

Content marketing as the key to successful PR

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Every day, every moment, no matter whether we are driving through the city, or whether we are listening to the TV or radio, we are literally overloaded with marketing messages. But does this really work? What makes people think of your product or service?

When I started working for City University / Vysoká škola manažmentu, our president used to tell us that "the role of successful marketing is to make the phones ring". This still holds true today. But today we call it "lead generation". Same effect, different name.

Today, most businesses, with the exception perhaps of innovative startups, face one brutal fact: they cannot pursue a "Blue Ocean Strategy" – a strategy, which creates "blue oceans" of uncontested market space. Rather, they have to operate in highly competitive markets, where they are battling competitors.

What works in highly competitive markets is to formulate your distinguishers, your strengths, why customers should buy from you and not from your competitors. Before you use any marketing approach, be aware of what makes you distinct as regards your product or service. Then create unique content around

it, content that will emphasize your set of distinguishers, and will instruct, guide and assist your potential customer in solving their problem(s). Not content that sells your product or service, but content that solves your customers' problems. This is a big difference.

At VŠM/CityU we sat down and first we gave honest answers to the question "What makes us different from other schools?" We came up with the following answers (our set of distinguishers):

1. We offer quality business education in Slovak and/or English and our students can receive both Slovak and US accredited business degrees (BSBA, MBA, Bc. Mgr.).
2. We have an international faculty – a mix of Slovak, US, Canadian, Ethiopian, and Swedish nationals with extensive business experience.
3. We offer flexibility in our programs through various study modes – full time, part time, weekend or online.

4. We offer value for money – our quality programs and their price are well balanced.
5. We offer inclusive education with feedback from our students.
6. We produce quality graduates with 0% unemployment rate (INEKO research).

After the specification of our distinguishers, we decided

Here are our four PR articles and their performance:

Published	Article Name	Page Views	FB Share
18/1 /2015	10 Things to Remember During University Selection Process	4829	97
26/1 /2015	10 Things to Focus on in Online Education	1101	59
09/02 /2015	Slovak Students Through the Eyes of International Faculty	4576	82
17/02 /2015	University Students Rate Their Faculty	1965	0

After publishing the PR articles, we saw an immediate positive impact on the traffic to our website. Thanks to good content, we were able to effectively communicate our strengths (distinguishers) and drive potential customers to the website for further conversions. We "made our phones ring".

M.B.A. Master of Business Administration

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