Two Steps to Bring the WOW Factor To Your Email Marketing

BY LINDSAY GRIFFITHS ON JUNE 28, 2016

Last week, we talked about two steps to bring the WOW factor back to your content marketing. Continuing with that theme, and the post that inspired it, we're going to look at two more actions that those of us producing content for law firms should be taking to make sure that we're wow-ing with our email content.

Step One: Give More Attention to Your Client Alerts

In his post, Pulizzi says:

> Give more time and attention to your newsletter. Is it truly amazing or is it something your customers consider 'salesy' or spam? Of all the subscription options we have with our customers, including all social channels, email is where we have the most control over messaging."

While he's talking about newsletters (and you can certainly apply this advice to any newsletters you're producing as well), I'd like to concentrate on the client alert, as it's something that continues to get attention. Why is that?

Well, as one in-house counsel said during a panel session I attended a few years ago, while it's easy to ignore the alerts as they come in, it's also just as easy to file them away in your emails for future reference, to identify who has the proper expertise in a subject area and who would be able to speak competently on an issue that you need assistance with.

So as Pulizzi suggests about the newsletter, take the following action steps with your client alerts:

> Make some hard decisions with your newsletter. Is it focused on just one audience? Is it truly valuable? Does it contain unique information that your audience can't get anywhere else?"

Law firms have certainly gotten the "don't be salesy" message with the client alert, but the other messages here are well-taken. When a new piece of legislation comes out, or a new ruling is handed down, are you just one of many firms that is sending out the same alert, with the same advice, to the same clients? Or are you truly adding value to them? How?

Client alerts developed because in the past, when something happened that would affect a client, lawyers would write a note to the client with the impact of that legislation or ruling for that client's business, and the thought became "if that's true for one client, it must be true for others, as well as potential clients." And while that continues to be the case, and is a valuable exercise (as is repurposing this content in other ways, by the way), how can you still make each client feel that that alert is written just for them? How can you turn your client alerts into something that's truly amazing instead of just something that you, and every other law firm, does because you should?

Step Two: Look at Engagement

Do you know how your clients are engaging with your alerts versus your other email subscribers? Pulizzi asks:

> **Do you know if your email subscribers behave differently than the other customers in your database?"**

His action step:

> **Start figuring out what the people who engage regularly with your content do differently than those who do not. This could be as easy as overlaying your audience database with your customer database."**

This can be a bit time consuming if you don't have an existing CRM system, but it's also not impossible. Take the list of your email subscribers and start with company names, if nothing else, and compare those with your current client list. Then look at the behavior of those recipients:

- Are they opening your emails?
- Clicking on any links?
- Forwarding the email to others within their own companies, or outside?

Look in general at the behavior of your email subscribers too, so you know what's typical for your alerts – if, in general, people are opening your alerts in large numbers, they're clicking the links that you've included, and forwarding them to others, then that's behavior that shows they're engaged with those emails. By comparison, then, if your client subscribers are not doing the same in the same percentages, or higher, there's a disconnect happening, and you should find out why that is (hint: ask them).

If the open rates are low across the board, or no one clicks on the links you include, then you'll want to go back to step one, and see how you can make your alerts more valuable in the first place.

Secondarily, if you're seeing good engagement with those who are not existing clients, the next step will be to identify how to convert them to clients, within the ethical limitations that your respective bar associations have laid out.

Next week, we'll wrap up this series with a look at content marketing audiences, and in the meantime, let us know in the comments how you bring back the WOW factor in your email marketing.