

iSeries

Because it's about you!

Promotion and Marketing Keys in Today's Environment

Presented by The National Auctioneers Association



Introduction

The way we promote and/or market our business today, inside the auction industry and beyond, has a vastly different feel and look compared to the ancient history of five years ago, and speed is the culprit. Consumers, it is widely believed, are willing to give advertising about six seconds before they move on to the next link, post, story, etc.

Six seconds.

While that's enough to keep marketers and promoters up at night, the savvy ones in our midst are thankful to know that six seconds doesn't apply across the board. If it did, there would be no place within our content marketing realm for such things as blogs, long-form thought leading, expert analysis, and the like.

Personally, the reader in me is also thankful for this. However, the consumer side of me also knows it enjoys sharp, 300-dpi images and six-second Vine videos as much as the next consumer. Consumers want quality, and they want it now. That rule applies whether you're creating a print, radio or TV ad; engaging audiences through social media with witty banter; or even representing your brand the old-fashioned way with a 30-second sales pitch and offering a (gasp!) human-to-human handshake.

Yes, when it comes to marketing and promotions these days, every single tip and tool has to have a purpose. And, every effort must be quality. The National Auctioneers Association understands its members' needs and therefore offers the following information on promotions and marketing in the current climate.

We start with prospecting because, yes, it has a solid place. Then, because the promotions climate demands auction professionals reach outside their physical space in order to stay relevant, we will explore the concept of content marketing before diving in on how one should make sure their content marketing efforts are carried forth.

And finally, we take a look at how important quality imagery is and how a marketer can make sure their crafted message isn't lost in a fuzzy mess because you don't want to lose a potential client due to immediate turn-off.

Remember, consumers will give you about six seconds. You've got to make each one count.

Contents

Introduction	2
Prospecting	3
Content marketing: From drip to deluge	5
Content marketing: Find your Influencers	8
Image quality is vital.	10



PROSPECTING

BY NANCY HULL RIGDON



Auctioneers can turn to a variety of proven prospecting resources and practices to grow their businesses.

First, Auctioneers should view prospecting as the way in which they market themselves, says Mark Manley, CAI, AARE, MPPA, who teaches a course on prospecting in the NAA's Certified Auction Institute program. The relationships between Auctioneers and their clients, he says, are key to marketing.

"You need to ask, 'What commonalities do I have with the client?' Then, build on that," says Manley, of Rowell Auctions in Moultrie, Georgia. "And, I don't subscribe to the concept of walking in someone's office and seeing what's on the bookshelf to find your commonalities. This is about taking the time to determine if you and the client's goals align."

As Auctioneers look to expand their client base, Manley recommends about a three-year analysis of a business. This entails pinpointing which clients have led to a majority of a business' income and strategizing the best ways to target similar clients.

"This means simply asking a client, 'Who else do you know that I can work for?'" Manley says. "That's how you take the synergy you've built in a specific time frame and build on it."

He finds relationship building to be much more effective than cold calling.

"It is not in my psychological makeup to dial for dollars," he says. "I'd rather get a warm lead, and work from there."

Civic organizations

Often, Auctioneers find success by turning to civic organizations within their own community, something NAA Chief Executive Officer Hannes Combest emphasizes in "Easy Communications to Grow Your Business," a class that she teaches with state Auctioneers associations. She encourages Auctioneers to explore speaking opportunities with organizations such as Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions Club. A call to your local chamber of commerce should produce a list of local clubs and organizations.

"They are always looking for presentations to be given at those meetings," Combest says. "This is a natural opportunity for Auctioneers to talk about a really interesting profession."

NAA presentation resources

The NAA offers different presentations that its members can use once they secure a speaking engagement. The presentations are on the NAA website at: www.auctioneers.org/auction-presentations.

“All an Auctioneer has to do is download a presentation, put their name and logo on it, and then they’re ready to go,” Combest says.

Trust

John Genovese III, ATS, known as John John, has learned that earning the trust of those in his community plays a key role in drumming up business. He and his father, John Lee Genovese Jr., own Malama Auctions in Lihue, Hawaii. The Genoveses previously lived in California, where John owned an auction company.

“In Hawaii, it takes a long time to be accepted into the community,” John John says. “You can’t shake hands and say, ‘Let’s get down to business.’”

“They want to know who you are and find out if they can trust you.”

In turn, the Genoveses take a slow and steady approach to business prospecting with an emphasis on relationship building, and their efforts have brought strong results to the family’s nearly two-year-old business.

“We have been getting a good following and have quite a few regulars now,” John John says.

JillMarie Wiles, CAI, BAS, also places a high priority on trust when it comes to business prospecting.

“As Auctioneers, no matter what area we specialize in, we are transforming people’s assets, and trust is paramount in that transaction,” says Wiles, of Beneficial Auction Services in Canby, Ore. In addition, Wiles also stresses a few best practices: listening intently with sincerity, having integrity by keeping your word and creating a full circle experience by following up with clients.

Turning down business

Auctioneers can find themselves in tough prospecting situations, including hearing the word “No” from a potential or current client as well as turning down business.

“The word ‘No’ never bothers me when I have given a potential client all the information they need to make a choice in their best interest,” Wiles says. “A ‘No’ isn’t a rejection, but rather a chance to move on or to learn something new for next time.”

“A ‘No’ isn’t a rejection, but rather a chance to move on or to learn something new for next time.”

– JillMarie Wiles, CAI, BAS

Wiles has learned that turning down business is sometimes the right decision. She’s said “No” due to factors including the time a client would need, a calendar conflict, an auction falling outside of her area of expertise, and the opportunity not being a custom fit.

“I always give the inquiry their next step in utilizing the auction method, which is usually a referral to another NAA Auctioneer,” she says. “The NAA membership is a huge resource in my daily business.”

In addition, Wiles emphasizes the effectiveness of what she refers to as custom fitting. For instance, she finds success when she seeks out clients that are a good fit for her. With this approach, she brings a high level of passion to her work, which positively affects her auctions.

When those issues were at play in the past, she says she found that “the auction results were better, and my next auction was always out in the audience.”

She recommends that Auctioneers consider the CAI program in their efforts to grow their businesses. The program, she says, was the best investment she’s made in building her business.

“I learned strategies of how to attract business and build strong marketing specific to the auction profession,” she says.

She also encourages Auctioneers to ask themselves a series of questions to ensure they are well prepared to attract business.

“When a person or organization is looking for the services of an auction professional, are you set up so they can find you? Are you clear on the message of the services you provide?

“Are you investing your efforts into attracting business, or are you wasting your time by sporadically chasing business?”



CONTENT MARKETING: FROM DRIP TO DELUGE

BY CURTIS KITCHEN

More than ever, content is king.

It drives a never hungrier Internet. It shape-shifts from e-books and blogs to videos, newspaper articles and Internet memes. All of it combines to stuff our faces with brands, messages, agendas and even, on occasion, knowledge. It gets heavy at times, and consumers have pushed back by becoming guarded, skeptical and better informed – often quick to dismiss anything that seems pushy.

That leads to a simple question: How does one best reach and engage a savvy consumer on their turf and on their terms? The answer is that even if consumers have become extremely niched, their appetites for information have never been bigger or more efficient. They consume more info and do it faster than before, and that's a good thing. It leaves room for your message to be on the menu, and the Internet gives you more opportunity than ever to present why your meal is the best choice.

What a glorious table setting for content marketing.

“Content marketing has always been a part of the marketing mix in some fashion, just under different names such as branded content, brand storytelling and so on,” says Kevin Briody, Senior Vice President, Content Marketing, for Pace. (Based in Greensboro, North Carolina, Pace was named 2013 Content Agency of the Year at the second annual Content Marketing Awards.) “However it really took off over the last few years due to how consumers are finding and sharing all that content – in other words, due to the rise of organic search (Google, Bing, etc.) and social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.) and their increasing convergence.

“In an incredibly noisy marketing landscape, particularly online, having a powerful, relevant and engaging story to tell has become absolutely critical for brands looking to connect with their customers and prospects. Great storytelling content, and how it fuels organic search and social media, is the root of content marketing as a viable marketing strategy.”

James Meyers is the CEO of Imagination Publishing, which was a finalist for 2013 Content Agency of the Year. He believes the online culture has been a catalyst for content marketing's boom.

"Unquestionably, the Internet has catapulted the growth of content marketing," Meyers says. "The combination of needing frequent, valuable content to: improve SEO results; to encourage repeat customer visits; to engage customers; and to feed social networking streams have all become a critical necessity for marketers of all organizations. As a result, agencies of all types – traditional ad agencies, public relations firms and content publishers – have all moved to fill this need. In doing so, they have further elevated the frenzy around content marketing."

For a marketer who has never attempted a content marketing program, the entire philosophy and process can seem overwhelming and not worth the amount of time, energy and resources it takes to get a program moving. After all, how does one go about affecting the Internet?

But, think of a dry sponge placed under a faucet that has a single drip coming from it. The drip falls, and the sponge absorbs it in quick fashion. You know the water went in; it went somewhere, even if there's not really any good evidence of such after a brief moment. So, you spend your time and effort keeping the sponge perfectly still while waiting on the faucet to produce another drip, which it does. That drip also hits the sponge in the same spot and seems to disappear. However, this time you can feel where the drip hit. Soon, another drip and then another.

Pretty soon the water's effect is easily noticeable as it continues to hit the sponge in the same spot and then spread out as more of the sponge begins to absorb the moisture. After a while, the sponge is soaked – all from a steady stream of individual drips.

Now, what if that sponge is your desired consumer group? What if that single drip is your first attempt at content marketing via a new blog entry, a YouTube video tutorial or Pinterest post?

"First, define a distinctive brand voice and point of view – why should somebody listen to you instead of all the others out there making noise?"

– Kevin Briody, SVP, Content Marketing, Pace

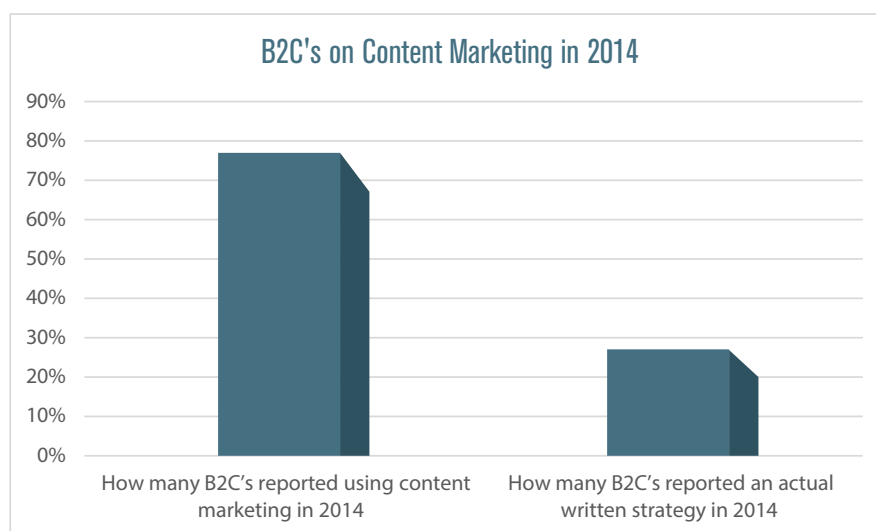
Nobody really noticed those first few efforts, probably. However, after some patience, sticking to a targeted approach, and having the resolve to hold your program in place, your message, which smartly has centered on and drummed home the fact that you are the expert of your industry, has saturated your target.

The most critical aspect to any content marketing initiative is, not surprisingly, to make sure you have content.

"A successful content marketing program is a complex undertaking and, depending upon scale, may require full-time resources," Myers says. "Many organizations have made the mistake of creating a new website or social site, launching it with content and then seen dismal results as they fail to feed constant additional content in a variety of formats to their customers.

"We believe that there are three essential pillars to any successful content marketing program: strategy, content creation and distribution marketing. Without addressing and continuously focusing on all three of these areas, most content marketing programs will ultimately fail."

Briody believes in sharpening your content to the point that it can't help but hit and impact the desired target; and making sure you can tell just how good the shot was.



From "2015 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends – North America,"
Content Marketing Institute

“First, define a distinctive brand voice and point of view – why should somebody listen to you instead of all the others out there making noise?” Briody says. “Why should they pay attention in the first place, and keep coming back for more?”

“Second, have a goal in mind, one you can measure – so many content marketing programs fail because they set out to “share lots of content” without any clear understanding of how all that content and all that sharing should lead back to measurable business results.

“Third, having a distribution strategy is as important as crafting great content; “Build it and they will come” is something that should only live in movies – it has no place in your content marketing efforts. Just because you launch the World’s Most Amazing Content Hub (or Blog), doesn’t mean anyone is going to find it.

“Lay out your SEO (Organic Search) strategy, then evaluate all the other customer touch points where your amazing content might add value – can it fuel your email marketing, make your social media more effective, add some personality to your events, or some context to your advertising? Where and how can your content be used, so that it has the most chance of being seen, consumed and drive real results?”

As consumers continue to improve their search capabilities, it will become even more vital for marketers to find ways to stand out among competitors. Developing a content marketing plan now, even if you haven’t previously, will go a long ways toward helping accomplish that goal.

“We conducted very successful content programs that have been proven drivers of audience expansion, increased sales leads or conversions, shorter decision cycles, customer engagement and improved loyalty,” Meyers says. “Unlike traditional advertising campaigns where results drop off when the spending stops, content marketing is a long-term program that continues to build over time and has a long residual value tail.”

Briody also believes in content marketing’s staying power.

“I don’t think there really is a ceiling to great content marketing,” Briody says. “If you look at trends the major, iconic brands are following, everyone from Nike to Coke and beyond are making amazing content the centerpiece of their entire digital brand experience.

“It increasingly dominates their traditional advertising and is displacing offer-based promotions in everything from email to social to digital paid media. Great content is rapidly become a de facto requirement for great marketing – so the sky’s the limit.”



CONTENT MARKETING: FIND YOUR INFLUENCERS

BY CURTIS KITCHEN

Boil down your content marketing strategy, and what do you find in there?

You likely see a thought process that leads to social media and an approach or at least an idea for how to try and get more page views, clicks, likes, follows and links. Surely, those are all good things, and they represent to some degree where your brand is positioned within the public consciousness.

What you likely don't find within your overall strategy, however, is a dedicated program to getting your strategies and initiatives under the influence.

"Influencers should be a key part of any marketing strategy because they present an opportunity to add credibility to what you do while at the same time expanding your reach to new audiences," said Kevin Cain, Content Marketing and Communications Consultant. "Since it only costs time and effort, rather than budget dollars, it's really a win-win."

A strong influencer program can solve a lot of issues for small, mid and even large-sized businesses. It helps develop brand loyalty, and it can help a business save spending way too much on sometimes high-priced, short-lived social media campaigns that are like lighter fluid – they make for an impressive flame and heat up front but then quickly burn off.

And, let's face it, nobody likes to hear "fire's out."

Influencers are the long burning, sweet smelling, wood chips in your content marketing and social media strategy smoker. Influencers are what the public trust, according to a Nielsen white paper, *"The Role of Content in the Consumer Decision Making Process."*

"Influencers should be a key part of any marketing strategy because they present an opportunity to add credibility to what you do while . . . expanding your reach to new audiences."

- Kevin Cain, Content Marketing
and Communications Consultant

“Overall, our research suggests that there is a higher degree of trust from consumers when they are reading content from credible, third-party experts,” the paper said. “Knowing the power of expert content, advertisers may want to consider increasing consumer exposure to expert content to build greater trust while also supplementing with branded content and users reviews to build familiarity and influence opinions about the product.

“Our findings suggest that such a strategy could be more effective at influencing consumers, particularly with their final purchase decision.”

So, yes, it is about brand building and awareness. But, it is also vitally important (perhaps to your future bottom line as the paper indicates) in today’s sharing world that you identify those people who pay attention to your industry and your brand and get them on your team.

I first found Cain online through a search that led me to an article named “Amplify Your Content Strategy with Influencer Marketing.” In it, Cain described several points on how to get started identifying and building influencers.

The points included doing keyword searches to find names, prioritizing them based on potential impact, and keeping their involvement with your project as easy as possible. Like most worthwhile things, the points took experiences and time to develop.

“Those pointers were developed over the course of a couple of years while I was working as the Director of Content Strategy at OpenView Venture Partners,” Cain said. “We did a lot of work with influencers there, and our content marketing program wouldn’t have been nearly as successful without them.

“I had the good fortune to learn a lot about influencer marketing from my colleagues there.”

Solid influencer marketing will help you with the important heavy lifting in developing the public’s positive attitudes and behaviors toward your brand.

Man, doesn’t that sound nice? And horribly daunting? And, again, time consuming?

“Remember that you’re only going to get out of an influencer program what you put into it,” said Cain. “You’ve got to make an effort to build strong relationships with influencers, and that takes time. If you want to expedite that process, you need to have

Do you know where to look for influencers?



Try the Influencers Program on LinkedIn



Followerwonk for Twitter



Circle Count for Google+

something compelling to offer your influencers to entice them, such as giving them access to new audiences that they might not otherwise be able to tap into.

“The bottom line is that the more you can help your influencers, the more they’re going to be willing to help you.”

It is also crucial to remember that your influencers are real people – something that sometimes gets lost in the email/text/Internet world. Your best relationship can go south in a hurry if you don’t cultivate and then maintain it, or simply mistreat the human on the other end of the relationship.

In other words, remember this: hell hath no fury like an influencer scorned.

“Fail to treat an influencer well and you’ll not only damage whatever relationship you may have with that person (thereby reducing the chances that they’ll help you in the future), but you may also hurt your reputation more broadly,” Cain said. “The fact is that people talk and communities are often quite small.

“You can’t afford to have one influencer have a bad experience with you and potentially relay that experience to others.”



IMAGE QUALITY IS VITAL

BY ANDREW IMHOLTE, BAS, ATS

Have you ever gone through your life with a piece of knowledge you know to be true, but don't really know why?

For example, when you think of firefighters, what dog comes to mind? Your first guess, as well as mine, is probably the Dalmatian. Why is that? It's a little known fact that 100-plus years ago, in the time of horse-drawn fire equipment, Dalmatians were used because of the calming effect they had on horses. During the chaos of a fire, the Dalmatian was a best friend to both man and horse.

We can apply the Dalmatian concept to photography. How? Think about your marketing and public relations efforts. When it comes time to pull together images or graphics, what number sticks out to you if you think about it long enough?

I don't remember the class or professor who drilled it into my head, but ever since college, I have embraced the mantra of 300 dpi. If you have ever spoken with your printer, you have probably heard that number as well. But, what does it mean? Why is it important?

Dots per inch

DPI stands for "dots-per-inch," which is how printing ink is applied to a page. Each dot has a combination of the four colors: Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black. At 300 dpi, the naked eye cannot see the individual colors, but it sees the blend that makes a clean image. Images with less than 300 dpi can appear blurry or pixelated when printed because the computer used for printing

made some color assumptions when filling in missing information. Often, this results in photos that aren't as sharp and easy to read. In other words, hello, blurred image.

With the dawn of digital photography, we were introduced to another measurement called pixels-per-inch (ppi). While ppi and dpi do not technically mean the same thing, they are often interchangeable when considering equipment and photo quality. One big addition with digital photography was a term introduced to help consumers make decisions based on a simple number: the megapixel. We have all seen cameras boast five, 10, or possibly 20 megapixels, but, what do those numbers mean?

One megapixel is an area measurement of 1 million pixels. It is calculated much like square feet. Typically, a 10-megapixel camera will produce images that are 3872 x 2592 pixels. If you multiply those dimensions, you have 10,036,224 or 10 million pixels.

"Keep DPI in mind from the beginning and you won't have to worry about the final step of printing ruining a great photo."

– By Andrew Imholte, BAS, ATS

Why images “shrink”

One complaint printers or editors usually have is that when they receive an image for publication, it isn’t nearly large enough. The person who submitted the image doesn’t understand. After all, when they sent the image, it measured 500k, or maybe even one 1MB, and it took up the entire computer screen.

So, why is the printer now saying the image is only an inch or two wide and not nearly big enough to print?

To determine the maximum size photo quality image you can produce, divide each dimension of your photo file by 300. In this example, 3872/300 equals 12.91 inches, and 2592/300 equals 8.64 inches. (See Table 1.)

Billboards

So, you may be thinking to yourself: But, what about gigantic images, like on billboards? You might think that those photographs can only be created by a 100-plus megapixel camera. There is one other calculation you must consider: distance.

The distance from which your audience views the image allows for certain freedoms in regards to image quality. The farther away from a picture you view it, the less dpi is required because human eyesight is unable to differentiate the image’s imperfections.

Armed with these numbers, you can begin to plan your marketing around your capabilities. If you plan to mail a postcard promoting your next real estate auction, an image from a six-megapixel camera may be just fine. But, if you put that same picture across the top of a large folded brochure, six megapixels may not cut it.

Many other factors can affect the quality of your photograph, such as lighting conditions or lenses used. But, keep 300 DPI in mind from the beginning and you won’t have to worry about the final step of printing ruining a great photo.

MEGAPIXEL TO RESOLUTION & SIZE		
Megapixels	Typical pixel resolution	Print size @ 300ppi
3	2048 x1536	6.82" x 5.12"
4	2464 x 1632	8.21" x 5.44"
6	3008 x 2000	10.02" x 6.67"
8	3264 x 2448	10.88" x 8.16"
10	3872 x 2592	12.91" x 8.64"
12	4290 x 2800	14.30" x 9.34"
16	4920 x 3264	16.40" x 10.88"
22	5488 x 4145	18.29" x 13.82"
31	6496 x 4872	21.65" x 16.24"
39	7216 x 5412	24.05" x 18.04"

Table 1. This chart shows how the resolution measurements of an image are translated into actual image size in print

2015 marketing COMPETITION

NATIONAL AUCTIONEERS ASSOCIATION'S

PRESENTED IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH



The Auction Marketing Campaign of the Year was awarded to Scott H. Shuman, CAI, Hall & Hall Auctions, Eaton, Colorado, for his company's Hager Farm & Ranches Absolute Auction campaign, which helped lead to a \$46+ million total sale and land price records being established in two counties.

Joff Van Reenen, CAI, AARE, (second from right) The High St. Auction Co., Johannesburg, South Africa, won "Best in Show — Advertising/PR" for his Property Real Estate Auction Brochure entry.



COMPETITION OPENS MARCH 1, 2015

James T. Pike, CAI, AARE, Key Auctioneers, Indianapolis, Indiana, took "Best in Show — Photography" for his entry titled "Front Page News."





iSeries

Because it's about you!

As an auction and marketing professional, you spend most of your time helping others reach their goals. Now, it's your turn. With skill-sharpening webinars and whitepapers touching on a mix of general and industry-specific marketing topics, NAA is your support. The new NAA iSeries: *Because it's about you!*

SEPT. 3, 2014

Working with Nonprofit Boards

OCT. 1, 2014

Whitepaper: Legal

NOV. 5, 2014

Auctions in Today's Real Estate Market

JAN. 14, 2015

Sales Force Development

FEB. 4, 2015

Whitepaper: Promotion

MAR. 4, 2015

Marketing From a Winner

APR. 1, 2015

Audio: Tips from IAC Champions

MAY 6, 2015

Bid Calling Tips

JULY 1, 2015

Appraisals for Auctioneers

Archives available at auctioneers.org/iserie.