Any journalist or communications expert worth his salt will tell you that content is king. For years the art of communicating without selling was the reserve of the ‘professional’ publishing community and over the decades has been labelled everything from custom publishing to private media and branded content (and slightly less savoury, advertorial). Digital advances and a different label – content marketing – have changed this landscape irrevocably: we are now awash with content; everyone and anyone can publish stuff. And indeed they do.

Content saturation has had (thankfully) an interesting effect on content and information seekers. In an attempt to weed out the wheat from the chaff, they have honed their search skills. They know exactly what they are looking for; and if it isn’t valuable and relevant they’ll simply move on.

According to the Content Marketing Institute content marketing is: ‘a marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire and engage a clearly defined and
understood target audience - with the objective of driving profitable customer action.”

In other words deliver the right information to the right people at the right time – the result of which should be engagement, the creation of a relationship (customer retention and satisfaction not simply a sales transaction) and with any luck some business.

The greater the depth of valuable information you give, the more interactions, downloads, views and links you will get, and the more insight into the company as a whole the user will gain.

Less is more

When it comes to content generation it is tempting to believe that ‘more’ is always best – it isn’t. It is easy to fall into this trap as we are continuously being told that fresh content, as well as killer search engine optimisation (SEO), will help our Google rankings no end. There is no doubt an element of truth here but if what you’re saying isn’t worth listening to (or reading), worse than not seeing your message at all, people will see it and possibly won’t come back. If you have something to say, it MUST be relevant.

And this doesn’t refer only to words, but image and video too. And if a picture really does paint a thousand words, then perhaps an image (infographic), video or other form of multimedia will cater to your needs and those of your customers more effectively than reams of text. For more complex points/offers use links to your website or others – don’t reinvent the wheel if you don’t have to.

Effective SEO (measures you can take to affect the visibility of your website in a search engine’s unpaid search results) will significantly increase traffic to your PMHub. There are a number of SEO tactics but most commonly efforts focus on what people search for, actual search terms or keywords typed into search engines.

Ensuring that the content of your PMHub contains the keywords for which you want to be found is crucial. However, it is worth checking out the competition for these keyword searches on SEMRush, Keyword Discovery or WordTracker and of course Google to get an idea of just how many organisations are battling it out over your chosen search terms.

As stupid as it sounds, the keywords must be relevant to your business and should sit comfortably within the context of your profile. More details on this can be found at the Content Management Institute http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2013/01/keyword-selection-content-marketing-seo/

With some of the more blindingly obvious points now out of the way: what is the best approach to maximising your PMHub profile?

1. WHO ARE YOU?

This is your chance to tell potential clients who you are and what you stand for. Less is more here – a concise and intriguing introduction can generate leads and will pique people’s interest enough to delve deeper into your profile.

Heritage is important, so it’s worth letting people know how long you’ve been operating and if appropriate how you have evolved. This should be followed by a whistle-stop tour of the major pillars of your business – not everything and the kitchen sink – the detail comes later.

2. WHAT DO YOU DO?

The words ‘unique’ and ‘bespoke’ do not describe what you do and are seldom ever accurate. Gratuitous use of these terms is not only meaningless, but undermines true innovation and uniqueness.

Explain EXACTLY what you do and avoid jargon. Put your skills as a business into context – how can you help potential clients?

3. AREAS OF EXPERTISE & CLIENTS

This is where the detail comes in from channel use and therapy area expertise to evidence-based solutions and market access. It serves a checklist of all your capabilities and skills.

Where possible add in a client list and the products/programmes/initiatives you are working on as it will supplement and complement what you have said about your areas of expertise.

4. TEAM & CULTURE

Names and pictures are important (and good for SEO) and contact numbers and email are a must. You need to make it as easy as possible for potential clients to get in touch. Try to avoid using generic email addresses (eg, info@). People want to connect with a person, not a nameless, faceless inbox. You can include as many key personnel as you wish.

5. THOUGHT LEADERSHIP – WHITE PAPERS, PRESS RELEASES

Here content is definitely king. Case studies that support what you say you do provide context. Whitepapers covering trends and topical issues give readers value at the same time as revealing what makes you tick as an organisation and sharing your thoughts on how to deal with opportunities and challenges in the marketplace. Other resources could include guides to anything from healthcare app development and multichannel marketing to customer experience and capability management.

You can request that readers enter their name, email and company when they download your resources. Traditionally seen as a barrier to engagement, we are all now used to divulging this small bit of information in exchange for valuable insights - so make the most of it.

6. VIDEO

Often underused this is a great way to get across a lot of information quickly and effectively. It could be the results of a survey, a presentation, conference footage, top tips for launch or simply a walk through your business that enables potential clients to get a better understanding of your company.

7. SOCIAL MEDIA

Embedding twitter or blog feeds is an easy way to increase engagement. Again it’s all about value – what are you providing through social media? Is it useful, timely, different - if the answer is ‘yes’, then people will engage with you.

8. AWARDS

If you have won awards, then let people know. While some may see this as blowing your own trumpet, for potential customers it reinforces your expertise and experience.

9. TESTIMONIALS

If you have existing clients who are able and willing to provide testimonials then take them up on the offer. Third-party endorsement can be very powerful.

10. UPDATES

With time in short supply, updating information about your company or agency often falls down the list of priorities, if not off the list completely. It is crucial that the information in your PMHub profile is up to dates from your telephone number to changes in personnel and news therapy area expertise. With this in mind, it is worth allocating the update task to one person that way it won’t get missed.

For more information on PMHub email sales@pmlive.com.