



Business Strategies

A Picture Says It All

We are drawn to visual stimuli, but we don't use many visual prompts in our business. Here's how you can change that to drive results:

By Michael Hammond

In today's marketplace the challenge to differentiate among competing companies and products is becoming increasingly more difficult. Products and services are becoming commoditized and increasingly similar. Acronyms and buzzwords are used by many companies and are creating noise that can blur the lines of differentiation. The advent of the digital age has significantly increased the sheer volume of online content, making it even more difficult to stand out above the crowd.

When it comes to standing out amongst the wave of online content, companies are learning to "show not tell." Today, a picture really can say it all.

Everyone likes pictures. But how do you use pictures to grow your business and stand out? Easy, turn to infographics. Infographics can be an effective tool for conveying information about practically anything. Yes, even your business. If you have a business or a product or service that needs some publicity, creating an infographic, or having one created can be an effective way of marketing it. In this article, you'll learn why you should make use of this type of media, and how you could do it.

The definition of an infographic is relatively simple: infographics are images that convey information in one way or another. They incorporate writing, design and analysis in order to convey as much information as possible in an easy-to-read, enjoyable and visually appealing format. A good infographic can summarize complex data in an easily understandable way.

You might wonder what good these things might do for you, and I am here to tell you what. Infographics are on the rise: since 2010, searches for infographics have increased 800%. They provide an eye-catching and effective way of sharing information and content, and if they are about a popular subject, they might even go viral.

When creating an infographic you obviously

want it to look good. Therefore, if you are not a very good visual designer, you should hire someone.

Remember, though: always, ALWAYS fact check your infographics before publishing them. Besides being unprofessional, having errors in them just isn't right: you would effectively be spreading misinformation. Still not convinced? In an article called "9 Awesome Reasons to Use Infographics in your Content Marketing" by Jeff Bullas, he puts it this way: "We live in an age of "Big Data" ... which means there is more data than ever before. In one day we create 1.5 billion pieces of content, 140 million tweets and 2 million videos. Trying to make sense of the mountains and oceans of data that are now part of our knowledge world due to computers, mobiles and the web is a daily challenge."

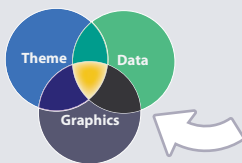
- Do you bookmark, file it or Evernote the link or PDF?
- Do you punch the reference into your iPhone or iPad
- Do you grab a pen and jot it down on your beloved Moleskine notepad?

We constantly are attempting to organize, collate and curate information. Consuming that data is like drinking from a fire hose. That's where infographics can be really powerful. Infographics are one efficient way of combining the best of text, images and design to represent complex data that tells a story that begs to be shared. Recent research from Barbara M. Miller and Brooke Barnett discovered this about infographics:

"On their own, text and graphics are both useful yet imperfect methods for communication. Written language allows an almost infinite number of word combinations that allow deep analysis of concepts but relies heavily on the reader's ability to process that information. Graphics may be easier for the reader to understand but are less effective in communication of abstract and complicated concepts. ... combining text and graphics allows communicators to take advantage of each

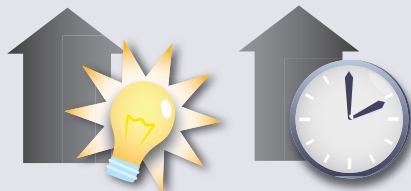
WHAT'S THE BUZZ ON INFOGRAPHICS?

Infographics are where data, graphics and theme intersect



90% of the information that comes to the brain IS VISUAL

Visually illustrating complex data and ideas **improves both COMPREHENSION and RETENTION**



Popularity Is skyrocketing

Infographic search volumes have increased by over **800%** in just over 2 years



A high-quality infographic is **30x** more likely to be read than plain text



(and more likely to be shared too!)

medium's strengths and diminish each medium's weaknesses."

Does your industry need to present data in an effective manner to communicate and engage its customers and prospects? Then infographics could be part of the answer. Statistics from the social network

Digg reveal that since 2007, infographics on Digg have increased by 250 times. Now that is a trend wave worth catching!

Why Include Infographics in your Content Marketing Strategy? When it comes down to it Infographics may be compelling but why use them? Here's why, according to Jeff Bullas:

1. **They're Compelling and Attractive.** There is one thing that I have discovered while blogging is that people love facts, figures and statistics. Add some compelling images and graphics and ..."voila," you have addictive content!
2. **They're Easily Scanned and Viewed.** Human beings are highly visual and because 90% of the information that comes to the brain is visual you need to tap into that "optic nerve."
3. **They Have Viral Capability.** Due to infographics attractiveness, the capacity for them to be shared on social networks and become viral is much higher than ordinary text content.
4. **They Are Portable (Embeddable).** When designing, developing and publishing an infographic the code to put it on a WordPress blog or website is provided as an embed code. This then creates an automatic link from their site to yours.
5. **They Can Get Worldwide Coverage.** In a world where online publishing is now visible globally at the push of a button, infographics can provide global coverage that local print media could never do.
6. **They Can Offer Brand Awareness.** Creating an infographic that is embedded with your logo and brand displayed is a powerful means of creating a greater "Brand Awareness."
7. **They Increase Traffic.** An infographic that is linked and compelling by its nature will drive traffic to your website and blog as people "share" and "click."
8. **They Benefits Search Engine Optimization.** The viral nature of the infographic medium makes people link to your site and Google will index your website higher due to Google's "Page Rank" algorithm. This increases the importance that search engines place on your site.
9. **They Show an Expert Understanding of a Subject.** The research required to create an infographic will display your knowledge and position you as an expert on your category or topic.

If created well, infographics can be very powerful. So get the right help and start on your first infographic today. Your business will thank you. ❖

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