

Creating great B2B content

 By [Susannah Holz](#)

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When a lifting equipment dealership servicing almost the entire of West Africa challenged us to help them deepen their customer relationships, I knew that content would be key.

I wasn't so sure though how much relevant content we could create around the relatively narrow field of cranes and forklifts. But we forged ahead and designed a monthly newsletter supported by social media links in Y1, and planned a content-laden web site in Y2.

A year and twelve newsletter editions later I can happily report that my concerns have been replaced with confidence. With a 30%+ conversion rate (mails sent: Newsletters read) and only a handful of unsubscribes, the newsletter has become a mainstay for the sales team - with clients sometimes referencing it when making enquiries.

My top three tips for producing effective B2B [newsletters](#):

1. All products have fans

Never underestimate how immersed professional people are in what they do. From umbrellas to biscuits professionals in any industry crave new information that can give them an edge.

As such the newsletter we developed is almost entirely about cranes and forklifts lensed through the company's projects, products and staff. The rest is generic content such as rights-based news, humour and sport. We have found a 70/30 ratio between company or industry specific content and generic content a good blend to keep readers engaged.

2. Get the sales and technical teams on-side

The staff, engineers and technical crews are spread over a large area (Ghana, Nigeria and the UK). I nonetheless made it a key priority to get my "content engines" i.e. the guys on the ground, on board with the content-driven marketing strategy. Over time I introduced them to the concepts of content marketing, and gently but consistently nudged them for their stories.

We issued the teams with GoPros, offered guidelines on taking images (for instance we cannot use images where engineers are not in safety gear) and on a weekly basis I run through potential stories with the MD.

Once the teams saw how the stories appear in the newsletter they became more open and enthusiastic. In this way our content remains original which is great for search results!

3. Never, ever buy databases

It took a bit of work to convince the management that buying a large database of emails was a bad idea. I argued that there was more to lose by spamming (in such a niche market reputation and relationships are crucial) than to be gained. They reluctantly agreed to go the long way round: developing and collating a bespoke list from internal resources.

The next step was for the sales teams to export the addresses in their inbox and sent items as well as Address Books while also eliminating personal contacts. It took a bit of leg work from each staff member, but eventually we began building a valuable list of close to 4000 names.

New contacts and potential customers are subsequently added to the master list on a weekly basis. I credit our high conversion rate to the cleanliness and relevance of our email list.

The work done this year has seen the creative team become more familiar with the content, internal teams becoming enthusiastic about their company's stories and customers and partners of the company becoming more in-tune with the services, staff and projects.

Consequently LinkedIn followers jumped by 60%, and we are in a strong position to continue the content generation journey online with a brand new web site, which will become the ultimate content hub going forward.

ABOUT SUSANNAH HOLZ

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