

Want Traffic to Your Site? Build a Newsroom.

February 5, 2021 7 min read

Opinions expressed by *Entrepreneur* contributors are their own.

Mainstream media has continued to shrink – in fact, this recent Pew Research report shows newsroom employment in the United States declined by 23% between 2008 and 2019. The smaller size of newsrooms, paired with the fact that the technology press continues to favor only the biggest companies, means many organizations are searching for fresh ways to uplevel their profiles.

One way to break through the barriers to coverage today: create your own newsroom that lives on your website and covers topics of interest to influencers, investors, decision-makers, and other key audiences.

At Nutanix, we created one in May of 2019 that we call The Forecast. Through authentic, journalistic storytelling, our newsroom aims to raise awareness about the people and trends shaping the future of IT, especially during a time of dramatic change and digital transformation. It's given us an outlet to share new ideas, drive more people to our website, engage prospective customers, and ignite discussions on important trends and technology themes.

Related: 8 Simple But Critical Tips for Improving Your 'Online Newsroom'

You can create a news site too (and I recommend you do!), but building one from the ground up requires strategy, commitment, and constant collaboration. For anyone interested in where to

short, here's what our team has learned so far.

Create specific goals and an overarching vision

The best marketers make clear goals and stick to them; goal-setting marketers are actually 376% more likely to report success. Establishing goals for your news site is no exception – so spend time clearly laying them out.

When we set out to create The Forecast, we wrote down tangible goals and an overarching vision for what we hoped to create. These goals included: 1) inform readers and help them overcome fears and anxiety about the rapid pace of technology innovation, 2) put the future into focus through expert interviews and thought leader explanations of how data technologies are changing our world, and 3) reach existing and attract new audiences beyond traditional PR and demand-generation marketing efforts.

We also shared these goals with key stakeholders at Nutanix to get their signoff on investment and align on what we hoped to accomplish. Before you begin a project like this, communicate closely with key stakeholders on a vision to make sure everyone is on the same page about the site's potential impact and reach.

Focus the content on people

Rather than gravitating toward buzzy headlines and breaking news bites to grab attention, take a step back and consider which story elements will be most interesting to your key audiences. When thinking about what would resonate most with potential Forecast readers, we landed on one common thread we could maintain across every article: a focus on people. We wanted to humanize complex concepts and bring to life personal anecdotes and analogies from interview subjects.

To create this people-centric content, we conduct extensive interviews with Nutanix experts, customers, partners, and IT leaders across different industries to discover story angles and insights. We don't just talk to the subject of the article (if it's about a specific person): we talk to people who know them from working with them and those who can share unique points of view on how they work, their personalities, and specific experiences. We get to know their passions, their key problems, and their long-term goals.

What we are finding is that despite a shrinking media landscape, people are still interested in reading compelling stories about the intersection of humans and technology. By creating people-focused and non-promotional content, you also differentiate from the articles on your company's blog or internal marketing materials, driving more viewers to your news site to read journalistic stories.

Related: Why Your Marketing Team Should Be Journalists

Highlight a mix of media and get creative

News sites might be primarily journalistic in nature, but that doesn't mean you can't experiment with new ways to reach different audiences. For example, think about incorporating video and podcasts into your site.

Podcasts have risen in popularity over the years – statistics show the number of people who listened to a podcast at least once a week rose by 17% between 2018 and 2019 – so it's critical to meet your audience where they consume their content. Creating a unique podcast show or ongoing series allows you to reach audiences through a variety of podcast platforms, and these podcast interviews humanize stories that are relevant to your company. They can be embedded in related articles on the news site homepage. Seeing how this content

attracted viewers or listeners, we started the Tech Barometer – a professionally-produced podcast, where visitors to The Forecast can listen directly to the people interviewed.

You can also consider curating and creating original videos. The Forecast culls existing Nutanix videos that focus on people, like the series “Beers with Engineers.” The news site also produces feature videos shot on location and based on interviews with IT leaders, who take viewers inside the world of car racing, law and order, and robots.

In these podcast or video series, you can also point readers to existing materials to drive interest to your company’s website for more info – like webinars, industry reports, e-books, customer stories, and case studies. Keep in mind that the priority is to share valuable insights, not to sell company goods or services.

Related: How to Promote Your New Podcast: 10 Effective Strategies to Try

Hire the right team to make it happen

The creation of a news site from scratch can’t happen without making the right hires and upfront investment. We hired an award-winning Editor-in-Chief, Ken Kaplan, to create the overall editorial direction, assign and edit every piece, and also contribute his own stories each month. He leads a virtual team of contributing writers and graphic designers plus web, analytics, and email marketing managers, which create up to four original articles, three unique social posts, and one subscriber newsletter each week.

Hiring the right team also means getting buy-in from people at the top to invest in this hiring and the integrity of the site itself. Your CMO and CEO must be on board, along with other

key stakeholders. These execs can also provide routes into relationships with new execs and experts both from the company and externally that can be interviewed. If your execs advocate for your news site, you'll have the buy-in you need to help it scale. We are lucky at Nutanix to have a CMO who believes in the editorial integrity of The Forecast, which can be helpful for making sure it does not become a megaphone for Nutanix alone.

Evaluate your progress closely

Building a news site is a big undertaking, but it's worth it to bring new visitors to your page and to humanize your brand. Think of it as a crawl, walk, then run approach. Once the publishing platform is humming, the content is flowing, the paid media strategy is attracting new readers and organic search is growing...that's when the site is really running. Along the way, set stretch goals around page views, organic engagement, and subscribers. Once the site is really running well, that's the time to experiment with A-B testing, retargeting, and syndicating your news site content across owned and sponsored sites.

We're only at the beginning – The Forecast's potential is far greater than what we've achieved so far, and we're ready to put in the work to reach an even bigger audience!

loading...

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/359847>