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Personalize Your Online Marketing & Customer Service Content

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Your online content often conveys the first and most lasting impression of your business' overall value and personality. People buy from and recommend companies that they like and trust. Customers respond more quickly and more favorably when they feel welcomed, important and understood. This can be accomplished by establishing a more direct, one-to-one relationship between you and the customer by carefully structuring your online dialogue.

Modern web and email communication strategies can create this essential business dynamic...

Think "PERSONAL."

Communicate on a first-name basis... Personalize email correspondence using the individual's own name and organization, even within broadcast mailings. Remember to embed a courtesy link inside all outbound messages leading recipients back to a short online form to add or update any personalization information.

For websites, employ a simple registration feature, allowing customers to both be welcomed by name and to receive and retrieve other personalized information upon their return. Remember too, to invite first-time visitors to register (reinforced, perhaps with a small incentive), so that they may also be welcomed in the future. In some cases, a programming "cookie" may be voluntarily inserted onto the visitor's computer, so that the individual may be recognized and greeted later. A secured "login" option could also be provided, allowing customers to gain access to private information.

Encourage a more active exchange of information... The more you know about the individual, the more personalized experience you can offer. Fill-in-the-blank online forms, interactive surveys and ranking polls are good ways to start this process, but they don't typically offer the chance to respond back with an immediate, personal response. Consider adding a "Live Chat" or "Click to Call" option, creating an instant, one-to-one conversation between you and your customer.

On your home page, present only a few, pre-qualifying navigation link choices, allowing visitors to identify their core interest with their initial selection of the type of information that is most relevant to them. With cookies, "click path recognition" can later link individuals directly back to frequently accessed content.

Email can also automate the exchange of personalized content. Customers may sign-up to receive a personalized selection of product related "Email Alerts." By preselecting from a diverse list of specified alert topics, individuals can tailor their own "information channel(s)."

Leverage previous interaction & past history... Offer pre-built tools so visitors may easily flag and retrieve pages or documents for future reference. Further, post data collection forms that feature "pre-filled" information, incorporating the customer's last submission, using cookie or login identification.

About the author:

As one of the region's earliest pioneers in the field of online communications, *Kip Cozart*, along with CC Communications owner/partners *Russ Husky* and *Loretta Cozart*, have consulted with hundreds of businesses and organizations to enhance and produce effective web, email, multimedia marketing initiatives and business process improvements for more than fourteen years. Contact kcozart@cccommunications.com or call CC Communications at 704-543-1171.

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