

HOW TO PICK THE BEST TOPICS FOR YOUR CONTENT

TO MEET YOUR BUSINESS GOALS

You've been told –

"You've got to generate content!"

So blog, tweet, and podcast! But you maybe asking, what is all that blogging, twittering and podcasting supposed to be about? How do you pick topics for your content that will be interesting to your potential clients, and also meet your business goals?

Here's how to pick your "sweet spot" for content topics. It's like three intersecting circles – and your goal is to find out what's in the exact center, because whatever's in there – those are the best topics for you. Your sweet spot.

But first, you need to get some clarity through two questions:

1 What's Your Avatar?

Before you start building content, you need to get a clear idea in your mind about your ideal client, called your "avatar." If you haven't thought this through, you really need to do that. So think about what your avatar is all about:

- Which industry – retail, hospitality, manufacturing, municipal government, or ...?
- Which profession or occupation – lawyer, consultant, entrepreneur, or ...?
- Age, education, years of experience?
- Concerns and issues they're facing?
- Which of those concerns and issues can you help them with?

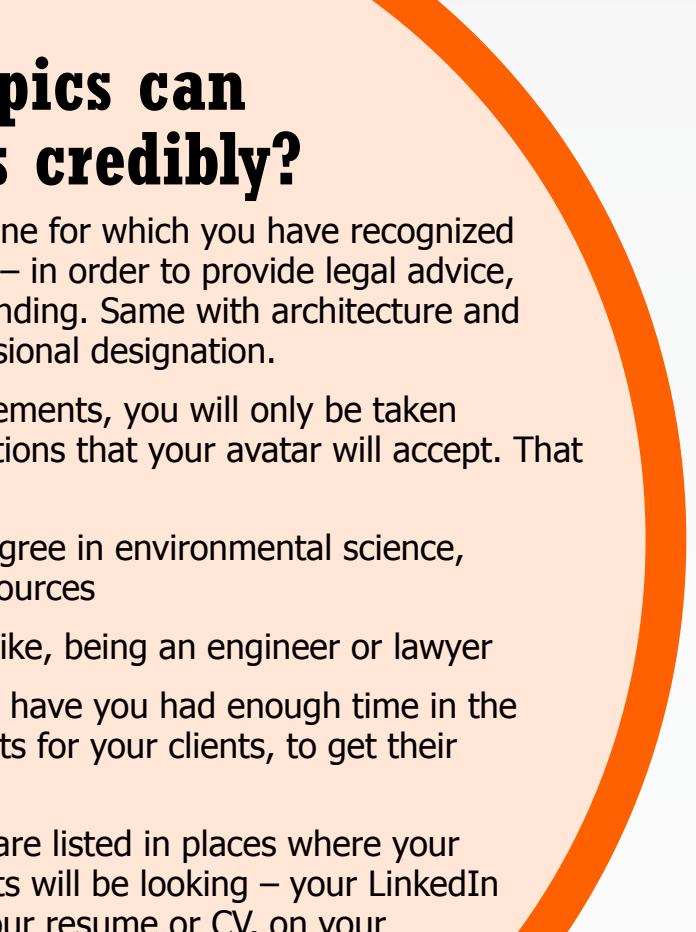


2 What kind of content should you produce?

It's like walking into the world's biggest vehicle showroom — there's a huge range of vehicles that can help you get your content in front of your avatar. Note that it's not so much about how you like to present your ideas – it's about how they want to receive them. If your avatar likes e-books, you make e-books. If they like short, 90-second videos, that's what you do. The vehicles you choose need to match what your avatar likes, which may be different from what you like. Here are some of the vehicles in your showroom:

- Blog posts – on your own blog, or guest posts on someone else's blog
- Articles in your avatar's niche trade media, either in print or online
- Speeches, seminars and workshops
- Webinars and online videos
- Infographics (maybe like this one)
- LinkedIn Posts

Now, you're ready to start looking for the sweet spot for your content.



1

Find topics meeting your prospect's concerns

Your first circle should contain topics that are of pressing concern to your avatar. If the people matching your avatar aren't concerned about the topic you choose for your content, they won't take action.

That concern can involve a problem they need to solve or an opportunity they can access. So think about it – what new and pressing issues are being faced by your avatar?

Start by going wide – global concerns like:

- The growth of mobile computing
- Rising wealth and income inequality
- Climate change and other environmental issues

Then, go narrow:

- New government regulations (National, state, regional) in areas such as environment and worker safety
 - New laws that affect your avatar
 - New disruptive technologies – which can be a problem -- or an opportunity

2

Which topics can you discuss credibly?

The topic you choose must also be one for which you have recognized credibility. In some cases, this is easy – in order to provide legal advice, it's essential to be a lawyer in good standing. Same with architecture and engineering – you need the right professional designation.

But as well as these hard-and-fast requirements, you will only be taken seriously if you can demonstrate qualifications that your avatar will accept. That credibility can come three ways:

- **Your education** – such as having a degree in environmental science, marketing communications or Human Resources
- **Your professional qualifications** – like, being an engineer or lawyer

- **Your experience** – have you had enough time in the trenches, getting results for your clients, to get their respect?

Be sure that these are listed in places where your potential clients will be looking – your LinkedIn profile, your resume or CV, on your website, and on the home pages

of your social media channels such as

Twitter and YouTube.

3

What topics match your business priorities?

Third, the topic you choose should be one on which you want to achieve status as a recognized subject-matter expert, because it meets your business purpose. This is closely allied to the kind of work you want to do. Looked at this way, there are just three kinds of work:

- **Work you do now, but you hate it**, or it's boring, or it just doesn't help you get going in the morning (so DON'T create content around this. Just stop. And just stop doing this kind of work, too)
- **Work you do now, and you're okay with that** – it's interesting, you like the people you work with, and it provides a steady source of income to meet expenses and build your savings (go on creating content that will help you get these engagements, at least until you can build the third kind of work, below)
- **Work you don't do now, but really, really want to do** (from a content perspective, this should be your priority. Find ways to demonstrate your ability to do this work and your understanding of the issues faced by the people who might want you to do it for them)

You do not want to spend your time demonstrating expertise in a field where you don't want to work. Life's too short for that. Even if it's very lucrative work, your heart won't be in it. So be ruthless.

Stop creating content that supports getting work that you don't want to do.



Prospect's Concerns

Your Credibility

Your Priorities

Picking a topic that's in your sweet spot

This process-of-elimination procedure can help to, well, eliminate a large universe of potential topics. Just back away from topics that aren't of interest to your avatar, on which you're not qualified to discuss, and that don't get you where you want to go. Now, what's left? What's your "sweet spot" in the middle, for you?

Go there, and just make it happen.

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