

Creating great web content at the intersection of writing, inspiration and expertise.

by Mark O'Brien, July 2009

What makes great web content? For the purpose of this post I am referring to content that marketers add to their site for the purpose of furthering their particular content strategy. I think the best content written for this purpose is found at the intersection of writing, inspiration and expertise.

The willingness to write is of course the first step. Specifically, you have to write educational content that serves your prospects - it should be content they come to rely on you for. This is why focused expertise is necessary, you have to know one niche pretty well in order to create meaningful content consistently. If you are a generic full service branding firm, your content is not likely to be that distinguishable from the next full service firm's. If you, say, specialize in package design for organic foods, you probably have a ton to write about in terms of both your skill set and the vertical you serve. But what about the last point, inspiration? This is where it gets tough.

Writing for a few weeks or months about top of mind subjects comes relatively easy to many of us, but the well starts to run dry after too long, fear creeps in and before you know it you've got writer's block.

I know how I get inspired to write content for our site, but I was curious what other writers' thoughts were. To find out, I consulted LinkedIn in the forms of a Poll and a Question. I received a mountain of great responses, thanks so much to all who contributed! Here are the poll results:



It is pretty odd that among the results reading, people's own musings, and client dialog all evened out, but the graph above supports my personal experience quite well. I think that thinking, reading and observing your conversations with clients and colleagues are the three best ways to mine your days for inspirations for creating web content.

In response to my LinkedIn question, I received some pretty outstanding answers, here are a few:

"With a few exceptions (David Baker, David Maister, a little bit of Alan Weiss) I work hard to avoid what's being written about the subjects I trade in. I'm sure I pay a huge price for this (e.g. occasional topics of complete irrelevance, missing timely issues) but I'll take the trade-off of not being influenced by 'conventional wisdom'. The best book I've read on selling was not a book about sales. The best book I've read on brands was The Origin of Species." - [Blair Enns, Win Without Pitching](#)

"When my clients ask questions about design, marketing, internet strategy, web design, communications or any other related industry topic, I find that it's a great opportunity to explore the subject and write a relevant article or post addressing it." - [Eileen Burick](#)

"I'll let you in on a trick that works. Remember the letters M - F - T, and you'll never need to look for content.

M - What's on their mind? What are they thinking about? What concerns them?

F - What do they fear? How can you help alleviate that fear?

T - What do they treasure? How can you connect with them on something they really care about?" - [Brian Hemsworth, Newman Grace](#)

So, what inspires you to write content on your website?