Content Starter Kit

Typically only a small number of people (sometimes just one) are responsible for creating an organisation's digital content.

That's a lot of pressure to come up with great ideas, do the research, gather all the relevant information, then tell those stories in a way that engages audiences *and* helps to achieve organisational goals.

Involving other people from across your organisation can help to lighten that load. (And may even uncover hidden stories that would otherwise never be told!)

But for colleagues who've never created content before, it can be hard to know where on earth to start.

This content starter kit is designed to give newbie content creators useful tips and handy prompts for making a news article / blog post for your organisation's website.

1/ Do the research!

What's the post about?

Summarise the main gist – this will likely form the 'beginning' of your post.

What's the hook?

What one thing makes this post particularly shareable/useful/interesting? There may not always be a clear hook – but it can be helpful if there is as it can be used when promoting your post.

Who are you talking to?

i.e. new audiences, loyal fans, lapsed attenders, people with kids ...

What are your main points?

Bullet-point out what you want to say, in the order you want to say it. This will form the main basis of the article – the chunky 'middle'. Include any links you want to add – to other pages on your website, or to external websites.

What's the call-to-action?

What do you want people to do when they've finished reading? Sign-up to a newsletter? Make a donation? Buy a ticket? Visit another page on your website? Knowing how you're going to round up before you start writing can help you to structure the rest of the post.

Do you need any imagery, video etc.?

If yes, will you reuse existing imagery? Do you need to source some from elsewhere? Will something need to be commissioned - and if so, do you have the time and budget for that? And if you're including images, don't forget to write alt text!

2/ Check your facts

Once you've answered those questions – but before writing the post-proper – share the notes with someone else, and ask them to check that:

- All relevant information is included
- Any facts are accurate
- They understand the story you're telling
- Links are working / go to the correct place

- Any visuals are relevant, available in the correct format, and have the correct permissions.

If you're not able to get someone else to check your notes, do it yourself. But leave at least a day between making the notes and checking them.

3/ Write-up

You already have content and a rough structure, thanks to your research notes. Nice! Now it's time to flesh-out these notes into lovely prose.

Writing-up your post could be done by the person who compiled the research. Or the research could be handed to your usual content creator at this point, for them to write.

Every organisation will have their own style, but here're some general rules of thumb:

Be succinct
Make your points clearly and quickly.

Be conversational
Write the way you speak; including use of contractions and colloquial language. This helps to add personality.

Think about your audience
Writing as if you're talking to one specific person can be helpful. (Making sure what you write is pitched at the right level, and covers what's important/interesting to that person.)

Keep a logical structure
Make sure there's a clear, easy-to-follow narrative running through the whole post; a beginning, middle, and end. Having those initial notes should help a lot with this!

Edit
Once your post's written, double-check all the facts and links. Then read it through - out loud can be helpful! Ask yourself if there's a clearer way of explaining things, and edit out anything superfluous. Then edit again. Be brutal!

Get someone else to proof-read
Your organisation may already have a pre-publishing proofing process in place. If

not, it's always a good idea to get someone else to read-through your post before it's published.

Looking good – it's time to publish! Yay!
Don't forget to promote and share your post with your audiences and colleagues.

More helpful resources:

How to write great web copy

How to create engaging calls-to-action

How to create great online images

How to write good alt text

Sustainable content creation tips

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