

ellcom Backgrounder

An e-newsletter from Ellenbecker Communications focusing on the PR, marketing and creative needs of B2B equipment manufacturers

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Are improved equipment sales adding resources to marketing departments in 2015?

I was encouraged early on in 2014 by articles in the trade press forecasting slight improvements to the construction sector. But it really wasn't until CONEXPO in March that I started hearing stories that made me believe we might be at a turning point.

One manufacturer told me that they had done more business on the first day of the show than they'd done in all five days of the last show, back in 2011. It's not a surprise that business would be better in 2014, but it was the degree of difference that was surprising. And this wasn't the only time I heard that kind of story.

A big part of my job entails talking to non-clients (or, as I prefer to say, "potential clients") and recently a new narrative began to emerge. I started hearing very similar comments from a number of marketing managers of companies catering to the construction industry. They could be summed up as, "If sales can maintain the current pace, we're going to be able to do more in 2015." Depending on the company, that may mean more advertising dollars, or maybe a greater focus on content creation, perhaps more investment in social media or just catching up on all those brochures that need to be updated. Some companies without agencies now may consider signing an agency in 2015, some will add staff in-house, and some will turn to freelancers to help them keep up with the demand for more quality content.

For construction equipment manufacturers, there is certainly more reason for optimism than simple anecdotal evidence, though. *Construction Equipment* reported in its June issue on the results of their reader survey that indicated that almost two-thirds of respondents expected to replace some portion of their equipment fleet this year. In August *Equipment Today* reported on a study by the Association of Equipment Manufacturers that found "40 to 43 percent of companies with fewer than 1,000 employees indicate that they will increase fleet size over the next 12 months... and about 25 percent of companies with 1,000 or more employees are planning to expand their fleets."

What about your department? Are you thinking about doing more next year? Have you been given more resources to support your 2015 action plan? And for those of you in other industries, how does your outlook for 2015 differ? Feel free to give me a call if you'd like to bounce some ideas off someone—no commitment necessary. There are incremental steps you can take to improve your content creation, for example, that are scalable and affordable.

Give us
a call!



Matt Fueston is an Account Manager for Ellenbecker Communications, is responsible for new business development, and contributes as a staff writer. He believes in the intersection between Sales and Marketing.

We want your feedback!

We really want to know what you think about the articles we write—any comments, suggestions for future articles or contributions to a discussion around the issues facing marketing and communications managers for B2B are very welcome. Just reply to matt@ellcom.us, and put "Backgrounder" in the subject line. We will never publish your comments without your express permission.

"What to leave in, what to leave out"

*"Well those drifter's days are past me now
I've got so much more to think about
Deadlines and commitments
What to leave in, what to leave out."*

Against the Wind, by Bob Seger



When Bob Seger wrote those lyrics back in the late seventies, I doubt that he was thinking about writing, editing or publishing. But lines two to four of that verse could easily be the theme song for an editing seminar. (The references to deadlines and commitments are just a bonus, particularly from a writer or editor's point of view.)

Editing is all about knowing what to leave in, and what to leave out. That is true of any kind of editing, even the kind of self-editing a good writer does as part of his regular process. Some are natural masters of the art, like the great Elmore Leonard, who famously said that he left out the parts that people didn't read. Most of us mere mortals need an actual editor, however.*

This principle definitely applies to a press release—if the first draft is 650 words, it will be worlds better if cut to 400. And not just because a person is more likely to read a short piece than a long one. A piece that only contains necessary information will better represent your company. That is true because those 400 carefully chosen words are focused on the message, rather than distracting from it with a lot of unnecessary "static."

This is where the art and the skill of editing come in. A really good editor can save a piece of content, because they know *what to leave in, what to leave out*.

(* This short piece went through two edits before being finalized.)

—Matt Fueston