

How the security industry can benefit from content marketing



Think for a moment about the way in which you first learn of a new consumer or business brand today. Your initial exposure likely comes through a friend or colleague, either in discussion or via a post on a site like LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook – or through a Google search for an answer to a question or problem you are experiencing. Most industries and brands have caught on to this trend and addressed it by adopting content marketing: a form of marketing where brands build connections and awareness with potential customers by providing information of interest and value rather than trying to make a straight sell.

While the move towards content marketing has taken firm hold in the B-to-B world, the physical security industry has yet to fully adopt the approach. In previous decades, the industry was able to meet their marketing objectives with outbound tactics such as print advertising, e-blasts and cold calls. While these tactics still have value in the physical security industry, today's buyer has a more diverse media intake, and more ways to learn about providers, than ever before. Add the realities of increased competition and lower barriers to entry, and the result is a significant challenge for security brands to create differentiation in the marketplace.

In addition, business-to-business brands no longer have the same level of trust they received 20 years ago. Today, they must earn that trust by helping customers solve problems and by demonstrating thought leadership. As search and social media grow in importance as channels for buyer information, brands can meet those expectations by creating great content.



Here are five tactics brands can use to create great content:



1 Blogging

According to HubSpot's benchmark report, brands that publish at least 16 blog posts per month got 3.5X more web traffic than those publishing four or fewer times per month. This is because updating your website frequently with content also helps boost your site's search results. As a result, you're more likely to get potential customers to view your web page as a resource, giving you the captive audience you need.

Suffering from writer's block? An easy way to figure out what to write is by reverse engineering what a prospective customer might be searching for on Google. If you don't have any content that directly speaks to that need, write a blog post on the topic. Part of ranking well for search has to do with writing content that your customers would want to find via Google.

2 Newsjacking

Reporters are most likely to talk to you if your story is relevant to the stories they're reporting. This makes newsjacking a critical skill to have in your arsenal. If you've taken a Journalism 101 class, you might recall the factors that play into deciding the newsworthiness of a story.

In this case, you're looking at a combination of impact and timeliness. Taking a story that people are interested in right now and putting a unique spin on the implications of that news is a proven way to get the media to talk to you. By keeping your ear to the ground for relevant news, you'll find ample opportunity to weave yourself into the conversation. Two examples would be a story on how surveillance enabled law enforcement to catch vandals breaking into a car dealership or how someone got into an area they shouldn't have had access to.

Another angle for getting your brand in the news is to pick topics tangential to your area of expertise. For instance, if your solutions are environmentally friendly, you have the opportunity to speak up any time there's a story about green energy. If your brand uses biometrics, there are numerous uses outside of security that may

interest the general public and provide an opportunity for you to introduce yourself into the conversation.



What makes a story newsworthy?



Timeliness – The more recently a story happened, the more relevant it is for the media.

Proximity – Local stories are more relevant to local audiences. You don't tend to hear about local LA news if you live in New York.



Celebrity – Hollywood stars and professional athletes get press much more easily than you or I can because they're famous.

Conflict – War, violence and terrorism are generally more prominent because conflict is newsworthy. However, election stories or public debates such as Black Lives Matter or gun control also qualify.



Impact – People read about things that might change how they live their lives either for better or worse. Examples might include technology upgrades or a new product launch.

Human Interest – Feel-good stories about topics like cancer research, rags to riches or the latest Nobel Prize winner are always strong contenders.



Bizarre – Dog bites man isn't a story. Man bites dog is. Anything that's weird or strange is considered to be big news. This is why click-bait is considered so effective.

3 Whitepapers

A good whitepaper contains valuable information that appeals to your target audience. With the right topic and substance, it has the potential to deliver leads by giving your prospects great value. Some mistakes that B2B brands make include writing whitepapers that don't resonate with potential customers or are simply self-serving. Here are a few strategies to make sure your whitepapers accomplish the goals you're looking to achieve.



- **Create a buyer persona** – Talk to some potential and current customers to figure out what they need or areas where they're lacking information.
- **Conduct keyword research** – Find out which keywords or phrases are being used that are most relevant to your brand. It often takes multiple rounds of this to figure out exactly what to write about, but can be extremely helpful when creating a whitepaper.
- **Analyze the competition** – Take a look at the type of content your competitors are writing. If the problem you're trying to solve isn't adequately covered – or not being covered at all – you have a great opportunity to step in and take ownership.



Next, understand how your audience is going to find your white paper. Analyze different paid channels including social media, display and PPC to determine where to best feature your content. All of these media provide different advantages depending on your objectives. Paid social allows you to narrow your audience based on a demographic such as who they follow, their interests or their job level. With PPC you can narrow your audience based on search intent.

If you've done your research and there are a few specific searches that have a lot of volume and aren't overly competitive, that might be your best bet. Finally, if you can identify certain websites that most of your audience is reading, display ads are perfect for catching their attention with compelling copy that will bring them to your landing page.

4 Case studies

There's no better way to prove your value than to show the good work you've done for clients. A good case study should address what the client's problem was, strategies you used to help them and most importantly, the results. Make certain the KPIs that matter most are emphasized. Whether you helped a client save time or money, increase revenue or create another benefit that went above and beyond their expectations, this is your time to tell the world.

Most brands know the value of case studies, but many don't make them compelling enough to actually be convincing. Maersk, a large B-to-B container shipping company, is one of the smartest brands when it comes to content marketing. They've taken a creative approach to sharing case studies by doing **video interviews** with their clients to make the stories more

interesting for website visitors. While it can be difficult to get clients to speak on the record or provide testimony, it does make the case study significantly more compelling if you can make that happen.



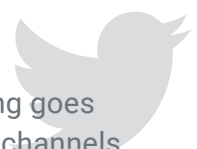
5 Social media

If you don't have a presence on social yet, you are already behind from a content perspective. Social media is ideal for getting your content in front of the right audience and finding industry influencers that are a good fit for your brand.

In addition, social media gives you a channel to comment on relevant industry news in real time while engaging with followers.

Getting your content shared through social is highly beneficial from an SEO perspective. The more people share your content, the more likely you are to get visitors to your website, which help you rank better with search engines. Need proof? Google any brand and you'll notice that their social media profiles are some of the first results that appear. This is because search engines are using social signals such as shares and reputation to help determine ranking.

Using social media for content marketing goes far beyond simply posting on the major channels. Understanding how to leverage the power of social to meet B-to-B objectives requires skill and knowledge, and is a responsibility that should be managed by someone with specific industry and social expertise and experience.



Content is the future of marketing

The physical security industry has a terrific opportunity to embrace content marketing as a channel to lead customers through the buying process. While a content marketing program can take time and budget to execute properly, it is well worth the investment. Ultimately, content marketing will drive more leads, create more sales opportunities for your staff and leave customers satisfied with their decision to choose you as their solution.



Looking for help with your content marketing?



Email us at info@lrgmarketing.com for a free 30-minute consultation of your current strategy.

