

# Complement with content

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Freedom of choice for the consumer makes it exceptionally easy for them to select what kind of marketing and advertising they allow into their lives...

Technology has aided this even further from simply keeping your car window shut whilst the person handing out flyers walks past you at the traffic light, to streaming or prerecording television shows to avoid watching advertisements, the consumer can actively avoid the 'hard sell'.

So what avenues does this leave open to create awareness and gain traction with your target audience if they are going to fast forward through your television ad? The over-simplified answer is to add value to the lives of those you want attention from and creating credible, interesting content that is high quality and can add an educational element to your marketing strategy and platforms.



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By building the ecosystem around you through valuable content, your business is no longer perceived as pushing products and services but instead you are drawing attention to your business and creating the holy grail of marketing - word of mouth referrals. It's all about creating content that will be a catalyst to a conversation. The ecosystem doesn't only refer to your targeted client base, it also refers to your suppliers, your network in both a professional and personal capacity as well as the general public whose perception you would like to shape.

When developing a content strategy, a business is incredibly concerned about protecting its intellectual property (IP) and is wary of sharing its secrets in case it empowers the opposition but in today's age of accessibility to information, there is very little IP that is exclusively yours. By sharing experiences, stories, advice and inspiration with interested parties you are able to build awareness without the feeling that you are desperate for the next sale and the conversations that are created beyond the Facebook post will reap far more brand affinity in the long term.

This is not to say that companies should do away with the traditional approach to advertising and marketing, but complemented with a clear understanding of what information your target audience is seeking and you providing a portal by which those needs can be met increases the probability that when there is an opportunity for a business transaction, the client will turn to you. As a consumer, I am more likely to remember a source that has made an impression by improving my life and return to that source if I am looking for a solution to a similar problem.

## ABOUT LISA ILLINGWORTH

A journalist and editorial specialist in content development across print, online and radio platforms with a particular passion for entrepreneurship and SMEs. Director and co-founder of a "for purpose" business that launches entrepreneurial kids.

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