

December 2011

Dear Friend,

This month, I'm wrapping up a year-long series of articles about content marketing with a topic that will affect your business even if you're not doing this type of marketing yet: *QUALITY* content, and why you shouldn't settle for "less than the best" for your website, whether you're doing blog posts, articles, or even simple email messages ... including autoresponders.

In this issue, I'll explain how Google's recent [Panda Update](#) has had a major impact on the amount of traffic coming to some companies' websites, and how you can avoid that same fate with your own site.

Make Panda Happy: Quality Content Only!

by Chris Wilson

You know all about SEO, right? Search engine optimization - sprinkling keywords strategically throughout the copy so more visitors will find your website. Some people, however, go overboard with keywords and phrases, pouring so many of them into Web pages that the messages are completely lost ... making those pages useless for anyone seeking helpful information.

This is why, early this year, Google launched something called Panda. Basically, the Panda update changed Google's algorithm so that information produced by "content farms," which exist solely to draw as much traffic as possible, would no longer be able to rank high in search engines. ***The key now is to create content for your sites that is so interesting, people will want to share it with their friends!***

The main reason for this change? Social media. These days, people like to pass on recommendations to friends and family members about favorite places to go, interesting anecdotes, or helpful information.

Articles filled with "optimal" but empty keywords don't fool readers. They're looking for content that captures their attention - info that's funny, helpful, beautiful, poignant, incredible ... or any combination of these. And when they find it, they share it!

What Exactly *IS* Great Content, and How Do You Create It?

Good content establishes you as an expert in your field and a resource for information. It sets you apart from your peers because of the way you get your message across - whether extremely helpful, humorous, or unusual. And the more your readers like what they see, the more they'll bookmark your site, generating even more traffic for you ... and ultimately, more business.

Coming up with compelling content for your company's website doesn't have to be difficult. Some of it - like blog posts, employee profiles, or new product releases - can be created by you or someone on your staff. It just needs to be written well.

As one author said in an article at ArticleGather.com, "If you are purchasing content, it's time to break away from your crappy content provider and switch to a provider that makes Panda-friendly content."

What Is Your Content Marketing Strategy?

Eventually, if you really want to be successful with content marketing, you'll need to sit down and come up with a solid **content marketing strategy**. Listed below are the main areas you'll need to address:

- **Goal setting** - Set one or more *MEASURABLE* goals, with end dates in mind.
- **Research** - Figure out what your prospective and current customers are looking for.
- **Content creation** - Create new engaging content, or revise existing information. Remember to *show*, not just tell.
- **Link-building** - Insert strong *QUALITY* links, both internal (pointing to spots on your own site) and external. (For ideas on how to do this, see Rick Ramos' article at Fusionbox.com: "[How to Build a Strong Link Portfolio](#).")
- **Distribution** - Choose one or more ways to get your message out: RSS (for blogs), YouTube, [SlideShare](#), etc.
- **Promotion** - Offer to write for other blogs in your industry, and cultivate contacts through social media sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.
- **Tracking results** - Analyze your Web traffic with tools like [Google Analytics](#) to better understand your customers' behavior and more quickly see new trends developing.

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The resources I've listed below will help you better understand the whole concept of content marketing, and suggest some steps for creating your own strategy.

RESOURCES

[Poor Richard's Web Site Marketing Makeover](#) (Chapter 6: Content as Bait) by Marcia Yudkin. This book may be a decade old, but the principles it contains are just as relevant today as they were back then.

Yudkin does a great job of spelling out several different types of content you can use on your website, from the ordinary (like articles, reviews, and photos) to the creative (like stories, contests, and quizzes). She also mentions the benefits and hazards of allowing user-generated content on your site.


One thing that impressed me was the fact that all nine Amazon reviews for this book were 5-star!

"[Google's Panda Update and How It Affects You](#)" by Derek Pankaew. This article, posted on **Contentrix.com**, does a good job of explaining what Panda is all about.

"[What Is Content Marketing and How Can a Good Content Marketing Strategy Help Me?](#)" by **TheSmallBusiness.org**. As you can probably guess from the title, this article focuses on the process of creating a strong content marketing strategy.

Hope you and your loved ones had a great Christmas and are enjoying what's left of the holidays. May you be blessed with much success in 2012!

To your success,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris".

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