

# Being brave and controversial in your content marketing

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Content marketing differs from traditional PR in that it is educational and informative entertainment – but importantly, it is entertainment.

People have to be interested and you have to keep their interest – and in our quick-fix world of instant gratification that can be a difficult thing to do.

So how do you create great content that gets noticed and has feet in our cluttered media space?

## Be controversial

When you get down to the nuts and bolts of things, the concept of society is really a set of rules and regulations that ensure you don't offend the people around you, and simultaneously have you vying to obtain external validation.

In simpler terms, society is about not upsetting or offending the beliefs of the people around you, and ensuring that you behave in a way that sees you seeking the approval of others. In other words ensuring they approve of you.



Effectively then, being controversial in a media piece is the antithesis of everything we're taught in order to fit into society – and that means that taking a risk on controversy goes counter to all the expectations of the people and world around us.

Controversy and strong opinions really do work to generate movement and create awareness though. So, if you do have a lead on a nice controversial angle, it's worth considering pursuing it.

## **Ignore the comments and develop a thick skin**

It's not without consequence though – and even if you do get positive feedback, you are guaranteed that you will get at least a small bit of backlash.

Every time. Every single time, without fail.

Media nowadays doesn't take place without the Internet, and the Internet is a funny place, full of anonymous people who like to use their anonymity to hurl abuse at those who do get out there and create content.

When I first started putting myself out there in terms of my own profile, the abuse on comments paralysed me with fear. I come across as confident and outspoken, but at heart – like you – I am still an artist that pours my heart and soul into every creation I birth.

To pore over an article or design for hours and then have people attack it can be heart-breaking. When you're going out with strong opinions, especially if they are your personal opinions, and people attack those, it becomes a personal attack on you as an individual.

## **You can't please all the people and you will make enemies**

We have created a world of very self-important people. There are 8-billion people on the planet, and almost every single one of them feels that they are unique and important, they are special and everything about them matters.

People are unbelievably stuck in their opinions and ways of thinking and being, and someone daring to express any contrary opinion becomes a personal attack because they have made themselves so self-important in their own worlds.

Our judgmental society doesn't help that either... people feel they have the right to judge, and then they will try and enforce their opinion on you.

Why do people do this?

This is partly the fault of the marketing and media industry's 'programming': people have become USED to being told what to do and when to do it; what to strive towards; what to desire and want.

They've become so acclimatised to this programming in fact, that it has become habit to accept programming. If they accept programming by seeing and hearing it, then it stands to reason (in their minds) that if they can MAKE someone see and hear their explanation, that person will be FORCED to take the belief on.

Because they are reliant on external programming, they believe that everyone around them will be prone to it too. As a stronger writer leaning towards the controversial, you are likely much more internally validated than the people around you – but your Achilles Heel will be having your art and expression attacked.

Alternately, they will try and one-up you because it's the only way they can feel superior. If they're not feeling superior then by default they must be inferior – the self-importance we've created in the world cannot allow people to tolerate being inferior.

Add in external validation and people can only see themselves in contrast and comparison to others, so they NEED someone to be inferior in order for them to be superior.

## You will screw up at least once

And it may be a massive mess you make.

Clearly I like putting myself out there and causing a bit of stir, but here's the first mess up I made that really scared me and made me take notice.

I belonged to a social media platform that had a trend of skinny shaming activities. As someone who had lost (and was losing) weight, I started to get annoyed with this, tired of reading about how skinny women weren't real women and didn't deserve the love or attention of a man, and similar ideas.

To be fair, this particular site does go overboard with this issue, and you could often go onto main board and see multiple pieces to this effect, purporting the idea that only fat women are real or matter.

So I wrote a piece entitled *"Why your fat body isn't sexy – and why you shouldn't be offended that I said that."*

OMG... if you want to be scared as a writer, wait until you see what it's like when a million people turn on you online.

The boards went insane... people were writing articles about my article, linking to the piece... and the comments flew thick and fast. By the time I shut my profile down a few days later, there were about 6,000 comments if I remember.

Yes I did get a lot of private messages saying thank you to me for verbalising the issue, but the public attack was just that – an outright attack on me and my piece.

It's scary... I'm not even going to lie. And it will truly test your mettle as a writer and voice.

But I strongly recommend that you mess up that monumentally at least once... because once you get over the fear and vulnerability that it dredges up you will develop an entirely new level of confidence – and that will surge your writing onto a whole new level.

## Take chances and be brave

Writing and thinking are like any other discipline – they require practice and mistakes and learning and adjusting.

Right now, South Africa and the world desperately need strong voices that can stand up and be moral and ethical compasses, and help to change the tone of the current global conversation.

So many of us start businesses because we want to make a difference – and great content is a phenomenal way to achieve that in your area of focus.

It's a brave new world out there, and the voice you choose to show will help to permanently shape it.

Take part in the conversation and help to change the world.

## ABOUT CHEMORY GUNKO

Chemory Gunko is a seasoned Creative Director, a certified NLP Practitioner, Ericksonian Hypnotherapy Practitioner, Energy ReSourcing Practitioner & Life Coach, among others. She works as a marketing consultant and provides copywriting, SEO, graphic design and Joomla! website services.

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