

BURN AFTER READING

Key takeaways from Ragan's
Writing & Content Creation Conference
(so your boss doesn't think you had *too* much fun)

Dec. 10, 2019

The #HiltonEffect: Highlighting impact, accomplishments and the future through the lens of human storytelling

Lou DuBois, director of content for global brand communications, Hilton Worldwide

- Audiences are 22x more likely to remember a fact when it's wrapped in a story.
- Team members are your best chance at finding a brand ambassador. "If you're doing cool work, but you can't get your team members to talk about it, it's probably not that cool."
- Great stories start and end with people, like this one about a [Hilton employee who bonded with a boy with autism by doing magic tricks](#).
- [Video](#): The #HiltonEffect
- Hilton turned 100, but what did that mean to external audiences?
- [Video](#): Content series "Room 702" highlights staffers doing great things. The name is inspired by John Lennon and Yoko Ono's "live-in."
- Hilton consolidated 14 newsrooms [into one](#).

How to create incredible content without breaking the budget

Diane Schwartz, CEO, Ragan Communications; Bridgette Cameron, associate director of communications, ITHAKA; Kat Atienza, VP of marketing, ShelterPoint Life Insurance Co.; Rachel Clemens, digital strategist, Whole Whale

- Kat: Challenge: Audiences don't trust insurance companies. Solution: ShelterPoint created a completely unbranded microsite to educate audiences about new paid family leave laws. [Paidfamilyleave.com](#).
 - They measured engagements by lift on net promoter score, notching a 72% lift.
- Bridgette: Hired new interns, had them interview each other for a newsletter. Engagement went through the roof. She emphasized the importance of having interns interview each other.
- Rachel: Long-form content is some of the best-performing content on their site.
 - Remember: YouTube is the second-largest search engine. They started with data and research around search trends on YouTube.
 - Spent a limited amount of money to boost new videos to get them past a threshold, after which YouTube will begin to prioritize the video organically.
 - Use Adobe Premier and Photoshop.

- Having YouTube videos helps your Google SEO, too.
- Kat: Started out using external agencies but brought a lot of content creation in-house, using someone talented with infographic creation.
- Tools they can't live without:
 - Bridgette: BananaTag.
 - Kat: Pardot, which integrates with Salesforce; manage blog through DNN (DotNetNuke). Couldn't use Wordpress or Drupal, so they had to align closely with IT.
 - Kat: Also the Google Suite—Analytics, Tag Manager.
 - Rachel: Google Analytics, Tag Manager, Google Trends.
 - Grants available for Google Ads for 501(c)3 orgs.
 - Rachel: Moz for paid research; it offers a discount for nonprofits.
 - Rachel: Keywords Everywhere offers free research.
- Rachel: Loading time is essential for ranking high organically. Tags and headers are also important.
- Rachel: Social media is becoming pay to play; \$100 a month is enough to drive extra engagement. They use Sprout Social for social media scheduling.
- Kat: Use BrightEdge for SEO—offers concrete tips for improving ranks of each particular page.
- Rachel: When reaching out to a potential influencer, make sure you're making a clear request, and tell them what they're getting in return.
- One incredible tip:
 - Rachel: Make data-driven decisions. Look at it relative to how people are engaging already.
 - Kat: Use the tools you have in new ways; think outside the box. Used logic from SurveyGizmo (survey tech) to deploy surveys—and to create an interactive decision tree for employers to decide whether they should offer paid family leave.
 - Bridgette: Don't ignore the talent around you. Your colleagues have talent you can use to get the job done.

Dec. 11, 2019

Content that converts: How to earn hearts, minds and ROI through in-house media production

Amanda Todorovich, director of content marketing, Cleveland Clinic

- Cleveland Clinic: video.
- Be there for people. Use Google search data to understand your audience.
- Make your audience your universe.
- Goal: Be the No. 1 provider of health care **content**.
- People make health care decisions from the time they wake up until they go to bed.
- Audience needs are fluid.
- Goal: Inspire blog comments like, "You read my mind," and, "You were there for me."

- Example: Recipes for a person with diabetes.
- Went from 200,000 visits a month to 2,000,000 visits a month in six months.
- Three posts a day—mix of health and wellness and clinical content. It's not about *more*; it's about *better*.
- Organic search makes up 90% of web traffic.
- Users expect the user experience of Google, Amazon and Uber. Convenience is paramount.
- Persona: Judy, 65 and on Facebook, who worries about her family.
 - New persona: Meghan, who is Google obsessed. She's curious and devours information.
- One in five Google searches is health related.
- Strategy: Engage users in daily conversation using health, wellness and clinical content that is unique to Cleveland Clinic.
- Distribute content only on the platforms that work, only in the ways that work for each platform.
- Use audience data to be hyper-relevant. Example: Don't post something about breakfast at 6 p.m.
- Review process: Make sure a medical expert approves anything they say about medicine.
- One post that sounds like selling can negate the trust built by showing empathy.
- They added advertising to the Cleveland Clinic blog. Did it erode trust? No, because people are used to ads, and it actually made them look more like a publisher.
- Ad revenue is worth multimillions today.
- Don't be afraid to say no. Be an audience advocate.

5 steps to building an ROI generating content program

Courtney Beasley, vice president of marketing, Walker Sands

- Anything that touches your brand is a piece of content.
- Example: [Bud Light campaign](#) of real fan who took a home run ball to the chest.
- Trust matters: Buffer offers [dramatic transparency](#) about its brand, including salary information.
- Build content that makes your audience feel heard.
- Recommends [Respondent.io](#) for collecting data without spending too much.
- Content audit:
 - Look at all your channels to find out what is performing well.
 - Find what has to be updated, what is working, what should you walk away from.
- Ask what types of content work at which phases of the buyer journey: awareness, interest, consideration, purchase, etc.
- Buffer's "No New Content" challenge: They stopped creating new content and repurposed their own content in infographics.
 - Got over 200,000 views on a presentation.
 - Medium post was in the top 10 for the day.
- Whether you are sunsetting, repurposing or creating content, just know why you're doing that.
- Challenge: Challenge the notion that tech isn't for girls. [Used Rosie the Riveter](#) as a character, with 180 media placements.

- [Video](#): Patagonia Worn Wear program for recycling unwanted clothes.
- Don't forget: Customers are people, too.
- They use B2BMA/Pardot for marketing analytics

