



CASE STUDY

CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY
TRANSFORMS TRADITIONAL BUSINESS



////// SUMMARY

A business cannot guarantee success or longevity simply because it has expertise in a particular industry. Recognized brands die every day because they aren't consistently connecting with *today's* customers. Historical performance doesn't pay tomorrow's bills. A content marketing strategy developed and executed by Ben Stroup helped one legacy company go from slow decline to exponential growth, while in the process revitalizing it and establishing it as an industry thought leader.

////// BACKGROUND



RSI Stewardship was founded in 1972 as America's first company devoted to the stewardship and fundraising needs of churches. Many of the company's key staff and those in consulting roles have served in church staff positions, so there is high organizational intelligence and an intimate understanding of the funding challenges facing churches. Over four decades, RSI has partnered with more than 10,000 churches that have committed more than \$10 billion for ministry needs.

////// THE CHALLENGE

A successful history does not guarantee a successful future. RSI was living that reality. Even though RSI was considered the industry leader in all matters related to church stewardship, it was experiencing a decline in business. President Joel Mikell said customers were getting harder to come by.

"We were doing marketing the way we'd always done it," Mikell said. "We were exclusively outbound, meaning we had a call center that pursued leads and cold called churches. That is

a model with limited effectiveness today and we experienced that. It was getting harder to get to the decision makers and our company was in a downward spiral.”

RSI’s Executive Vice President, Bill McMillan, said that RSI was seen as a big corporate entity with no personality, no passion, and hard to connect with.

“Nothing could be further from the truth,” McMillan said. “So many of us have spent time on church staffs and love the local church. We know the financial challenges ministers and church leaders face because we’ve walked that road ourselves. Unfortunately, our former marketing model didn’t allow us to express the passion we each have to see healthy churches and to help leaders succeed in those churches.”



THE CONTENT MARKETING SOLUTION

Mikell and McMillan knew something drastic needed to change, or it was just a matter of time before the industry leader was no longer even in the industry. Willing to consider radical marketing alternatives, the two reached out to Ben Stroup. What they found was out of the box thinking in the form of a strategic content marketing strategy that wasn’t nearly as radical as they thought it would be. RSI has a successful story to share, and that is where the plan began.

Ben Stroup assessed the stewardship industry and RSI’s position within the industry and developed a strategy that included books that conveyed stewardship knowledge and case studies and a blogging strategy that, in essence, shared RSI’s 40 years of experience. The intent was to take RSI from being an industry leader in church financial stewardship and capital development to being an industry *thought* leader.

“There is a big difference between the two,” McMillan said. “What the content marketing strategy did for us was to allow that passion we have for the local church to come out of us and really express our experience in a context that our clients not only see us as their partners, they see us as being the go-to company in the industry. Ben’s content marketing strategy certainly recast our brand in a much more influential light.”

THE RESULTS

In just a little over two years of working with Ben Stroup, RSI has not only stopped the downward revenue spiral, Mikell reports that RSI has seen a significant turnaround - resulting in a 20 percent growth trend during 2013.

“The content marketing strategy has totally restructured the way we market our company,” he said. “We were once completely an outbound marketing operation, trying to go out and beat

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the bushes for business. Now, a significant amount of our business comes from inbound leads generated as a result of people accessing our content. There is no question it saved us. Making the decision to work with Ben was the best strategic decision we’ve made, and it has made us a firm believer that if companies want to connect with clients and potential customers at a deeper level, then they need to get a handle on content marketing.”

CONCLUSION

Content marketing requires personalized strategies designed to uniquely fit each circumstance. Content marketing strategies designed by Ben Stroup enable even legacy companies to effectively recast their corporate stories in relevant ways, resulting in stronger customer relationships and opening untapped revenue streams to new clients.



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Learn more at www.benstroupwriter.com.

RSI Stewardship was founded in 1972 as America's first company fully devoted to the stewardship and fundraising needs of churches and has grown to become one of the nation's most sought-after provider of stewardship services. Our staff hails from many denominations and traditions, and work tirelessly to build the nation's leading resource for practical, faithful, and effective Christian stewardship counsel. For help in identifying the most creative ways to fulfill your mission of growing the Kingdom, visit www.rsisewardship.com.