Content marketing for parks

IT & SOCIAL MEDIA

David Lakins of Key Digital looks at developing a content strategy to support holiday and residential parks' marketing plans

In this article, I look at why developing a content strategy is an essential component of any marketing campaign, and how it should ensure a park's content meets its business objectives and needs of its customers.

Developing a content strategy for your park website

What should parks write? For many website and social media managers, the difficult part is figuring out what type of content to publish.

Other considerations include:
- *How can parks get people to discover their content?*
- *What will engage people?*
- *What will make people book a holiday or enquire about a holiday caravan or residential park home for sale?*

In an age of information overload, using content to attract visitors and engage with them has never been more important.

However, developing an effective content strategy requires more than simply putting pen to paper. It requires an approach that puts the target audience at the heart of the research before starting to write.

The core of a strategy is to tailor content to the audience's interests. To engage the reader, it is necessary to get inside the head of the reader and understand what interests them. Look at the world through a guest's eyes to understand what will resonate with them. Try and understand their needs, wants, desires, fears and more.

If copy can then be written that informs the reader (in a way that matters to them) and then also persuades them to act, it is a winning formula.

Eight simple steps to developing a content strategy:

1. Define goals

It is essential to consider what needs to be achieved with content. Do parks want to improve brand awareness, increase website traffic, generate holiday bookings or boost park home sales enquiries?

2. Identify the target audience

Who are the ideal customers or readers of a park's content? Are they new or existing customers? What sort of content are they looking for? Do they have specific questions, interests or needs?

3. Ask the audience

Think about contacting the park's audience using social media, email or surveys to ask what topics they would like to see covered. This can help create content that is tailored just for them.

4. Map content to a park's marketing funnel

Map out the customer journey across the stages of customer engagement – **Awareness, Consideration, Conversion, Loyalty, and Advocacy**. This will help to identify the varying needs of the park's customers at different points in the marketing funnel. Content can then be mapped out that will deliver to each of these requirements.

5. Conduct a content audit

Whilst mapping a park's content, it is an ideal time to review existing content and identify what is working well and what can be improved. The first place to check through is the park's Google Analytics, as this will help understand what type of content resonates with its audience.

6. Develop a content plan

It is now time to create a plan for content that aligns with the park's goals and target audience. Determine what types of content will be created (e.g., blog posts, videos, social media posts), how often these will be published and what topics will be covered.

a. Conduct keyword research – there are several tools that can help to identify relevant content themes that are related to the parks market – look at Google Keyword Planner, SEMrush[1] or Ahrefs[2]. They can all help you come up with topic ideas that are relevant and valuable to the park's audience.

b. Research the competition – look at what other parks are publishing, what topics they are covering and how they are presenting their content. Parks may find the odd 'gold nugget' they can use for themselves.

c. Use social media – follow relevant hashtags on Twitter, Instagram and other social media platforms to see what topics are currently trending. This can help parks stay up to date with the latest news and events.

d. Repurpose old content – look at existing content and see if it can be updated or repurposed into a new format. For example, a blog post could be turned into a video or a series of social posts created using an old article.

e. Develop a simple content plan – either in Excel or a table in Word. This will help to identify key messages and themes. This content plan serves as the backbone of all future communication.

7. Determine content channels

Identify the channels where the park will distribute content (e.g., social media platforms, email newsletters, website). Consider which channels are most effective for reaching the park's target audience.

8. Measure success

Track content performance using analytics tools to understand what is working and what needs improvement. This will help to refine the content strategy over time. ➤

CONTENT STRATEGY

Content ideas for a holiday park

Virtual tour
Create a virtual tour of the holiday park to show potential visitors what they can expect when they arrive. Use 360-degree photos or videos to give them a sense of the surroundings and facilities. Check out Google's Virtual Tours and Matterport 3D interactive tours.

Holiday park activities
Highlight the range of activities and experiences that guests can enjoy during their stay, such as swimming pools, outdoor games, dog walks and entertainment.

Local attractions
Showcase the local attractions and points of interest around the holiday park. This can include nearby beaches, walks, historical sites or cultural events.

Customer reviews and testimonials
Share positive customer reviews and testimonials on the website and social media channels to build trust with potential visitors and showcase the experiences of previous guests.

Seasonal content
Create seasonal content that is relevant to the target audience, such as holiday park activities during the summer or winter season, holiday-themed events and packages, dog-friendly pages and family-friendly activities during school breaks.

Travel tips and advice
Offer tips and advice to help visitors plan their trip, such as travel guides, and local recommendations for restaurants and shops.

Community news and events
Keep holiday caravan owners up to date with news and events happening within the park community. This can include updates on community events, new facilities, and park improvements.

Homeowner profiles
Create profiles of holiday caravan owners to showcase the diversity of the park community and highlight their unique stories.

Investment opportunities
If holiday caravans can be used as investment properties, create content that explains the benefits of owning a holiday caravan for rental income or as a holiday property.

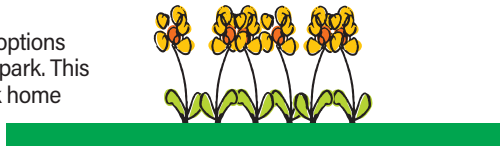
Environmental and sustainability efforts
Share information about the holiday park's efforts to promote sustainability and protect the environment. Include information about recycling programmes, energy-saving initiatives and eco-friendly practices. Also, don't forget to promote the details if the park has taken the David Bellamy Blooming Marvellous Pledge for Nature.

Remember to focus on creating content that is informative, engaging and helpful to park guests. By providing value to potential visitors, trust can be built and the holiday park established as a top destination for their next holiday stay or holiday caravan purchase.

Content ideas for a residential park

Lifestyle content
Showcase the lifestyle and community aspects of living in a residential park. This can include interviews with residents, profiles of their homes and gardens, and features on community events and activities.

Location content
Highlight the location of the residential park and the surrounding area. Create content that showcases the local attractions, scenic areas, and nearby towns and cities.



Residential park home design
Offer advice and inspiration on design options for choosing a home on the residential park. This can include tips on interior design, park home technology, decking and landscaping.

Retirement living
Create content that is relevant to the target audience, such as articles on retirement living, financial planning, and health and wellness.

Pet-friendly content
If the residential park is pet-friendly, create content that highlights the facilities that are available for pets, such as dog washes and dog-friendly walking routes.

Customer reviews and testimonials
Share positive customer reviews and testimonials on the website and social media channels to build trust with potential residents and showcase the experiences of current residents.

Sustainable living
Again, share information about the residential park's efforts to promote sustainability and protect the environment.

Make sure that content resonates with the target audience and provides value to potential residents. Remember, the objective with this type of content approach is to create content that showcases the lifestyle, community and location aspects of living in a residential park, so that new residents can be attracted and a strong sense of community built within the park. ➤

Measuring the performance of content

Tracking the performance of content is a must if parks want to understand what is working and where improvements might need to be made. Using some simple analytics tools like Google GA-4 and Google Search Console will help to refine the content strategy over time.

Using GA-4 to track your content

Hopefully, most parks have moved across to the new Google GA-4 Analytics by now. BH&HPA members can read about the transition that Google is making to GA-4 in a previous issued of the BH&HPA Journal[3].

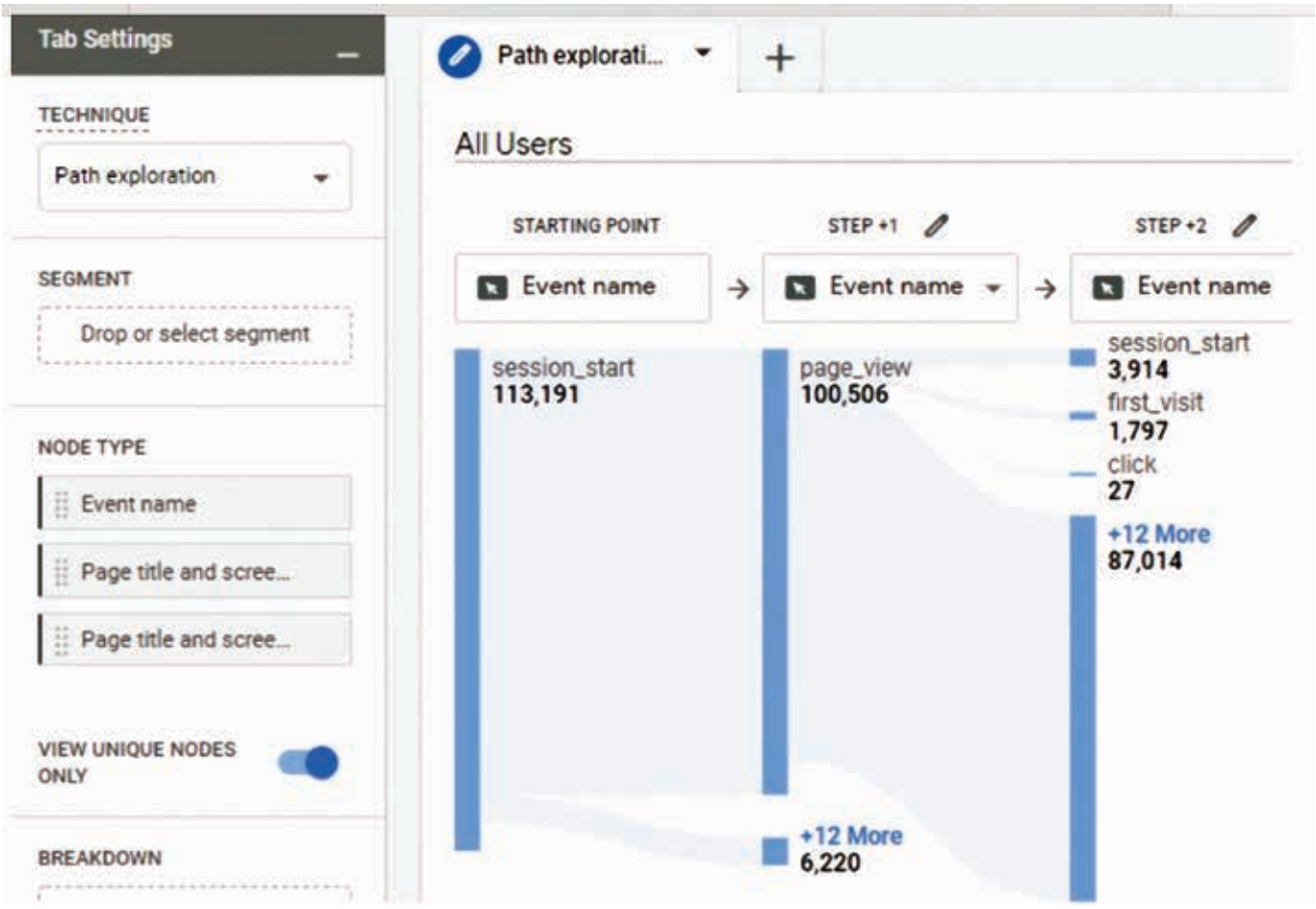
Don't forget the deadline is looming for the changeover from Universal Analytics, when data will no longer be collected – **1 July 2023**.

In the early version of Google's Universal Analytics, website activity was primarily tracked based on sessions and page views. In GA-4, activity is measured by events – so as well as page view and session data, parks can also track events such as clicks on their holiday booking widget, how far someone scrolled through a page, page view to video views, downloads, shares, newsletter sign-ups and more.

Pathway Exploration

The Pathway Exploration report within GA-4 is a useful module to clearly see the journey that a user takes through a park's website. It can be found under the 'Explore' section – and it is a useful tool to see where they entered the site, how they navigated the park web pages, and interacted with it, before converting or leaving.

Spending time reviewing this section will help parks to see those steps clearly and improve the user experience.



Further information

[1] SEMrush: **www.semrush.com**
[2] Ahrefs: **www.ahrefs.com**
[3] BH&HPA Journal, 200-2021.3, 'G4 Analytics': **https://tinyurl.com/3f83xy6z**

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