

# The Right Content Will Make Or Break You!

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Professionals who attend my social-media selling workshops hear me say repeatedly, “*Content is not king. Content is a king maker.*” In my experience, entrepreneurs are most successful when they complement the work they do with content that addresses a customer need.

Content gives companies of all sizes the opportunity to engage with somebody,” RSL Media's CEO, Robert Levin, told me during a *Money Talk* interview last week on KCAA Radio. “It’s an opportunity to build a relationship, to build trust and to demonstrate expertise.”

Such content might be a journalistic article, a news video posted on YouTube, material pinned on Pinterest or a podcast found on TuneIn, a link shared through text messaging or a white paper downloaded from DocStoc.

“In today's digital marketplace, producing regular content is critical to any company's success,” Joe Issid shared on Monster's website. “The prevalence of social media and the content-driven platforms upon which they rest can reap incalculable benefits for your business.”

As Karen Leland described in *Pinterest for Business: The Basics*, entrepreneurs must effectively “curate content that is meaningful, attractive, social media friendly, and on message with your brand.” This involves searching for available content of potential appeal, interpreting and synthesizing it and presenting it in a desired format for consumers.

Christian Jorg realized "it was very difficult for companies to find the right content and have enough," he said recently on my *Money Talk* radio program. This prompted his launch of a content-marketing software firm, Opentopic, dedicated to providing entrepreneurs with the tools to effectively deliver such material. "The Internet is great because there is so much out there. But it is hard to find the right stuff," he added.

But what is content marketing really? The Content Marketing Institute has defined it as "a marketing technique of creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience -- with the objective of driving profitable customer action.”

And a Nielsen report from March noted, “Our research suggests that there is a higher degree of trust from consumers when they are reading content from credible, third party experts.”

So entrepreneurs should not only create internally branded content but also distribute material crafted by others that supports their company's business-development efforts, knowing the solid outcomes from material derived from authoritative third-party sources.

“All companies are now media companies,” Levin observed. “Whether you have the ability or desire to spend the money to produce a print magazine, to create a video or simply place content on your website, you no longer need to go to a media company to put out your content.”

The following five tips can provide a blueprint for rolling out an effective content-marketing strategy:

**1. Rely on the right tools.** Copywriter and Internet marketer Pamela Neely recommended on Web Marketing Today use of such tools as Google Alerts, Paper.li, List.ly, Scoop.it and Swayy.co to identify content of possible value to current and prospective customers.

And appropriate tools, Jorg said, can help entrepreneurs “to find the right content that helps them drive engagement with a Web site, social media or their newsletters resulting in additional business.”

**2. Customize what's shared.** Content marketing means sharing content, in many cases, others' content. Editor Miranda Paquet recommended on the Constant Contact blog that entrepreneurs add their own perspective to the content shared.

Make sure the content applies to the entrepreneur's business, perhaps addressing how to make better use of the product or service.

**3. Start with what you know.** Levin recommended that any entrepreneurs aiming to create their own content begin with what they know: their customers and their expertise.

Content created about customers provides them a great reward and benefits the entrepreneur when an excited customer begins to share such content with their own clients and prospects.

And content created to highlight a firm's expertise allows for showcasing business competencies and begins to establish the entrepreneur as a subject matter expert.

**4. Give proper attribution.** “Make sure you're giving the original author or source credit by mentioning them whenever and wherever you're using their content,” Paquet wrote.

“Include a link if you are going to use a writer's exact words, whether that is a sentence or a paragraph,” Neely said. “Without acknowledging where you got the content, you're not doing curation. You're stealing, violating copyright laws.”

**5. Imitate others.** “Look at other small businesses that are good at marketing and that already have a strong social media following,” Levin advised.

Any content-marketing strategy will have hits and misses. By studying successful content marketers, an entrepreneur can reap greater success. Consider visiting or calling professionals (who aren't competitors) to pick their brains about what works.