Content Marketing in 'Boring' Industries:

A 20-Point Checklist for Creating Stand-Out Business Content

Are you afraid your web copy, blog posts, emails, or marketing copy aren't really *connecting* with your potential customers?

Do you suspect something's missing – something that's costing you money and loyal clients?

Whether you want to educate, persuade, instruct, or entertain, you know that in order to help people – and get rave reviews and glowing recommendations – you have to hook visitors in and keep them engaged and excited long enough for them to benefit from your advice.

The good news? You can learn the tips and techniques that pro writers use to keep readers interested and motivate them to act. Whether you're writing a blog post or a sales page, tightening your website copy or starting your first authority-building nonfiction book, this checklist will help!

Step 1 - Prepare to knock their socks off

✓ **1. Have a plan**

Even a simple, high-level outline will keep you organized and on topic and make writing much easier. Avoid the temptation to "wing it" and you'll spend much less time revising. Not sure how to start? Use a template (that's what the pros do!)

✓ **2. Get spooky with your mind reading abilities**

Your audience will trust you when you show you can relate to their problem. Describe the pain or frustration they're feeling and/or motivate them with a vision of achieving their goals and dreams. You'll prove: 1) that you know what they're going through, and 2) that you're the right person to help them.

✓ **3. Promise the moon (and then deliver!)**

Specifically, tell your readers what they'll know that they didn't before and what new tools they'll have at their disposal. How will their lives be better? The tempting result you promise will lure them in – and delivering on your promise will make them your personal brand ambassadors.

✓ **4. Compel your readers to take action**

Especially in web pages, blog posts, or emails, but also in book chapters – clearly direct people to do one thing: call your office, grab your free download, check out your product page, or something else to help themselves (like completing an exercise). After all, they have to implement your advice in order to see results!

Step 2 – Make your content irresistible

✓ **5. Be sneakily seductive**

When you focus on your readers instead of on yourself, people will naturally be drawn into your writing. This is a tough order for beginners, but it becomes easier with practice. Use the *find* function (ctrl-F or similar) to locate every instance of "I" or "me" in your copy and reframe your narrative using "you" instead. Use "you" 9 times for every time you use "I" or "me".

✓ **6. Dare to be different**

Avoid boring and predictable advice at all costs. Write down the advice your readers *expect* you to give them. Have they heard it all before? If so, they'll tune out. Throw out the same-old, same-old. Reframe your recommendations so that they add a new twist (or at least sound new.)

✓ **7. Turn your usual stories on their heads**

Don't drone on about yourself. No matter how fascinating your life is, you'll lose people. Instead, practice writing short 2-4 sentence stories – or 1-3 paragraph stories – that show your readers you know what they're going through. Convince them your advice is hard-won and valuable. But after that, it's enough about you. Turn your focus back to your audience.

✓ **8. Embrace entertainment**

Don't be afraid of humor – it bonds readers to you. But use it sparingly and cautiously at first, because written jokes are easily misunderstood. Always get feedback before publishing to make sure your words match your intentions.

✓ **9. Teach without preaching**

No one likes to be lectured to, so take care not to turn readers off. Avoid heavy-handed phrases like "you must," "you need to," and "you should." Recommend, suggest, and gently guide instead.

- ✓ **10. Inspire people**

  Paint a picture of what life could be like for your reader once they've made the change. Describe their current pain – including what they see, hear, feel, think, and experience – and their future relief in as much detail as you can. Make them want a new reality and convince them that they can achieve it.

Step 3 – Bring the finesse

- ✓ **11. Eliminate friction**

  Help readers to sail effortlessly through your writing by breaking long blocks of text into smaller sections. Use short sentences and paragraphs and lots of white space, especially if you're writing for the web. Craft clear, strong headings and subheadings every few paragraphs to further organize your writing.

- ✓ **12. Get visual**

  When you're writing online, add photos every 600 words or so to keep readers engaged and make your content more memorable.

- ✓ **13. Build on- and off-ramps**

  Use transition sentences to effortlessly guide readers on to the next section. Good transitions compel readers to keep reading so that they can satisfy the curiosity you've planted in their minds. A transition could be as simple as: "Want more tips to sharpen your writing chops? Read on!"

- ✓ **14. Stamp out pesky sources of confusion**

  It's easy to take your expertise for granted and assume everyone knows what you're talking about. But many won't. So make sure you speak to readers in *their* language, not yours. Use a tool like the Hemingway App to check your draft's readability. In general, aim for a 6th grade reading level. Remove or clarify all abbreviations and jargon.

- ✓ **15. Become an orator**

  You don't have to stand on a pulpit. But read your copy out loud to yourself, a family member, a supportive colleague, or even to a cooperative pet. You can also record yourself and listen back. Reading your drafts out loud helps to keep your tone and writing style accessible, conversational, and smooth.

- ✓ **16. Enlist fresh eyes**

  Have an uninitiated friend or newbie in your field tell you how clear and understandable your writing is. Does it hold their interest? Did they lose momentum anywhere? Revise and repeat.

Step 4 – Edit in the awesome

✓ **17. Triple-check for clarity**

Use the [Hemingway App](#) or [Grammarly](#) to check your writing for passive voice and other common problems before you publish. Cut unnecessary words. Let your draft sit for a day or two before looking at it with fresh eyes. Find more powerful ways to say what you need to say and rewrite

✓ **18. Search for speed bumps**

Pay attention to subject/verb consistency throughout your document. Then check your headings and subheadings as well. Copy your headings and subheadings into another document and make sure they make sense all on their own (almost like an outline.)

✓ **19. Give your draft one last visual once-over**

Are your paragraphs crammed on the page or screen? Does your draft flow visually? Readers will leave if your text looks too dense. Add final graphics, photos, or illustrations if needed.

✓ **20. Hit "publish!"**

You'll never really know how good your writing is until you've shared it with your audience and gotten feedback. Approach publishing as a growth and learning experience. You're already ahead of the game. Each point on this checklist will help to set you apart from the majority of writers, and it will all become easier as you make these approaches habit.

Congratulations and great work. Keep at it!

Hope this checklist is helpful. Let me know!

Want more great tips? Watch your email for my upcoming email course, writing templates, and trainings.

Thanks for being awesome!

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