

GUEST COLUMN: B2B brands need to think beyond lead generation

Sharma enlists key tools for an effective content marketing strategy

21 Jun, 2021 - 08:52 AM IST | By Ambika arma



New Delhi: In business-to-business (b2b), marketing often comes to a halt at the lead generation funnel. Given the economic environment created by the pandemic, the stress on lead generation is not surprising, but working on the lowest hanging fruit is not a long-term strategy.

In the aggressively competitive environment, B2B brands need to think beyond just lead generation for their content marketing strategy. Simply put, what is your answer to this? What are you doing to help your customers succeed?

Your content marketing needs to be a method of helping your customers succeed. Under the pressure of an immediate lead and conversion, we tend to lack business empathy, and thus our content intended to be educational ends up being more transactional. I encourage B2B brands to use content marketing as a tool to support and help meet customer goals. That is what the purpose of your brand

is in the first place. Keep connected to the roots of why you thought customers would come to you and choose your product or service.

There is a specific problem that your business solves for your customers, and that should be at the heart of your B2B content marketing strategy. It's a whole new ball game possibly from what most B2B organizations are doing currently. Here are a few things to consider. I have outlined must-haves, good to have, and great have for your content marketing strategy.

B2B Content marketing 'must-haves'

Blog: While all organizations have a blog on their website but usually, they are sparsely populated and more focused on SEO than on content value. The resources section is important and needs its due.

Case Studies: I recommend case studies that are not just a synopsis of what the process was and what the ROI was but also a customer's point of view. It may take a lot more work but in this case, it is an excellent differentiator, a brand will earn 10X in credibility vs the increase in effort.

White papers, guides, and research: What is on 'top of mind' for any business is 'who else is in my boat' and what are they doing to navigate a circumstance. White papers are must-have tools in the arsenal. Remember that being unique is the key. Creating content is fairly easy. Creating good content that isn't 'hard selling' and provides customers with genuine value — that's a tricky, time-consuming business.

B2B Content marketing 'good to have'

Webinars and events: Online webinars and events are a good way to get your product or service to your customers, it is also an opportunity to build an improved relationship with your customers, it can be the platform to create thought leadership. Profiling and targeted invites are a great way to reach customers with whom you may not have engaged in the past.

Training & courses: Training is an important part of the B2B marketing content strategy. If you understand your customer then I recommend that based on your customer persona, develop training and certifications which not just train customers on your product but also add skills and learning beyond your product.

Co-Creation & collaborations: Customers are in the same storm, and very slightly different boats; they are stressed for leads and under pressure to build engagement. Create a partnership with your customer, build value with combined resources, co-host events, webinars, build joint resources, create PR opportunities. You will be surprised that in addition to goodwill and visibility, the value it builds for your business in hard number crunched ROI.