

# Why content should play an important part in your specification strategy

Marketing to specifiers is challenging. Competition levels are higher than ever in the construction and interiors sectors, and trying to stand out and build relationships with specifiers is increasingly difficult.

You will appreciate the importance of specifying your product or service for your business' growth. And you will also understand how difficult it can be.

Once you have convinced the architect or specifier early on in the process that your product is the best solution for their project, you then have to convince main contractors, sub-contractors and other construction professionals later on in the specification process that your product is still the best solution and avoid product switch-out.

*How do you do this?*

The most effective way to influence specifiers and build relationships is your content.

But what does this mean? And why is content so important in the specification process?

Sales has changed in recent years. In previous years, a large focus on relationship building with specifiers was with external sales reps who would visit their customers to talk about their projects, and ultimately sell them their products.

Now, we are in a position where specifiers are busy and they have less time to spare for sales reps and other visitors. Instead, they prefer to source new suppliers and products based on either recommendations or internet research.

And even when they are recommended a supplier, they will still carry out their due diligence, researching their prospective supplier's website and social media feeds.

This is where your content plays an important part in your specification strategy.

The content on your website or social media channels must influence and relate to your prospective specifier, whether they are an architect, interior designer, contractor, or other construction professional.

They will judge your business and make assumptions based on the content you communicate, as to whether you are a good fit for their business and their project. Ultimately, they are deciding whether you can help them.

**What is content marketing?**

Content marketing is taking a strategic approach to creating content for your business, that will help improve your specification strategy, and ultimately will help you build authority, develop relationships, and sell more products or services.

For business owners, it is a chance to educate and inspire the specifier for them to take action and use your product. Your content will include writing about projects you have worked on where you can tell your story as to how you have helped your customer, as well as writing about important issues within industry, in the form of thought leadership content. This will help to make you the 'go-to' contact in your industry and will build relationships, increase awareness, and ultimately increase sales.

For marketing managers, your content strategy will form the foundation of your marketing campaign, feeding your tactical channels such as social media channels, emails and blog content. You are creating content that will increase awareness, build relationships, and increase leads for your sales colleagues to follow up.

## **What are the benefits of content marketing?**

### **It will help you specify more products/services**

First and foremost, it will improve your specification strategy. It will help to build relationships and influence key specifiers which will result in increased sales. And not only will you specify more products, you will reduce the risk of being swapped out later in the specification process.

### **You will increase awareness and build authority**

By consistently creating and distributing valuable content, it will position you as an expert or authority figure within the construction or interiors industry.

### **You will build relationships with key specifiers**

By creating content that specifiers find valuable and enjoy reading, it will help to form and develop relationships with them. Specifiers want to be educated and inspired with your content, whether it is a case study or thought leadership piece, and if you write content that satisfies their needs they will want to do business with you.

95% of your audience isn't ready to buy when they see your content.

The purpose of your content is to ensure that your brand is at the forefront of their mind when they are ready to buy. That is achieved when you build relationships through your content.

### **You will maximise your return on investment**

Compared to traditional forms of advertising, investing in creating excellent content will provide a higher return on your marketing investment.

Advertising is a high cost activity that does have its place in a marketing strategy, but if you are looking to maximise your investment, content creation should be what you focus on.

There is more trust and credibility in content, as opposed to advertising platforms. So specifiers will always appreciate reading long-form case studies which demonstrate how you have helped your customer on a build project, rather than a Google PPC advert that contains a few hooks.

## **How to integrate content into your specification strategy?**

It is all about planning and making sure you are writing content that your audience wants to read.

Rather than focusing your content on your business and the various features your products or services have, focus on problems and pain points that your audience are experiencing.

By focusing on your audience's needs, you are creating content that they will find valuable. And as a result, you are tapping into their unconscious bias and their emotions.

It is important to realise that the decision making process within the specification process is made by emotion and justified by logic.

Yes, it is important that your product or service is fit for the purpose intended within a project, and has to conform to various UK Building Regulations or other industry accreditations. This is the logic side.

But it is important to realise that the final decision isn't based on logic. It is based on emotion, and whether the specifier likes you, trusts you, and wants to do business with you. This is where it is important to create engaging content that makes your audience feel good. You need to educate them, inspire them, and demonstrate your expertise and brand values.

*"Content doesn't sell products"*

As an agency we have heard this statement many times. But the uncomfortable truth is that content **does** sell products.

Content helps your business to:

- build authority in a crowded marketplace
- develop relationships with key specifiers
- increase sales and your specification strategy

## **Can we help your content strategy?**

If you are considering how to create content to improve your specification strategy but unsure where to get started, contact us to arrange a 30 minute zoom call.

We can help you create content ideas and importantly discover why content is important and how it will benefit your business. It will see if we can help you build your business through effective marketing.

Time54 is a specialist marketing agency that works exclusively with construction industry clients. We can build your brand awareness through content and other strategic marketing that leads to specification inclusion.

We are construction experts and have worked in the sector for nearly a combined 40 years. We know what works and what doesn't work when influencing specifiers and increasing your business through specification.

Fill out the form below and we will get back to you as soon as we can.