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Beyond Brochures

Using creative collateral to help tell your story

By: Jennifer Marsnik

Do you walk trade show exhibit halls collecting the latest brochures from dozens of companies and eagerly read them on the plane ride home? Or perhaps you wait until you are back in your office so you can examine each one during some downtime there.

No? This doesn't describe you?

What about your clients? Do they have so much free time that you envision them kicking back and reading about the great features and benefits offered by your products or services?

Now more than ever, organizations must find creative and compelling ways to tell their story and engage potential clients in a way that leaves them wanting to learn more. People are inundated with media and messages today through channels that did not exist just a generation ago. In 1993, did you know anybody who began a day sifting through emails or checking a Facebook page before even finishing that first cup of coffee? Today we communicate via text and tweets, limiting our exchanges to a mere 140 characters. Our collective attention spans are shrinking, and yet the need remains to educate your target market about who you are and how you can solve their problems better than anyone else. The need remains to tell your story in a way that convinces a sales lead to take a closer look, eventually converting them from a lead to a client.

Some see printed collateral as a necessary evil – insisting there is no replacement for handing out a glossy printed piece to an event attendee or sharing with a prospect at the end of a meeting. And while that argument has some merit, there are many ways to tell your story, to convey the key messages about your value proposition and what differentiates your products and services, than just traditional folders stuffed with brochures and product sell sheets.

Case studies – Prospects are less interested in reading the laundry list of features and benefits about your product than in knowing how it will solve their problems. Few things share this information as effectively as a good case study. Pointing out an example of how you solved someone else's problem may help a prospect see themselves in the shoes of a client and how they will benefit from your solution and achieve the same successful results.

Product reviews – Third party-authored reviews convey a much more compelling description of your product than any brochure or data sheet ever could. The credibility that comes with an independent product review is significant. There may be perceived risks in letting outsiders analyze a product; they might find something negative to say about it. But taking this risk demonstrates confidence in the product and your ability to respond to any potential constructive criticism.

Videos – Most people are visual by nature, as evidenced by the success of social media platforms such as Pinterest and Instagram. The popularity of YouTube likewise reflects our culture's captivation with visual media. Marketers can leverage this interest by using short videos to convey company, product or service information that would otherwise make for rather dry reading material.

Web content – Your website makes a first impression. Be sure to include fresh, dynamic content. News and Twitter feeds, announcements, press releases and reprints of bylined articles are ways to demonstrate your company's expertise and thought leadership.



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Sales materials are no longer limited to just basic brochures – using creative collateral makes a memorable impression with your audience and can convert leads to clients.

About the Author

Jennifer Marsnik is a senior account manager with Edge Marketing, Inc. Leveraging more than 20 years of experience working in professional services industries, Jennifer consults with clients to develop and implement strategic marketing plans that complement and support their overall business goals.



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