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Daily Business Analysis

How to reach your target market online

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By Alex Wright, owner of Wright Communications and author of *Every Word Counts – The Easy Way To Win More Customers Online*

As a business owner or manager, you will have a clear target audience in mind who you want to sell your product or service to.

Yet while the move to online has opened up a host of new communication channels to reach your intended audience, it has also made it harder to do so with hundreds of other companies competing with you to get their attention.

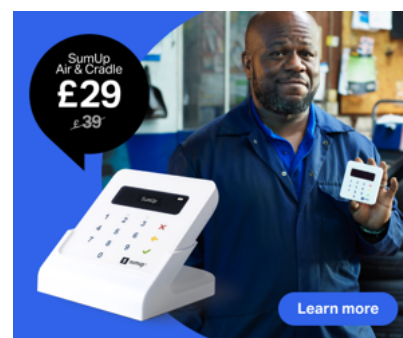
That's why it's key, once you have established who you want to sell to, to decide what it is they are looking for or are going to be most interested in.

The danger, however, is that you may assume you know what they want, because you have been doing things a certain way for so long, but, in reality, often you're overlooking what is really important to them.

Here are three simple steps to determine exactly what your target market's needs are:

Determine what your target audience wants

Start by carrying out extensive market research to identify trends that drive your key audience's buying behaviour, needs and desires. Use analytics programs such as Google Analytics to see the most commonly searched-for terms and determine those which you can use to create a niche for yourself.



Only by having your finger on the pulse can you know what your customer genuinely wants. Getting out ahead of the curve and trying to anticipate key trends will put you in a much better position to meet their needs.

You should also look at what your competitors are doing, how successful they are and whether you can use, adapt or expand on some of their methods. The best businesses are those that distinguish themselves as unique and powerful brands, yet are not afraid to develop and improve upon others' ideas.

Get your message across

When you are writing, always think about what your reader wants. I have seen too many businesses that make the mistake of focusing on themselves rather than the customer.



You need to concentrate on the 'you' and why your product or service is important for the customer and what they will derive from it. This boils down to the key features and benefits of what you are selling, such as ease of use or helping people to save money.

Think about how they are likely to use the product or service, what they want to achieve from it and the value they will get from it. Then explain in the simplest terms how they will benefit, eg, it will 'help you to get the job done more easily' or 'save you lots of money'.

Think:

- Who is visiting my website?
- What are they looking for?
- How will they get there?
- How can I give them the most relevant information as easily as possible?
- What is the easiest way for them to get in touch?

Another common error that I see is businesses thinking they need to use as many words as possible to get their message across. In fact, the opposite is true: your audience will switch off if you give them too much information, so use as few words as necessary to make your point.

Measure your results

The best way to determine the success of your approach is ultimately in the sales you make. It's easier to measure if you have changed your key messaging, but you can also see what is working best, and why, by using analytics programs on the most visited pages of your website and those your customer spends the most time on.

Finding out where most of your traffic is coming from is also valuable, so that you can target the right communication channels, whether it is from search engines, email newsletters or social media. Again, you can do this through analytics programs by setting the metrics to help you find exactly what you are looking for.

You should also seek feedback from your customers to see if they found what they were looking for and how easily they found it, as well as how you can improve the process for them. By using all of this information in conjunction, you can improve your online content to best meet your customers' needs.

Get these three steps right and you will hit your target market every time.