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Media Release

White papers – a great source for valuable content marketing

Tuesday September 9, 2014. President and Founder of US Based i-Impact Group Mr. Claudio O. Pannunzio never ceases to underscore with his financial adviser and planner clients that to stand out and engage audiences in today's super crowded marketing landscape strong content marketing is imperative.

“Consumers are disconnecting from traditional marketing activities often ignoring TV, radio, newspaper and magazine advertising – even advertisements placed in electronic online bulletins are suffering the same fate”, said Pannunzio.

“Content marketing is emerging as a technique for creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent information to attract, connect and engage with a clearly defined target audience. A viable source for content marketing is the often-overlooked white paper”.

Despite an over proliferation of white papers – and this may have contributed to marginally dilute the importance of this tool – publishing one can generate significant benefits for an adviser's business.

A well thought-out and written white paper that addresses a current issue of great importance to a financial adviser's clients and prospects position him / her as a trusted expert source, builds trust, credibility and status as a thought leader.

In addition, it will raise the brand awareness of the practice and, if properly marketed, act as potential catalyst for journalists in search of expert opinions.

Ultimately, it will contribute to drive traffic to the adviser's website, encourage phone and email inquiries, as well as enable the collection of valuable demographics from would-be readers.

Pannunzio continues, “To be successful, the white paper must engage the attention and interest of the readers by offering knowledge and innovative thinking on a specific issue that is relevant to them. It must also provide well-researched finding backed by sound statistics”.

“Writing a white paper with the only scope being to educate readers, while a commendable gesture, will not help much in achieving the goal of growing an adviser's business or marketplace reputation. It must motivate the reader to take action. Readers will not opt to call the adviser's office or become clients only because he / she undertook the task of educating them about the features of an investment, protection or retirement strategy”.

Pannunzio affirms a white paper must offer a symbiosis of education and marketing. A blueprint for communicating and underscoring the value the adviser brings to the financial well being of the client. The educational component must be clear, easy to understand and meaningful to the target audience.

Ultimately, the readers will be genuinely engaged only if the perspective is relevant to them and clearly defines what it can do for them, how it will help them effectively address their problems, lessen their pains, and what key goal(s) will help them attain.

Pannunzio offers the following tips for advisers on how to make their next white paper successful.

Unique Topic – Advisers are the experts in their field with in depth insights into the markets and sectors within which they specialise. Consequently, by doing a bit of homework they can identify a relevant topic that has not yet been the subject of a recent white paper. The right subject matter will reinforce the unique client value proposition of the financial practice.

In the research process, stay clear of white label products, poorly researched topics and statistics, as well as data from questionable or unknown sources.

Map It Out – Prior to engaging in the actual writing process, draw out a structure for the white paper, outlining the different paragraphs and ensuring that content will follow a logical progression.

Find the most appropriate third party statistics, studies, articles, and exhibits and verify whether or not permission is required to reference them in the document. If issues to be addressed require the use of specific technical terms, resort to footnotes and/or a glossary to provide appropriate explanations. Remember that a glossary will also give the white paper a more professional look.

Copywriting & Tone – Do not assume that the audience possesses an in-depth knowledge of the topic and is familiar with the industry jargon. Craft concise sentences and short paragraphs articulated in a crisp clear language to make the white paper easy to read.

Implement a writing style that reflects the adviser's own personality. Do not get too casual, but seek to write with the same tone that would be used when explaining the topic to a prospect during a face-to-face conversation. This will help build credibility and trust and increase the odds readers will take appropriate action.

Promote it – Begin by making sure that the white paper displays the practice logo and full name of the firm, as well as the office contacts on the front cover and possibly last page.

Leverage social media platforms and email to announce its publication and availability for download. Email and social media announcements should feature links that will direct interested parties to a customized page, which provides no distractions and makes them feel comfortable to relinquish their email and other contact information in exchange for the sought after document.

The content of the white paper can also help the adviser create his / her own editorial calendar. This can be used to extract ideas, concepts, data, statistics, research findings, expand on them and use them as topics for a series of videos, blogs,

advisories, short articles and briefing documents that the adviser can periodically disseminate via social media. This will help spark conversations, gain followers and also increase the odds to get some media attention.

Be Prepared – When publishing anything, be it an article, op-ed or white paper, be prepared to accept the possibility that someone out there will not share the same point of view and openly disagree with the author. However, if good research has been undertaken and backed up with sound facts and figures, this is the time when they will be required to be referenced.

Advisers should not engage in hand-to-hand combat, rather use the opportunity of the verbal challenge as a viable PR opportunity to further articulate, refine and reiterate views and opinions.

Pannunzio added that with traditional marketing methods becoming outdated and uninteresting to consumers, financial advisers need to implement new and creative marketing strategies with the end goal of establishing their practice as expert in its field.

Content marketing is a targeted marketing strategy that involves creating insightful, engaging and interesting written content with the aim of facilitating client loyalty and increasing opportunities for future business.

“As it becomes harder for financial practices to stand out from the crowd in a highly competitive market, a content marketing strategy becomes increasingly important. Content marketing is a low-cost, highly effective way for advisers to establish a position of thought leadership, reinforce relationships with existing clients, centres of influence, alliance partners and potential future customers”, concluded Claudio Pannunzio.

ENDS

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