as you do in your blogs and don't be afraid to carry on a casual conversation with your followers. It will keep them subscribed to your social media lists, I promise.

3. Don't wait: Josh Bernoff, Senior VP, Idea Development at Forrester Research said in his keynote at the SIPA 2011 Conference, that another mistake that companies make “is to sit and plan and plan and plan for everything that will happen. I've seen companies take two years to get ready to launch these things, and the reason that's a mistake is because you don't really understand what's

going to happen until you do it, and then what happens is usually something you never imagine. So it's much better to start small, try something, see what happens and then be ready to respond to that as opposed to have some big budget and planning process and getting all ready to launch it.”

4. Don't forget to establish a social media policy: Do you have a social media policy for your editors? Or, are you an editor that don't have any type of guidelines to go by, when deciding what (and what not) to tweet? If you're having trouble even trying to figure out what should be a part of your social media policy, take a look at a few very different examples.

5. Don't wing it – develop a social schedule: Interacting on social media can take up half of your day if you let it, and you'd probably getting a much bigger return on your investment of time. However, unless you are the community manager of your publication, you probably need a workflow in order to get everything else done during the day. Read our 7 Everyday Tasks for Online Editors to discover a great, effective workflow.

Start engaging new followers and stop wasting time trying to find them with this new tool

Have you ever wanted to follow a list of people on Twitter that had a specific keyword and location in their profile? For example, if you were a knitting magazine you may want to follow all the people that live in the state of New York with the term “Knitting”. It's a simple strategy but the truth is it's a time consuming task to research and find all of those people. And let's not forget the mind-numbing task of following each and every user. This is where TweetAdder comes in. TweetAdder automates the task of finding potential readers and the egregious task of following them.

The research and following of users within TweetAdder is a two-step process. You start off by giving TweetAdder the criteria for your search. You can search for keywords in tweets and keywords in profiles. You can even follow all of the people that follow another Twitter account. It also lets you filter and refine your search by recency, language and number of people following your targets.

All of the users that fit your search criteria get placed on the To Follow List. The To Follow List is where you can manually remove and add Twitter users. The To Follow List acts like a holding area before you unleash the automation. Most lists created within TweetAdder can be exported, which can be handy for monthly reports and analytics.

The next step is to set up our follow automation. This is where TweetAdder will automatically follow all the users that fit our search criteria on our To Follow List. Some people get scared when they hear the word automation. These people should be scared. You can use TweetAdder like a cowboy and start to follow thousands of people every hour. This is not recommended. Twitter can block your account for suspicious activity and you just look a jerk. Fortunately TweetAdder is very smart and has a number of ways to make follow automation a more natural and human-like experience.

Ways TweetAdder Safely Follows People:

- It can run during set hours of the day or night
- Follows people at different time intervals. For example TweetAdder will follow a user every 1-10 minutes
- You can set a maximum number of follow sends a day. For example once I've sent 300 follow requests TweetAdder will turn itself off
- You can also set TweetAdder to turn off once a certain ratio of following-to-followers is met

TweetAdder also adds in another layer of security with its built in proxy connect feature. TweetAdder will connect to Twitter through these proxies making it look like you are using your accounts from different location.

TweetAdder runs on Mac, Linux and Windows. Licenses start at \$55 and you can download a limited-feature demo copy to see if it fits into your social media toolkit.

Remember these words from Chris S. Penn, "Content strategy requires a human presence to respond, to react, to publish, and to be human. *There's no way to automate that side of social media and get satisfactory results*". With TweetAdder you can automate the mundane parts of Twitter and begin engaging more with people.

DISCLAIMER: TweetAdder is powerful software and can get your Twitter accounts suspended if you use it like a jerk. Be smart and don't get greedy.

This TweetAdder review has covered only one feature, so try it out for yourself and let us know if you've come up with other neat uses for it.

5 Strategies for Using Google+ for Audience Development

Tips on how some journalists are using Google+ to build audience

Everyone has been speculating about whether or not Google+ will become a dominant social media force.

I first wrote about Google+ last week in a Mequoda Daily article to ask the readers' their opinions on Google+... Will it take off as a social platform? Will it give Facebook a run for its money?

One person commented on the article saying he believes Google+ is the beginning of the end of Facebook. Anyone else feel that way?

In the process of educating myself on Google+, I've spent some time discovering how journalists are using the platform. During my search, I found this recent article from Mashable that included five strategies journalists are using for Google+.

Five ways journalists are using Google+

#1: Talking about Google+. The more Google+ is talked about, tweeted about or written about, the more interest will develop. People who've never tried it may become intrigued even to join.

According to the article from Mashable, "As journalists continue to join the platform, further discussion and collaboration around Google+ as a communications tool will shape the way it's used for creating and distributing news content."

#2: Hosting audience hangouts. Hangouts is Google+'s video chat service in real time. Some journalists have been using it to interact with viewers. Although only 10 people are allowed to attend a hang out, there attempt to build a loyal audience can help draw in a crowd.

#3: Engaging readers. What draws in your audience? Is it specific topics or the way you share and communicate information? According to the Mashable article, Canada's top news source CBC, used witty from their photo capture challenge to engage readers. It has supposedly worked, as their work on Google+ has "outperformed other platforms."

#4: Analyzing news coverage. Let's think about how other social networks handle news. On Twitter, attention has to be grabbed with 140 characters. On Facebook, news has to be relevant to the user while competing with personal comments from friends and family. Google+ is designed for conversations as it brings conversations back to the top of the news stream when new comments are added.

#5: Showing personality. Google+ may help bring the professionalism of being a journalist together with personal interaction. Although Google+ isn't the first platform to do this, aspects like Hangout can make it easier.

How to Build More Significant Relationships on Twitter

Twitter isn't all @ signs and retweets, it's about building loyal customers

Everyone tells you how to get more Twitter followers, but how many tell you what to do when you get them? Because it's that step in the process that either keeps them on your "list" or allows them to slip away.

In the several social media accounts that I manage, I may discuss many different topics, with a broad range of unique people. I have target audiences who are doctors and nurses, email marketers, small businesses, holistic therapists and many more, including publishers (of course). The topics of discussion are all uniquely different from one another, but the strategies I've used to effectively keep them interested are not.

Since we're all friends here, I'm going to give you my five best strategies for building more meaningful relationships with your Twitter followers and I hope you'll report back here on how your relationships have evolved.

Answer questions in the community:

Nobody likes you when you're all business, all the time. If you invited a colleague to a BBQ, would he show up in a suit and park himself with a laptop at the nearest picnic table? Of course not. If there are business-casual questions and conversations going on in your Twitter feed, so don't be afraid to chime in. For example, we hold one of our annual conferences in Napa almost every spring, so we have no problem discussing wine or wineries in the Napa area which otherwise may seem too casual. If you're looking for questions to answer, InboxQ is a great tool.

Follow up with those you've talked to:

Nothing shows that you're paying attention more than following up a few days later. If you helped someone answer a question they had, or read about someone's dilemma, it's a great idea to follow up and say, "How did that go?" Most people will respond, but all will take note of your genuine interest.

Follow back those who follow you:

Disregard spammers and those who are clearly not following you for the content, but don't be afraid to follow back your loyal followers. Twitter Lists were created so that you can create custom feeds that you want to pay special attention to, so it matters very little how clogged up your main feed is. However, I use the main feed of the people who have followed me and who I've followed back, to complete all the next few steps.

Link to those who link to you:

When someone retweets an article of yours, it's great to say thank you. If you want to show even more appreciation, you can retweet them back. When we retweet, we try to say something nice about the article and mention their @handle also. Not everyone knows when you've hit the "retweet" button that's built into Twitter, so I always like to include a personal message and shout them out by using their @.

Link to those who you want to follow you:

When you look at your @ replies, you can probably find some people who frequently respond to you. Even if you haven't replied, you probably feel like you already have a relationship with them. If there are people who you want to follow you, try reaching out to them. Look through their feed and see if there's anything you can weigh in on.

Shout out followers as you see fit:

Are there people out there who you admire in your niche? #FollowFriday is a hashtag created to give shout-outs to those who you really enjoy following, but you don't need to limit that to just Fridays. If you've suddenly discovered a blog that is the best thing since sliced bread, give it and its author a nice big Twitter shout out. It won't go unappreciated.

Remember, Twitter may be the only chance you have to create these types of intimate relationships with your followers and seriously build some brand loyalty, which will result in more product sales. All of these strategies are proven to keep people following you for longer periods of time. Without some type of mutual engagement, a person can choose to unfollow you whenever they please.

Conclusion

Digital publishers, content marketers, and online editors have all been turning to organic audience development because there's trust in the process.

Opposed to using paid media to promote content, products, and services, the organic model is being used at a fraction of the price with great results.

Through targeted writing, search engine optimization, and social media, you too have the chance to make organic audience development a part of your digital media strategy.

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