

In need of a storyline

B2B communication needs more catchy content

by  **Tomáš Grečko**,
Strategist & Content
Specialist, SEESAME
Communication
Experts



The beeping of cash registers in hypermarkets continually announces the successful completion of another purchase. A B2B purchase is a very different case. It could be compared to a door-to-door sale in the countryside. Its marketing must be highly focused and effective. Because the customer only opens his door once. However, a new approach to content creation can take B2B communication to another level.

Despite the fact that business is dominated by big data, it must be taken into account that managers today consider more than just comparison tables before making their purchasing decisions. Research conducted by PwC and The Economist Intelligence Unit shows that for a third of them, intuition takes priority. The content B2B marketers take to market should communicate the story of the service or product, brand know-how, positive references and business cases in an attractive and authentic way. All of the above can make or break B2B communication much more than the numbers, parameters or unique sales proposals.

One shot only

Unlike multiple course menus in the consumer segment, marketers usually only have one bullet in the chamber when addressing companies in the B2B sphere. How do you determine which topics are worth discussing and which are better left out?

One option is to examine the potential of the topic from two angles: what business benefits it brings and how attractive it is with respect to communication. In the second case, the decisive issue is to communicate whether the brand has the ability to bring something new or inspirational, and whether it has an expert with something to say. If such an expert is missing, the company can use professionals from an international sister organization, or use the experience of existing clients. For instance, the Slovak Investment Support Association think-tank does not have its own experts, instead they use experts from their member firms, who cooperate with them in a business series on foreign direct investments in cooperation with Trend.sk.

The Problem with Tailor-made Solutions

Correctly targeted content in B2B communication might be compared to a search for something far out in space. It

sometimes seems like a search for something that might not exist. Solutions for specific clients often differ in parameters. The IT segment is a typical example, where each company needs tailor-made IT infrastructure for their specific needs. Communicating particular server parameters makes no sense, as this will often be incomprehensible to the decision makers. Each customer has different needs. The solution may be seen at companies which instead of engaging in monologues about how wonderful the parameters of their products and services are, open discussions about their business benefits. The IT segment has succeeded in this area by providing online content on IT for business articles.

B2B communication 10 years B.F. (Before Facebook) and today

In the early 90s, B2B PR and marketing managers did not have so many opportunities to approach a customer as they do today. Thanks to the internetization and interactivization

of content, we now have a much greater variety of formats available. The same topic can be portrayed in a blog, as an infographic, a videostory, through a newsletter or even as a laser show at an event.

The online world offers a shortcut to potential clients without mediators, i.e. journalists. Moreover, topics may be addressed without the assistance of editors. And the results do not necessarily need to be worse than standard journalism, even when an article or a video on a Slovak portal is labeled as advertising. What matters more is whether the content is written for its audience and contains a sufficient number of keywords. The same experience is shared not only in Slovakia, but the world. Numbers revealed by *the New York Times* in May 2014 confirmed this. Meredith Levien, the Executive Vice President of Advertising for *The NY Times* confirmed that ad-sponsored posts, known as "paid posts", performed as well and sometimes even better than traditional news stories. This was especially true when a story was created to advertise the brand and product.

