



CASE STUDY

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT LEVERAGES BOOK
TO ACHIEVE INSTITUTIONAL GOALS



SUMMARY

Establishing a presence in a competitive market is a necessity for leaders as well as for businesses. Often it is the leader who attracts interest, investments, and other resources that strengthen the organizations they represent. But how does one differentiate themselves when surrounded by other successful leaders? Ben Stroup helped one leader positively position himself by executing a comprehensive content marketing strategy from concept to completion.

BACKGROUND



Southeastern University (SEU) is a private Christian liberal arts university founded in 1935 and located in Lakeland, Fla. It has a growing enrollment of approximately 2,800 students. The university originated in Alabama but eventually relocated to its current location. It had struggled financially through the years, but between 2000 and 2010 went from being one of the poorest colleges supported by the Assembly of God church to becoming its flagship university under a charismatic president. However, trustees encountered difficulty cultivating potential successors when that president retired. The reason: no one wanted to follow such a dynamic personality. Kent Ingle was eventually nominated and named president.

THE CHALLENGE

Ingle isn't one to back away from a challenge, which is good since he walked into a sizable one at SEU. The university's location in Lakeland make it an ideal place to attend college as a student, but it presents significant challenges for administrators trying to provide a financially viable, quality university located in Central Florida surrounded by dozens of quality universities. The competition for students, community support, investment dollars, and corporate partnerships is challenging. Throw in the pressure of following a successful president and the balance of factors adds up to a significant leadership challenge.

THE CONTENT MARKETING SOLUTION

Ingle and his core leadership team recognized that if he was to succeed and advance the university's vision, he needed to differentiate himself—not only from his predecessor, but also in the surrounding business community. Ben Stroup developed a strategic content marketing plan from concept to completion to accomplish those goals. The plan was anchored by a book proposal based on an idea Ingle had in helping students achieve their “Divine Design.”

“No one has ever created a book like this, nor have they developed the idea of Divine Design,” said Brian Carroll, SEU's executive vice president. “It absolutely advances Dr. Ingle's vision for Divine Design and its message. The book is completely centered on the idea and is coupled with a practical ‘how-to’ action plan for developing and grasping one's Divine Design.”

Ben Stroup also helped Ingle outline a content strategy for his blog. The multi-faceted strategy was designed to accomplish specific goals: support Ingle's vision laid out in his book, and establish Ingle's identity as a thought influencer - and SEU as a top-tier university - among both the business community and student body.

THE RESULTS

The partnership between Ben Stroup and SEU launched in early 2013 and the content strategy plan yielded a valuable return on investment by year's end.

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"[The strategy] has significantly increased Dr. Ingle's presence all over the business community and within the Southeastern

community, including the alumni," Carroll said. "More and more people are raving about the impact the book has had in their lives. Both students and business professionals and many others are appreciative of the content and it has placed Dr. Ingle in a position to invest in more people than before."

Carroll said the strategy has cast Ingle in the light of being a "cutting edge" leader and that it "absolutely differentiates" Dr. Ingle from the other university leaders and SEU from other regional universities.

The book, originally intended to be self-published, has now earned a publisher.

"Working with Ben Stroup from concept to completion definitely helped us accomplish our goals to create an enormous presence in both the local and global community," Carroll said. "Ben Stroup offered effective guidance and advice for maximizing our communications platform through empowered brand identity."

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CONCLUSION

An effective and comprehensive content marketing strategy developed by Ben Stroup created a platform for leaders to differentiate themselves and their organizations, thereby competitively positioning them for valuable human and financial resources.



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Southeastern University (SEU) is a Christ-centered institution of higher learning, committed to equipping the next generation of leaders so that they can go into the world as influential servants in their careers and their communities. Located in central Florida, SEU is affiliated with the Assemblies of God and the Pentecostal traditions and is proud to be a welcoming community for students from all Christian backgrounds and denominations.

SEU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, and offers more than 50 undergraduate and 14 graduate degree programs across the academic spectrum. Learn more at www.seu.edu.