



MODULE 6: SEDUCING YOUR AUDIENCE WITH GREAT CONTENT

Welcome to Module Six in the **Red Slice Brand Bootcamp** series:
Seducing Your Audience with Great Content

SLIDE 2: In this session, we're going to DISCOVER crucial copywriting tips to take your copy from boring to brilliant. We'll also EXPLORE what blogging will – and won't – do for your business. I'm going to share some fabulous tips on how to blog effectively and leverage it for maximum impact and reach. And finally you'll LEARN how to efficiently manage and integrate your social media content.

SLIDE 3: It's important to understand that **being a good writer and being a good copy writer are not necessarily the same things**. If you can craft a good story or cobble together an interesting metaphor, you're halfway there. But copy writing is an art in and of itself. It's about good writing, yes, but its true purpose is to create effective, engaging, non-trite text that PRODUCES ACTION, whether it's persuading someone to download your free report, sign up for your training class or simply buy your products and services. And hopefully good copywriting also makes people know, like, and trust the person or company selling these things.

You have two options: You can hire a great copywriter, as I often do. Sarah Von Bargen, who contributed some of the content for this module, is a go-to partner of mine and has a real talent with finding just the right words. She and I partner often, not just for my clients but for my own copywriting needs! She's graciously contributed her expertise to this module to help you create magnetic content. If you ever need copy or content marketing strategy help, she's the one to call and you can visit her at www.yesandyes.org. Your other option is to write all your marketing and sales copy yourself, which is completely doable and realistic – and can save you some money.

"But I'm not a great writer", you might be saying. And if that's the case, you probably won't write great copy the first time you try. Or even the first 100 times you try; just like anything worth doing it takes lots and lots of practice.

Some resources that may help you become a better writer are: Copyblogger, Thesaurus.com, or the Rhyme zone rhyming dictionary.

SLIDE 4: Here are three crucial tips to help you write more compelling copy and flex your writing muscle.

#1 Start paying attention to which copy resonates with you. Create two folders: *Writing I Like* and *Writing I Don't Like*. Every time you encounter writing you react strongly to – whether it's an ad, article, blog, or sales copy - save that URL into one of these folders. This will help you hone in on your writing style. When you can discern what you like or dislike, you can start to find your own unique voice.

#2: Practice, practice, practice. Write three sample taglines and then ask others which they like best. Experiment with email subject lines, blog titles, product names. Don't censor yourself, just play and test. If you're really ambitious you can even **split test** these, which means you

send out half with one title, subject line or message and half with another (just don't split test multiple variables at once or you won't be able to isolate what works!). Then see which one gets opened more. Or do the same with ads, sales pages, etc.

#3: Consider how you like to be talked to. How do you feel when you receive a traditionally written press release? Or when you read sales copy that asks questions and then offers you a solution? If these formats work for you and you think they also will for your target audience - then you should write like that! But if you prefer copy with humor and spunk, or you appreciate the art of the "soft sell," then maybe that's how you should be writing. If you are writing in a way you're not comfortable with, the reader will be able to tell. So if your target audience is the polar opposite of you, you may need to hire a copywriter to help you!

SLIDE 5: There are lots of communication vehicles your business can produce. So you need to think about which communications are actually required. How do your ideal customers want to get their information? How do they want to engage with you? Branding is about two-way communication with your customers. If you have no way to talk to them, and more importantly, listen to them, your brand will never grab their loyalty. Go back to your ideal audience profile and compare notes. How should you be communicating with them? Where are they, what information do they need, and which vehicles do they prefer? Which communication avenues will they actually pay attention to? Are they online, offline, etc.? What is the bare minimum?

You may find that even though "everyone is on Twitter or Pinterest" your tribe may not want to interact with you there. Maybe they like email newsletters more than Facebook posts. Point is, try to find out how and where they want you to communicate with them.

It's also important to note that existing customers who know, like and trust you have a different relationship with you than brand new prospects who don't know you well yet. Going back to our dating analogy, you may offer different information or focus on different messages with people who already have a relationship with your brand vs. those with whom you're on a first date. Take a look at your communications and ensure you're appropriately talking to the right people in the right way and considering the different level of information they need.

SLIDE 6: This leads me to a discussion on Content Marketing – blogs, free reports, videos, podcasts. Your messaging platform will help you streamline your content marketing efforts. Once you know what your most important messaging points and pillars are, you can find topics and themes that drive those points home and show you in the best possible light. Without a messaging platform, your content marketing strategy can look like the Wild, Wild West!

But what the heck is Content Marketing, anyway? It's been the latest buzzword but is actually not a new concept at all. If you've ever downloaded a free report – or even seen an infomercial where they offered a free DVD or brochure before committing to a purchase – you've seen content marketing in action.

Wikipedia states that content marketing is an umbrella term for all marketing materials which involve the creation and sharing of content in order to engage current and potential consumer bases.

Notice the words “engage current and potential consumer bases.” It’s not just about people that have bought from you, but people that MAY buy from you at some point – your prospects, your website visitors, your social media fans.

The idea is that if you become known for delivering high-quality, relevant and valuable information it will pay off in profitable consumer action. Meaning SALES. Today’s savvy consumers often will demand value and quality from you before they ever spend a dime. It’s not about giving away the farm, as it were – it’s about proving your value BEFORE a sale is made and increasing brand loyalty.

SLIDE 7: One popular and easy way to deliver quality content is through your blog. Think of it like your own private magazine where you get to deliver whatever you like to your audience. Many of you may already have one; others may have one but rarely update it or find it to be a chore. But there are fabulous benefits you can get from blogging.

Blogging will: help establish you as an expert in your field. Provide a forum for you to make connections and network like crazy. If you have a blog, you give people something to talk about and share, thus increasing your profile. As mentioned, it gives you a platform to not only deliver value but subtly tout your talents, skills, products. And in truth, a good, value-rich blog worth sharing WILL consume a semi-significant amount of time

But blogging will NOT: make you rich quickly or make you famous on the internet quickly. If you started blogging last week and are wondering why your phone is not ringing off the hook yet, you may have chosen the wrong reasons to start a blog! It’s about delivering consistent and quality content and building a great reputation over time to augment your product or service sales – and of course, your brand reputation.

SLIDE 8: The most common questions are how often should I blog and what the heck should I even blog about? As to amount of time, you don’t need to blog every day – you need to do what will realistically work for you - but you should blog at least once a week, preferably at the same time, on the same day. This consistency will build up reader expectations and will prove that you’re reliable. They can start to trust you to deliver what you promise in your products or services, too. There is nothing worse than a blog that hasn’t been updated in months. It leaves visitors thinking, “If she is this disorganized and un-committed to a blog and how it makes her website look, how does this translate to the rest of her business? How is she relevant? Showing your readers that you’re reliable translates to everything else in your business.

Now, as to what to write about? Well, naturally, your area of expertise! What is your industry or field? What are some common questions you get asked? There must be lots of trends, tie-ins and observations you can make about it The best performing posts are things like top 10 lists or how-to’s. If you’re a headhunter, write about how applicants can give good interview or the top

5 hot sectors for new jobs. If you're a therapist, write about how someone can get past disappointment or 6 tips to control anger when you're in a tense situation. If you're a nutritionist, write about 5 ways to increase energy. There are a host of things you can comment on. Maybe there's a recent news story about your field that you can provide commentary on or explain. Now you can get web traffic for people searching for that hot term.

A good guideline is to keep blog posts under 500 words (300 words is about the perfect length) and use headings, bolding, and bullet points to make posts easy to read for today's short attention spans. You're not writing a novel, but think of it like a useful magazine article or tip sheet. I have to admit, when I have a juicy topic or interview to write about, I sometimes break this rule but I try to keep things short when I can! Plus, the added bonus? It makes things easier for you, too!

SLIDE 9: Awesome, now you've got a great blog plan and you're providing good content once a week. Now how can you leverage this blog for further reach and exposure?

First, your blog is a fabulous networking tool. It's a great way to meet people and cross promote. You can interview guests, exchange posts with likeminded blogs that your target audience reads, or create link round up posts to highlight other blogs your readers may like. Make sure these experts, interviewees and highlighted bloggers know you're talking about them - @mention them on Twitter when their post goes up or give them a shout out on Facebook. You can amplify your social media reach this way and reach tons of people who may never have heard of you!

Second, building a community extends your reach. That means not just focusing on your blog and responding to comments people leave there as often as you can, but visit other bloggers in your space, too. Leave a comment for them and interact with readers and fellow bloggers on Twitter and Facebook. This doesn't need to take too much time – pencil in just 20 minutes a day for community building. To increase engagement on your blog posts, end posts with an engaging question or provocative challenge. And don't be afraid to be yourself when you write - readers want to know the real person behind the business. It's not only fun and authentic, but it builds trust which leads to sales. Just make sure you're being respectful and kind – you never want to get the reputation of a blog troll – someone who leaves hateful remarks or leads a conversation wildly off-topic!

A great resource for flexing your blogging muscle is ProBlogger so be sure to check it out

SLIDE 10: **Building an Editorial Calendar can really help you streamline your content marketing efforts.** An editorial calendar is something that magazine and websites use to plan out which topics they will cover in any given month. For example, a Fashion Magazine may show that in September they are going with a theme of Back to School and all of their content will fall under that topic. You want to build an editorial calendar for your content as well. You don't need to share it with your audience, but you can use it as an internal planning tool. Simply build a calendar by week or month and determine which umbrella themes to cover and then perhaps, ideas for individual posts that relate to that theme. If you're a nutritionist for example,

you might make December all about Avoiding Temptation during the Holidays and your posts could be things like, “Five foods to avoid at your next holiday party” or “Top exercises to relieve holiday stress.”

Rather than creating content “on the fly” when the mood strikes, **an Editorial Calendar will help you be way more efficient.** It will save you time because you’ll know what you need to write about and can start thinking ahead or planning interviews. Now, of course if something timely occurs – like say you’re a leadership coach and a new study on which you should comment just hit the Wall Street Journal - you can do that, but you can simply find a way to slot those one-offs into your existing plan. Or you may find a topic you’re itching to cover can be placed in an appropriate month, thus keeping you focused. It also enables you to outsource or work with others on your content development – since they can work off the same editorial calendar without requiring you to come up with a topic for them each and every time.

Second, **an Editorial Calendar helps you with memorability:** When you have it, you don’t need to reinvent the wheel. You can showcase that same theme through all your different channels: blog, social media, and this will make your message much more crisp and memorable. A repeatable theme sets expectations with your audience because they will see that things are more “tied together”.

Third, Reusability. An editorial calendar enables you to create content once and repackage and reuse it in those different channels. You can take a blog post and tweak it into a video or a podcast. Or use it as a pitch for a contributed article in your local newspaper. You can create tweets or Facebook posts around your topic and schedule them in advance. This allows you to simply adapt existing content and avoid having to create brand new fresh content across the board, every day. Figure out different ways to develop content once and promote the heck out of it to reach more people.

SLIDE 11: Your assignment for this module is to identify seven to ten major themes that you can create content around, be it for your blog or maybe special reports, podcasts or articles. These can also become your blog categories.

Start creating an editorial calendar by month or week around specific topics under those categories for all your content channels. Remember lists, checklists and How-to or Top 10 Tips type of posts work best.

Write three to four Twitter, Linked In or Facebook posts for each specific topic so you can use them to promote the blog each week. Or create posts for whichever social media channel works best for you and your audience.

Identify two bigger content marketing pieces you could produce about your industry or field that would be useful to your audience. Think about creating those as email sign-up offers or other incentives. You know, when they sign up for your list, they can get a free article or report. Or make them into videos or podcasts. This is a great way to not only share your expertise with

newcomers, but incent them to sign up for your email list, thus building your community and growing your brand.

Please do all this before you move on to our final session, Module Seven, in which we'll build on this and be talking about how to put all the pieces together and bring your brand to life. We're also going to discuss pitching the media and hiring contractors or agencies more effectively. Any questions, please drop on over to the private Facebook group that is part of your course....Red Slice Brand Bootcamp. If you haven't already requested to join the group, please do! Enjoy, good luck and I look forward to seeing you in Module Seven.