Why Your Brand Should Double Down on Owned Media



Here are three steps you can take today to maximize your owned media assets.

March 27, 2020 7 min read

Opinions expressed by *Entrepreneur* contributors are their own.

When we consider the best customer relationships we've built, those relationships were often fostered in some part by owned media. Whether it's your website copy that motivated a customer to book a call with you, a blog post that warmed up or qualified a lead, or a value-packed newsletter that helped customers get information they couldn't get anywhere else, it's clear that high-quality digital media assets can help your business in a big way.

Despite this, a lot of companies still tend to focus on

marketing efforts that are instantaneous drivers of awareness but don’t necessarily foster long-term relationships. In other words, they’re investing in channels that help with visibility but don’t help establish loyalty and retention.

Surely, having a strong mix of marketing tactics is important. But a strong marketing mix is rarely if at all possible without strong owned media. So what is it?

What is owned media, and how can you leverage it to get more sales?

The PESO model seems to have popularized the term “owned media.” The model advises that a company should have a mix of paid, earned, shared and owned media. Earned media is what we often associate with press coverage and publicity; paid media includes anything “pay-to-play,” like PPC advertising and sponsored content. And shared media is often understood to be content a brand puts out that’s specifically designed to be shared out by an audience. So what is owned media?

Put simply, owned media encompasses all the media assets, digital and otherwise, that your brand owns. Typically, this refers to blogs, social media channels, newsletters, catalogs and so on. Why does owned media matter so much?

Well, primarily, if you own a strong distribution channel, you can use it whenever you want to without having to rely on other channels you don’t control. A lot of brands forget about the importance of owned media, or they don’t do enough to strengthen the very channels they own. Instead, they focus on getting in the press, which they usually can’t control.

So how do you get owned media right?

Related: 5 Crucial Ingredients of a Sustainable Paid-Media Strategy

3 ways to nail your brand’s owned media

1. Involve other members of the community.

When companies produce their owned media content, a common sentiment is that it should involve its own brand and its own brand only. After all, you don’t want to be investing in resources that may end up promoting other initiatives for free, right?

Generally, that’s true. But oftentimes it can also be a great strategy to involve other individuals in your niche.

To get a better idea of how this principle is applied in practice, I spoke with Brendan Frederick, Chief Content Officer at Genius, the world’s biggest collection of song lyrics and musical knowledge. Genius is the maker of the popular YouTube Series *Verified*, which invites artists to explain the deeper meanings behind their hit songs.

Verified has brought Genius a considerable amount of attention. Frederick told me:

“As an owned media property, it’s probably our most recognizable, in large part thanks to that Genius yellow backdrop. Since launching the show in late 2016, we’ve put out more than 900 episodes, which have racked up over a billion and a half collective views. It’s become a popular stop for artists on their promotional runs for a new song or album, and regularly spawns viral memes and parodies, which we get a kick

out of."

And there's a pretty good externality that comes from that too. Artists often share *Verified* episodes with their fan base, bringing Genius even more visibility. "The sharing obviously contributes to greater awareness around Genius, *Verified* and our other series, but more importantly, the reception from artists and fans gives us cool insight into what people are responding to. This is all stuff we take into account when we're producing *Verified* and developing our other shows," Frederick tells me.

Though you might not be inviting artists to film videos with you, you can still apply this idea of involving other members of your community to be a part of your owned media efforts. Let's say that you can get an expert to contribute a quote to your blog post. Well, that expert may very well end up sharing the article or even turn into a business relationship down the road.

Additionally, by involving experts outside of your brand, you can introduce a wider scope of perspectives to your content. This, in turn, can increase the likelihood that your owned media will reach a wider range of audiences or even bring other companies' customers to you.

Related: How to Create a Social Media Marketing Plan From Scratch

2. Repurpose content as much as possible.

The biggest misconception about owned media is that you have to have a lot of resources in order to put out a sufficient content volume. There are all sorts of social content, blog posts, podcast episodes and more. You might not be targeting

all of those channels, but how do you balance it all?

In my view, it comes down to repurposing. In other words, you don’t have to make everything from scratch.

Let me give you an example. Suppose you’re recording a podcast episode. Once that podcast is out there, you could transcribe it, make some edits and republish it as a blog post.

If your blog’s covered, you can take smaller snippets of your podcast episode and repurpose it into shorter tidbits to post on your social channels. Or you could make audio ads out of them. The point is, there’s almost always a way to repurpose your content to make it work more for you.

Gary Vaynerchuk, the founder and CEO of VaynerMedia, is an example of how useful repurposed content can be. Though it’s true that he simply puts out a lot of content, by his own admission, quite a bit of it is repurposed.

Don’t reinvent the wheel if you don’t have to. If you can break down your content and share it on a variety of distribution channels, then why not? And if you aren’t doing this already, just think about how much more content you could be putting out there.

3. Rather than assuming what your audience wants, just ask.

When it comes to content strategy, companies often try to predict what their customers want to hear or read about. But isn’t it so much simpler to just ask?

Plus, asking what your audience wants is a simple two-for-one solution. It’ll let you know what your customers want and increase transparency between your business and your customers. People like having the ability and power to contribute to a company. And giving your audience a voice can also help build that stronger customer relationship.

There are a variety of ways to approach engaging your audience and getting their feedback on content strategy. Sending out surveys to your email list (and listening!) is just one of them. You might also consider social media tools and functions. Instagram stories, for instance, are becoming an increasingly popular marketing tool, and the platform makes it easy for you to use the poll, slider or question stickers to boost engagement among your followers.

Related: 9 Social Media Goals You Can Set for Your Business (and How to …

https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/347635