

— FROM STARTUP TO ESTABLISHED BRAND:

Eight Ways To Sharpen Your Brand

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Hello! Here you will find tips to keep your brand sharp and relevant in 2018. In today's competitive digital arena, it's essential that you establish a strong and memorable brand presence. Your brand is all yours—make it count!

– TIP. 01

Your website- just how sharp is it?

Has it been more than 3 years since a website redo?
If so, then 2018 is the perfect time to start improvement.

1. One of the first places a potential customer will visit is your website.
2. Your website sets the expectation of what your clients can expect.
3. Your website is the hub for all your digital marketing.

From your company brand, message, influence, visibility, social presence and reaching new business, the website has a huge responsibility to deliver.

Your messages, brand and visuals should work seamlessly together to direct the spotlight proudly at your business and professional services.

First Things First...

Before you dive into a website redesign, take an in-depth look at what you are trying to improve. Besides the obvious outdated look, or heaven forbid, the site not mobile friendly, you need to understand your target market, current site and performance metrics.

After all, how can you improve what you don't know?

Here are a few questions to consider:

- How do your visitor's find you - and who are they?
- How much time do they spend on your site?
- Which pages are most popular and which pages have problems with visibility?
- How well are your website forms working? Are your forms sending you new leads?
- Does your website set a clear path. Think of it like this, if your website was a physical location could you find your way around for your needs?

Above are just a few of the basic questions.

A clear audit of your current website is recommended and a detailed road map for your new website should be planned. Your website is much more than information. It's the mothership for your brand.

Before you work on a new website design, make sure your designer has a detailed processes in place to determine the correct strategy for your website.

– TIP. 02

Sharpen Your Content Strategy

Your website is truly the hub for all your digital marketing.

Sure, social media is a powerful place to post your content and build brand awareness, however you don't own the platforms. Everything that you have created and shared outside of your owned content source can change with new app updates, algorithm changes and new social platforms.

With all the avenues for creating and sharing content, it's best to keep the source under your own brand.

Work from your website Blog and create content snippets from what you have already written and share across your social networks.

Post and share articles, infographics or any small or big information that people may find useful. Be sure and bring video into the mix. Use high quality graphics. As far as frequency, studies show that companies that produced 16 posts or more every month saw more than four times as much traffic as those who posted between 0 and 4 times.

Now this may sound intimidating. Especially for the busy small business owner that lacks the time and expertise for coming up with creative topics.

Help is on the way, keep reading.

8 Creative Ideas For Your Content & A Hands On Challenge

1. Infographics

Visuals rule in content! Not only can they be retained quicker than words, they can also be used in the form of Infographics to communicate detailed concepts and processes. The perk is that they are widely shared on social media and can be especially effective on Pinterest. There are a variety of resources to use for creating infographics such as [Canva](#) and [Piktochart](#). Explore these websites to get your creative juices flowing. Shown here is a snippet from an infographic created in Canva.



2. “How to”

Everybody is an expert online, or so it seems. Use your expertise and create how to videos, posts, free reports, etc. Be sure to design quality graphics and use creative photography. For an example of a ‘how to’, read one of my recent content pieces on [How to Write an Artist Statement](#).

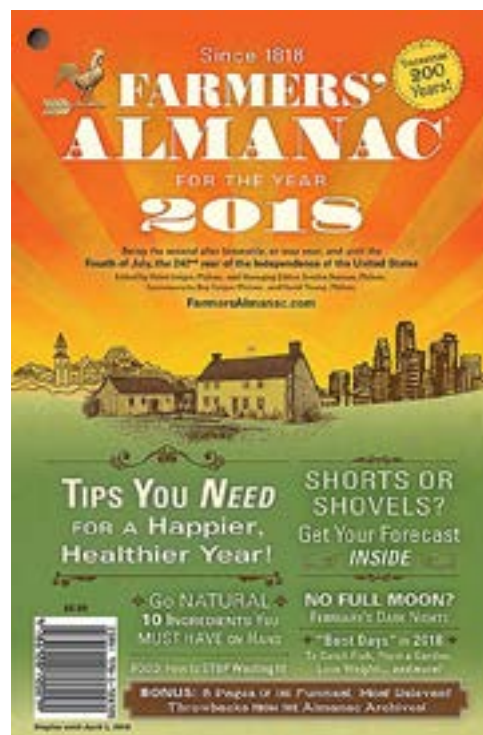
3. Inform and Encourage

Content that is created to help, inform and encourage can gain a lot of traction on social media. Create content based on what you have experienced or learned. It should be encouraging, relevant to your audience and base it on research. For an example of an encouragement post that I wrote on art therapy with over 1.3k shares, [take a look here](#).

4. I'm predicting 2018 will be...

Prediction pieces have a specific focus. For your industry, create content that predicts trends and changes. Base this on your own experience and research.

The Farmer's Almanac, a premier prediction piece and long standing brand, has been in continuous publication since 1818. Still going strong today, the Almanac has brought uncannily accurate results, traditionally said to be 80 percent accurate!



The Almanac is famous for its long-range weather predictions and astronomical data, along with a blend of humor, trivia, and advice on gardening, cooking, fishing, human interest and more.

Prediction pieces maintain a popularity that transcends time and trends.

5. Why...

Why is far and wide and the challenge is to narrow all the questions into specific categories. With the many Why directions that can be explored, wasted time could be spent answering what isn't relevant.

I recommend taking a look at [Quora](https://www.quora.com/) for inspiration. Quora is a good strategy for establishing your brand awareness and thought leadership. It's also a great place to find out what people are asking. Depending on your industry, search the topics related and note the most common questions. This is a good starting place for content ideas for your Why pieces.

6. Quizzes

Interactive and fun, a good quiz can gain you traction in your industry. Just take a look at Facebook for inspiration! Though business isn't always fun and games, you can be creative with quizzes while helping people think through decisions they need to make.

Create Quizzes to share:

- Onlinequizcreator.com
- Sporcle.com

WordPress Plugins for Quizzes

- WP Quiz Pro
- WordPress Viral Quiz

7. Interviews

Promote video and content interviews with your guests.

Interview relevant people in your niche or for your topic. For an example, take a look at [my interview Jocelyn Paige Kelly, who is a creative coach.](#)

8. Stories

Stories are a buzzword today, and nothing new. We engage with stories on an emotional level and pay more attention when facts or ideas are presented to us in a story format along with powerful visuals. Almost anything can be told in the form of a story with a beginning, middle, end, and a central character.

This form takes on a more creative approach, however it can be an interesting way for your customers and clients to engage with your brand.

Dennis Miller, Author of [Building a Story Brand](#), uses this technique very effectively and through story telling has built an impressive business.

– TIP. 04
TAKE A CHALLENGE

Choose 2 styles from my 8 ideas and create something of your own.

Go ahead, let's have some fun.

Write a post, conduct an interview, write something encouraging... create content that tells me who you are and what you enjoy.

Tell me about your business or your goals for 2018. If you're the creative sort of person, do something visual. I want to see!

For visual and creative, share with me here on my [Facebook page](#) for Artists and Designers. Or mention me [on Instagram, on my page.](#)

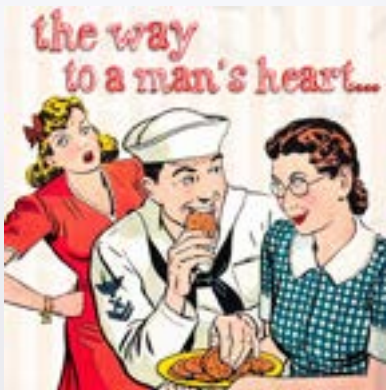
Business related?

[Tweet it to me @rosepapa](#)

Sharpen your understanding. Who are you talking to?

Learn who your audience is and don't assume that you know based on stereotypes. I know this from experience. For years I've worked in the digital media space starting out in the tech field (totally outnumbered by the guys) in website design. Since I go by my nickname 'Chris', people would assume before talking to me, that I was a 'web guy'.

The assumptions in the past have been that web designers are men. This is just one example of stereotypes.



A sharp brand needs to avoid gender stereotypes. Do your research carefully and also conduct surveys to understand your audience better. There are many survey apps that you can use. I recommend taking a look at [Typeform](#). It's very intuitive and easy to use.

As you may know, Merriam-Webster issues its top-10 words every year. With the word of the year being Feminism you can bet that more awareness will be placed on gender stereotypes and how they are used in content.

The issues of stereotyping are interesting and it's helpful to know what they are. Take a look at [Pew Research Center for tips](#) to better understanding.

Sharpen your listening skills. Everyone has something to say. Who's listening?

The digital space is busy, noisy and growing like crazy.

A few facts:

- Around 40% of the world population has an internet connection today.

In 1995, it was less than 1%.

- Facebook continues to be the most widely used social media platform, with 79% of American internet users. More [social media stats here](#)
- Just 10 thousand YouTube videos have generated more than 1 billion views.



One of the most effective social media skills to have is being a listener.

The term, 'social listening', is the process of monitoring social channels for mentions of your brand, competitor's and other conversations that are relevant to your brand. This is effective for learning how people perceive your brand in comparison to your competitor's. It can also be helpful in knowing what you need to change. Take serious every interaction with your brand and listen for ways that you can make your product/service better.

Email marketing – The sharpest way to reach your audience.

Email marketing is still on the throne and an inexpensive means of promoting your content and building loyalty. As you develop a reputation for providing great content, you'll earn more subscribers, and as your subscriber base grows, your promotion potential grows alongside it.

Facts show:

- 59% of marketers chose email to be the most effective channel for generating the highest revenue.
- Email marketing continues to be a vital communications channel with studies showing that email receives 30 times return on investment on average. 95% of respondents rated it as 'important' or 'very important' to their organization.

Implementing email-marketing campaigns to your digital marketing mix should be at the top of your list. It does take time to design and develop effective campaigns and much can be done through automation.

However, in the age of Intelligent Automation, keep in mind that too much automation will turn your audience away. Savvy consumers want heart and real. Not fake. Be sure and pair automation with manual or other creative approaches.

Last but not least – Sharpen your image with professional graphic design.

Great design sells. No doubt about it. Think of the biggest brands with the most visibility and success. You'll find design at the core. If you want your brand to be taken seriously you need to invest in professional design.

First impressions matter.
You know what they say:
you only have one chance to
make a first impression.



Whether it's a website or the logo in an email signature, potential customers will judge a business in just a few seconds based on visual appeal alone.

Design can tell a story.
People get a feel for what a business does even if they've never heard of it before. Thoughtful design evokes the right image in customers' minds.

Creativity can be a differentiator.
If there's one thing all small businesses have in common, it's that they all face competition. And to set themselves apart, they generally have a handful of differentiators, whether those include pricing, quality, customer service, or something else entirely. But consider that creativity can help a small business stand out, too.

Conclusion.

Thanks for reading and my hope is that you have a few new ideas. From content creation, to understanding your audience and the benefits of professional design; we covered a lot of ground. Digital marketing is like a jungle. Finding your way in and around can be a challenge.

At Rosepapa Creative we help small business owners sharpen their brand by focusing on 4 core integrated services.

- Creative Design: Web, Print and Promotional Graphics
- Content and strategy
- Email Marketing Campaigns
- And Social Media Management

With over 15 years of marketing experience and a proven track record of results, we've helped numerous small businesses through effective branding, messaging, web development, creative design and ongoing support.

We'd love to chat with you on details, [contact us](#) today for a free consultation.