Designing content that
Gets results

What's "Content?" It's any information you produce that is intended to inform and persuade, without being a sales pitch. It could be a:
- Post in your own blog, or on your LinkedIn profile
- Guest post in someone else's blog, or an article in an online or print publication
- White paper or e-book that presents a more extended view of your subject
- Speech, workshop, or panel appearance
- Video, slide show, infographic or audio file (podcast)

What's your intended audience?
It could be a specific industry such as film-making, the global mining sector, or hospitality. Maybe you want to reach a profession or occupation, such as lawyers or HR professionals. Or it's a type of organization – not-for-profits, B Corps, or maybe fast-growth entrepreneurial companies. So whom do you want to reach with your message?

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What action do you want them to take?
In many businesses, the preferred action is "Add to shopping cart." But the "Gets results" part of this workshop's name can be any of number of actions.
- Subscribe to your blog or e-newsletter
- Download your white paper or e-book
- Agree to fund your venture
- Write to a politician in support of your cause, or sign an online petition

What are their top three issues/concerns/opportunities?
To get them to take the action you want, the content you generate must be relevant to them. So think of issues they're facing – trends in technology, new regulations, social trends, demographics and others. Then list the top three concerns that are occupying your intended audience. That can be "good news" or "bad news." Your topic MUST meet at least one of their top issues – or they won't take action on what you say.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Matching your content to the audience's needs

There are only two ways to make anyone to do anything, and that includes getting your audience to take the action you've listed above. You must either (1) point out a problem that they need to solve or something bad will happen to them, or (2) describe an opportunity that they're going to miss out on unless they take the action you're recommending. I call these "fear" and "greed." Memorable, right?

Fear-oriented content must be scary

If you are to motivate your audience through "fear," the topic you choose must be relevant – and related to one or more of the three top concerns you've already outlined.

What's the problem they're facing? New competitors, declining market, demographics?

What will be their objections? "Not me" (it'll affect someone, but not me) or "No problem" (even if it does affect me, it won't be all that bad)

What are your recommendations on avoiding or dealing with the problem?

Greed-oriented content must offer practical solutions

Describe the opportunity you're offering -- and it must sound attainable and practical

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What will be their objections? "Sounds unrealistic" (offer a case study where your idea worked) or "Been there, done that" (What may have changed to make it practical?)

What are your recommendations on avoiding or dealing with the problem?

About Thought Leadership Resources founder, Carl Friesen

Carl Friesen has over 15 years of experience helping business professionals reach their ideal clients through publishing content. He uses his background in journalism to develop content that demonstrates the expertise of business professionals, while also being of interest to the people in his clients' markets. To access a weekly resource on how to demonstrate thought leadership, and receive a free e-book on the five most effective form of content to demonstrate expertise, see:

www.ThoughtLeadershipResources.com/newsletter