

# Developing a Profitable and Sustainable Stress Management Business:

## How Published Content Can Transform Your Marketing

This is the sixth in a series of articles I've been writing for *ISMA News* about Developing a Profitable and Sustainable Stress Management Business.

I had been planning to write about the need to have your own products and services – it's true, you need those. However, I've changed my mind about the theme this time. Because most people have stuff to sell, like training courses, but they struggle to sell them because of poor marketing.

Hence this article is about a key aspect of marketing these days and that's (free) published content.

It's a topic that dominates my current thinking, so much so that I've designated 2015 as my **Year of Publishing Content**. I plan to publish a lot and encourage you to do the same. Thankfully, it's become very easy to publish content.

My argument goes like this... Published content is the engine of your marketing. It's hugely cost-effective because one piece of content can be published in multiple ways, boosting your ranking on search engines. This content pre-sells your stuff (products and services) and influences people to buy from you. If useful, your published content can become viral, increasing exponentially the scope of your marketing. Your content isn't just a promotional tool, you also can turn it into high-value stuff to sell.

### Create content then publish it

It starts with creating content. But what's 'content'?

The words I'm writing now are content. In fact, anything you write is content. A stress management tool that you develop is content. A piece of research is content. You're creating content all the time. That's a great start.

But to make this content really work for marketing, you've got to *publish* it.

This finished article in *ISMA News* is *published* content. A blog post is published content. A *YouTube* video is published content. Even a tweet is published content.

In recent years, the internet has totally transformed marketing and the biggest transformation relates to publishing. Now anyone can be a publisher and that published content can be accessed at any time, from anywhere.

There's a strong case for saying that **marketing is published content**. If you're not publishing content on a regular basis, it will become difficult if not impossible to succeed in business.

That's a marketing challenge but also a huge opportunity, because no longer is marketing success down to money or clever advertising. Publishing content is largely free and you don't need to be that smart or creative to do it.

Let's look at a concrete example, using a stress management tool as your content...

So you have this great idea for a stress management tool. You run this idea past friends and colleagues – they like your tool and give you valuable feedback. You test it and refine it to a point where you're happy to let the world know about it.

*(By the way, it doesn't have to be 100% perfect. It never will be. Striving for absolute perfection will delay or even stop you publishing. If you wait too long to publish, you're wasting the marketing opportunity your content affords!)*

## **One piece of content, published multiple ways**

How can you publish (content about) your new tool? This is where it gets exciting, because nowadays you can take one piece of content and publish it in multiple ways, all of which will help your marketing. For example, you could:

- Write a blog post about how you came up with the idea for your tool and send a tweet to your followers to promote your blog post.
- Write an article, which you can: publish yourself on your website, submit to magazines and journals, publish on other people's websites, or submit to article directory sites. This of course could contain a link to your blog or web page of your choice.
- Create a PDF version of the tool that people can download from your website. You could have people subscribe in order to download your tool, thereby helping you to grow an opt-in list of people interested in your stuff. You could also send out an email to your existing contacts and subscribers letting them know about your new tool with a link to where they can download it.
- Record a video where you talk about the tool; its background and rationale, how people can use it, and what benefits they will see. This is very easy to do – all you need is a webcam. You could upload this to *YouTube* and other video websites.
- Publish the tool on your *LinkedIn* profile page. *LinkedIn* has recently become a much more powerful publishing platform. Publishing your tool there really beefs up your profile. It shows your work and what you can deliver.
- Create a *PowerPoint* presentation about your new tool that you can publish on *slideshare.com* or *authorstream.com*. *Slideshare* is owned by, and integrated with, *LinkedIn* so there is a double benefit to uploading your presentation.
- Record some audio with you speaking about the tool, or even better, record an interview where you talk to someone about how they used the tool and the benefits they got from using it. You could simply publish the audio clip on your website. Or you could publish the interview as part of a podcast series that people can download through *i-tunes*. You can use free

software called *Audacity* to record your audio and another program called *Pamela* will enable you to record an interview over *Skype*. Podcasting is a bit more complicated and takes a bit more planning.

- Create a transcript of the audio interview, which you can then publish as an article or short e-book. Once in e-book form, it could be published on *Kindle* or other e-book platforms.
- Record an audio of you delivering the *Powerpoint* presentation, convert the presentation slides into pictures, import the audio and pictures into *Windows Moviemaker* and create a short movie. This can be published to *YouTube* and/or placed on your website.
- Discuss your new tool with a few invited friends or subscribers on a *Google+ hangout*. Hangouts are video conversations streamed live via *Google+* (and you can stream it live on your website if you choose). But you can also set it up so that Google automatically records the hangout and uploads it as a *YouTube* video to your channel. You'll need a Google account to do this.
- Set up an event where you can introduce your new tool and provide download information as part of your follow-up email marketing. I've always loved events because they work so well for marketing stress management. Mixing on-line marketing (published content) with off-line events makes perfect sense. I've placed an article I wrote for a previous edition of ISMA News about marketing with events on my website.

## **Why does published content work for marketing?**

### **Search Engine Optimization**

For a start, useful free, 'niche' content is loved by the search engines like Google. Also, there's a powerful 'cross-pollination effect' from the different ways the content is published. Being published on one platform boosts your ranking on the others. These days, everything is connected. You'd be mad not take full advantage of this. Making video part of this publishing mix is especially useful as YouTube is the second most used search engine in the world. There's a lot of nonsense published about 'search engine optimization' – the key to it is creating useful content and publishing it in multiple ways.

### **Weapons of influence**

Your published content is hugely influential in ways that benefit your business. You can use this psychology of influence to your advantage. For example, you're providing high value to people free of charge, engaging *reciprocity*. Never underestimate the value of this in business. And the fact it is *published* content places you in the position of 'expert' and *an authority*. This raises your credibility in the eyes of your potential clients, making it much more likely people will want to listen to what you have to say. This influence in the marketplace ultimately makes it far more likely people will buy your stuff.

### **Engaging and interacting with prospects**

Thirdly, your published content enables you to engage and interact with prospects and potential clients. For example, people can leave comments on your blog post or *YouTube* video and your content encourages people to subscribe to future content and follow you.

## **Pre-selling**

Your published content effectively 'pre-sells' your products and services. This idea of 'pre-selling' is very important, especially in marketing services like stress management. We live increasingly in the age of the 'self-educating buyer'. Nowadays, people do their own research online before making buying decisions. Advertising doesn't work and neither does the hard sell. What does work though is giving people genuine, informative content – information, resources and tools they can use. Then, when they come to make a decision about which business or consultant they are going to work with, they'll choose you or at least give you the chance to pitch for the work. Your content has *pre-sold* your product or service.

## **It's not 'giving away your best stuff'**

Often people think about this kind of approach negatively, seeing it as 'giving away my best stuff'. That's completely the wrong way to think about it. Marketing (and ultimately, making sales) is about building relationships and trust with prospective clients. Publishing valuable content is often the best (and certainly the cheapest!) way you can do this.

## **Viral Marketing**

If your tool is useful, other people will promote it through their own networks, which expands your marketing reach exponentially. This is known as *viral* marketing and means that you could literally have hundreds of people promoting what you do. Having people recommend you in this way is very powerful.

*(But make sure that whatever you publish links back to you or your website – this could be a specific landing page that promotes your product or service.)*

## **It's always there**

Once developed and published online, your tool and associated content can be helping your marketing on an ongoing basis, essentially *for ever*. It's up there on the web, it's *been* published. No one but you can *un*-publish it.

## **From published content to saleable products and services**

Assuming your tool is *free* content, how could you use it to make money? There are various ways. Here are a few to get you thinking...

### **Turn your tool into a training product**

You could bolt your tool onto other tools you've developed to create a high-value training product. This could be a public training event or an in-house training course you deliver. You could also turn this into a train-the-trainer course where you train others to deliver your course. Or you could even create a video-based training programme, which you could sell on a platform like *udemy.com*.

### **Turn your tool into an app**

Dependent upon the nature of your tool, you could look into turning it into an app, so that people could access it via their tablets or smartphones. The most cost-effective way of doing this would be to outsource the programming to a developer via a website like *fiverr.com*.

*(One word of warning though. Take the time to work out exactly what you want the app to do first. You need to be very clear with tech people about what you want before they start. Otherwise you can waste a lot of time and money on development – and I mean a lot!)*

### **Promote coaching**

You could also use your stress management tool to promote a service like stress management coaching. For example, you could give people the opportunity to discuss their results over an initial, free consultation, with the option to continue coaching on a paid basis. This coaching could be done face-to-face but also online via skype (*I've found that skype can work very well for coaching or mentoring as long as both parties have a decent internet connection*). Or you could use this and other tools to develop some training for specifically for coaches and practitioners.

### **Keep publishing**

Key to this marketing strategy is to keep publishing. Publish something every day. What you publish doesn't always have to be a finished article or stress management tool, it can be a blog post about what you're currently working on. If you keep publishing, you'll rapidly build up a considerable body of work, which is *authentic* and reflective of what you do. That body of published work sells you better than any CV ever could.

### **Conclusions**

- The internet has made publishing content easily the most cost-effective marketing strategy available today. To a large extent, marketing *is* published content.
- Publish your content in multiple ways to maximize the effect. Make video part of your publishing mix.
- Published content works. It pre-sells your stuff. It's influential. It's viral. It's always there.
- Use your published content to develop saleable products and services, such as training products. Use it to promote your services too.
- Keep publishing! Publish something every day. That way you'll quickly build a considerable body of work.

Good luck with growing and developing your business!

Alan Bradshaw

### **Useful links:**

Business articles: <http://www.the-stress-site.net/business-articles.html>

Business mentoring: <http://www.the-stress-site.net/business-mentoring.html>

Alan's blog: <http://alanbradshaw.blogspot.co.uk>

Recommended tools: <http://www.the-stress-site.net/business-tools.html>

Business development toolkit for Professionals (e-book): <http://www.the-stress-site.net/business-development-toolkit.html>

**Profile:**

Alan Bradshaw is a Business Psychologist specialising in the fields of stress management and resilience. His business, Work-Life Solutions, provides stress management training and consultancy to clients across all sectors. Alan also provides training, coaching and mentoring to consultants and practitioners around business development and marketing.