

10½ alternatives to a traditional article

Tenandahalf top tips: May 2019

Articles have long been a mainstay of most professional service firms' marketing strategies and it's easy to understand why. Getting your name in the right publications immediately underlines your credibility in your market earning you kudos with your current clients and contacts and boosting your visibility to prospective clients.

However they also take a long time to research and write. And, looking towards your readers, they also take a while to read!

If you are looking to produce content for your website and newsletters you need to find more time-effective (and reader-friendly) formats. Here are 10½ we are seeing work really well for the solicitors, accountants, IP attorneys, barristers and architects we work with:

1. Serials

Instead of writing an article, take all of the key points you wanted to cover one by one and release them as short blogs every week or every fortnight to get significantly more sustained exposure from one idea.

2. Blogs

While some professionals feel a little exposed writing blogs given they really need to be a little more informal and conversational than a traditional article (and that often means adding in an opinion as well as just covering the particular point you want to make), they are still the best received form of content when you get it right.

Our advice? Find the members of your team who are comfortable writing blogs and give them personal responsibility for driving your blog.

3. Video

Thanks to free platforms like Lumen 5 and Screencastomatic producing short video content is quick, easy and no longer requires persuading people to actually put their face in front of the camera.

You can animate blog content or just talk over a few slides, save your work and have it online within minutes.

4. Reportage

Think about why you're producing content – it's ultimately to get found by people who need your services.

With that in mind reporting on what's happening in your chosen sectors/markets is perfectly acceptable as it marks you out as someone who works in that area, rather than someone trying to extract work from that area.

And if people are searching on that topic, they may be more likely to find you while they're searching.

5. Piggy-back pop culture

Some of the most effective articles we've seen clients produce are the ones that piggy-back on a TV show, celebrity scandal or anniversary of an album or landmark event.

Again if people are searching on that topic, they may be more likely to find you while they're searching but it's more than that ...

... you'll also bring yourself into contact with likeminded people and when it comes to effective business development, never underestimate likemindedness!

6. Top tips

This also involves revisiting your article plan and extracting the key points but rather than packaging them as a series of short blogs, you'd present them as even shorter bullet points.

What people really want from content is to see a problem they either have faced or are likely to face next to the solution.

7. FAQs

Think about the last tricky question a client asked you, anonymise it and sketch out the answer – bingo, you have an FAQ ready for publication!

And don't forget, how you define 'frequent' is totally down to you ...

8. Updates

Has the law or the accounting regulations covered in a previous article changed since publication? If so then publish an update bringing in the main things to watch out for now that the new legislation is in place.

9. Round-ups

One of the trends we've seen really take off over the last few years is the Twitter round up.

If you haven't seen one of these all you need to do is pick up on the stories/article/blogs most relevant to your practice and bring the headlines, opening paragraphs and links to the full article together in a newsletter format then send the link out namechecking all of the contributors.

It's another option that takes very little time but shows you are on top of the latest thinking in your specialist area.

10. Reskinning

From time to time take a look through your back catalogue. Can any of your previous articles be given a bit of a face-lift and made to suit other sectors? To maintain your credibility you will of course have to update the points of reference and examples used in the original article but generally speaking the main points could be equally applicable.

10½. Use someone else's headlines!

If you do nothing else then at least pick up on headlines in the trade or local press most likely to reach your target market and copy and paste them into LinkedIn. It'll never take the place of actually producing your own content but it will remind your connections you're out there and show you're up to speed with the latest developments.

Tenandahalf now not only help the keener writers amongst our clients develop their approach to content marketing (as we always have) but also produce regular content for a number of clients.

If you'd like to find out more about how we could help you ramp up your content production without you having to expend too much time and effort, please email douglas@tenandahalf.co.uk.

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