



# Drive revenue with Branded Content

NEW YORK PRESS ASSOCIATION • APRIL 2024

## A little about me

- 20 years of content and audience experience
- Was head of content at GateHouse Media (Gannett)
- Co-owned a unique real estate solution in Texas
- Work with newspapers, TV stations, magazines, digital only



**David Arkin**

Founder

David Arkin Consulting

## Consulting services

- Fractional audience & operations help
- Branded content, newsletter, SEO and social media programs
- Content creation services

# What we'll be covering today

- Defining what branded content is
- Create amazing content for clients
- How to distribute it
- Packages
- How to make even more money

# What *isn't* branded content?

Branded content is not an advertorial or an ad, it's an experience

- It isn't distracting. Instead, it adds to the reader's experience.
- It doesn't trick someone into reading something it's not
- It's not written by an ad rep or someone trying to sell a product

# Branded content can propel a brand

- Customer success stories
- Industry / subject matter expertise & key insights
- Community causes & corporate social responsibility initiatives



**Meet two St. Louis families who turned their kitchens upside down and couldn't be happier with the end result**

Callier & Thompson Kitchens, Baths and Appliances can take your remodel to the next level.

# Experts program: Be the go-to source

- Experts are vetted industry experts and community leaders who build strong engagement with readers by answering their biggest questions.
- Brand yourself as an Expert and showcase your valuable insights to the market every month, with widespread distribution of your content that you co-own.

## OUR EXPERTS



**Jeffrey Arron**  
Allie Beth Allman &  
Associates



**Nicole Smith**  
**Woodard**  
eXp Realty



**John Butcher**  
The Butcher Group



**Erin Young Garrett**  
Allie Beth Allman &  
Associates



**Jay Marks**  
Jay Marks Real Estate



**Jeff Cheney**  
Cheney Group

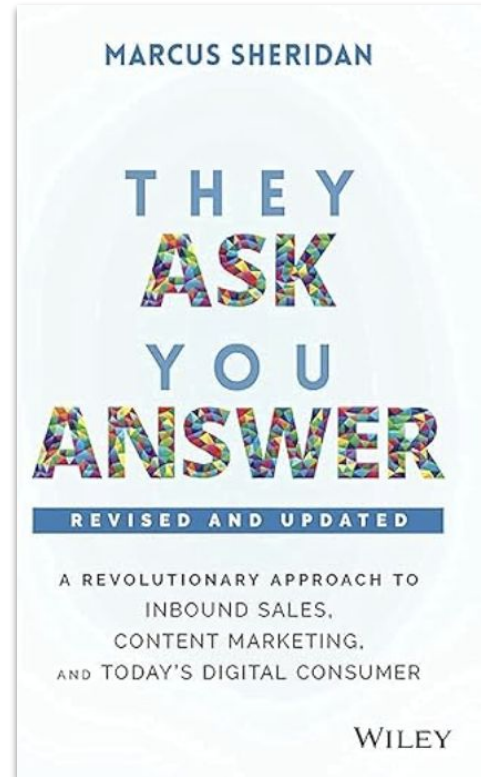
# Branded content is a great fit for ...

- Advertisers that have a lot of interesting, unique activity happening.
- Advertisers with a very unique story to tell (how they started, their service)
- Advertiser is an industry that is trending or unique (cannabis as an example)
- Advertiser provides services that solve someone's problems.
- Advertiser has information and insights the audience is craving

# They ask, you answer

We use a unique branded marketing model that centers on what's best for the customer:

- Cost and pricing
- Problems (yours)
- Comparisons and versus
- Best of lists (best in class, best practices)
- Reviews





# Framing a plan with the advertiser

Understanding the advertiser's background, products and goals is critical when trying to create clickable content. Here are some areas to explore:

- What is the business's history, background?
  - What questions are customers asking the business?
  - Why did the business decide to do the paid campaign?
  - Are there success stories and people that could be featured?
- What is it about the business that customers say they love about you?

# What makes a good branded content story?

## *Real estate example*

<b>Month 1</b>	<b>Month 2</b>	<b>Month 3</b>
Answering a real estate question: Is the winter a good time of year to buy?	5 reasons moving to this city is a great idea	Featuring a home a realtor recently helped someone buy

# What makes a good branded content story?

## *Medical example*

<b>Month 1</b>	<b>Month 2</b>	<b>Month 3</b>
Health screenings you should do in the new year for a healthy 2023	Meet our 3 new heart doctors and find out why they chose our city	What's the latest in pancreatic cancer technology and how can you use it

# What makes a good branded content story?

## *Restaurant example*

<b>Month 1</b>	<b>Month 2</b>	<b>Month 3</b>
Profile on a restaurant	5 most popular dishes to try	5 drinks that pair great for the summer

# Always try to sell multi-month campaigns

- Should aim for 3-month minimum campaigns (can discount 6-12 months) as a way to start the client
- This helps the advertiser create momentum with the content, you have more examples of what worked and didn't and it's obviously better for your revenue
- 1-month campaigns should really only be done to get someone to a 3 month

Idea: Use contests (Best Of) to build a sponsored content story into a package

# Examples: Build organized campaigns

## 10 of the best places to see Christmas lights across North Texas

Dec 12, 2022 Updated Dec 21, 2022



 **SPONSORED CONTENT**

When this couple learned a beautiful Celina home was being sold off market, they jumped at the chance to grab it

David Arkin | Jun 7, 2022 Updated Oct 20, 2022



From mortgage rates to buying now or waiting, here are 5 answers to your most burning DFW real estate questions

Oct 21, 2022 Updated Oct 26, 2022



**3-month real estate campaign:** Local expert advice, people and community content

# What should you be writing about?

- Content that centers on what the audience wants to know about
- Uses the same strategies newsrooms use to grow organic content
- Focuses on what solutions people need
- Attempts to be very local, not generic



# Examples: Write about people

SPONSORED CONTENT

## How one Long Island dad turned his love for travel into a free vacation planning agency

Posted June 29, 2023



COURTESY OF MOSBY BUILDING ARTS



Store owner Bill Gray (far left) shares a photo with his staff at one of the Metro Atlanta Scenthound locations that he owns.



# Examples: Get creative

BRANDED CONTENT /

## 15 things to know about Pappy's Smokehouse as it celebrates 15 years

This year, Pappy's marks a milestone while serving up Memphis-style barbecue.

BY SLM PARTNER STUDIO    OCTOBER 16, 2023    10:02 AM



SPONSORED POST

## 5 reasons why your family will love living in Rockville Centre, according to this Long Island real estate agent

Posted September 12, 2023

### 5 REASONS YOUR FAMILY WILL LOVE LIVING IN ROCKVILLE CENTRE



LI real estate agent Tiffany Balanoff shares her tips and top picks



@DouglasEllman **HERALD**  
Community Newspapers

# Examples: Get creative

FEATURED SPOTLIGHT

## 5 suburbs perfect for families in North Texas

Sep 27, 2023 Updated Sep 27, 2023



## Is it OK to Give Your Kids Ice Cream?

*Parents know that dairy foods are packed with nutrition but are there any benefits to dairy treats? An expert shares*

By Jenny Kales | June 16, 2023

BROUGHT TO YOU BY [MILK MEANS MORE](#)

Want to be the first to know about local parenting stories and trends? Get the latest info in our Pulse newsletter!



# Use story formats to increase time on page

Q&A on a topic  
Q&A with a person  
Bold headers

Infographics  
Social video/graphics  
List (Numbers based)

Glossary terms  
Quiz  
Maps

Showcasing products  
Numbers  
Polls

Checklist  
Photo list  
Live chat

Flip cards  
Charts and tables  
Pros and cons

# Example: Use alternative formats

## Teaching kids about germ basics

When teaching kids about the dangers of germs, start with the basics. What are they? Simply put, they are bacteria and viruses that can make you sick. They spread through sneezing or coughing, aka respiratory droplets or through contaminated surfaces. That's why it's so important to **wipe down high-traffic "touch" areas** in your home regularly.

### 10 household items that harbor germs:

- |                   |                            |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. DOORKNOBS      | 6. REFRIGERATOR HANDLES    |
| 2. KEYBOARDS      | 7. SALT AND PEPPER SHAKERS |
| 3. PILLOWCASES    | 8. SMARTPHONES             |
| 4. SHEETS         | 9. TOYS                    |
| 5. LIGHT SWITCHES | 10. REMOTE CONTROLS        |

Courtesy of Henry Ford Health

## Things to do in Sandusky, Ohio



# Example: Use alternative formats

## Choosing a Gift for a Child with Autism



Tips courtesy of Healing Haven  
[thehealinghaven.net](http://thehealinghaven.net)

- 1 Consider the child's primary interests.**  
What captures their attention?
- 2 Is a sensory gift appropriate?** Learn what the child prefers by asking the child's parent.
- 3** Does the child prefer toys? Or an experience? **Consider the gift of time.**
- 4 Is there a place you can make a donation,** like to their ABLE account or 529 account?
- 5** Not sure what's best? **Don't be afraid to ask** the child's parents. It shows you care.



Of course, the actual cost of college for your child will vary depending on several factors, including the type of school and your student's financial aid package. However, the numbers above give you a general idea of what to expect.

### WHAT MICHIGAN COLLEGES COST IN 2023

#### 4-YEAR **PUBLIC COLLEGE**

\$11,230 - \$18,074

#### 4-YEAR **PRIVATE COLLEGE**

(sample tuition costs)

\$30,780 - \$58,000+

..... Tuition only for one year, based on fall 2023 costs .....

# Example: Be mindful of what Google likes

## Holiday Wonderland Tours

If you're looking for a holiday-themed tour, check out these options to see some of Big Cedar Lodge's scenic 4,600 acres. You can explore the grounds in a variety of ways: lace up your hiking boots, hop in the car, or enjoy a scenic tram ride.

### [Home For The Holidays Self-Guided Light Tour](#)

Take a journey in the comfort of your own vehicle through the story of Christmas. Hot chocolate, s'mores, and souvenirs are available for purchase. Reservations are highly recommended.

#### DETAILS

- **Price:** \$40 for cars and SUVs; \$60 for mini bus
- **When:** Nightly from 5–10 p.m.
- **Where:** Check in at the Big Cedar entrance off the roundabout

**WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING:** "This place is so incredible! The cabin is super cool and overlooking the water. The staff is amazing! Our trip started this week and ends at Christmas. The lights are awesome!" *–Kaleb Garcia*

## McCormick Tribune Ice Rink

**Where:** Millennium Park

**When:** Beginning Nov. 17, 2023, through March 3, 2024 (Weather permitting)

**Highlights:** Admission is always free! Families will enjoy free beginner to intermediate skating and hockey skills lessons every Saturday and Sunday from 9–10 a.m. [Check out the ice rink website](#) to find the full lesson schedule and book your skating reservations.

**Tip:** "Skating times must be reserved online and skating lessons require reservations. Be sure to plan your trip in advance," says Villafranca. Go to the [Millennium Park website](#) to plan your visit.

**Extra tip:** Discounted parking is available for pre-purchase at [Millennium Garages](#).

***What Google is looking for:*** Personal experiences, showing you are an expert

# How to feature and label the content

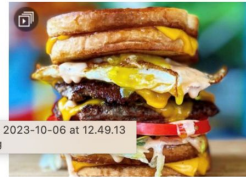
- Content should be featured on the homepage (at least two positions), section fronts and story pages (need to think of this as an inventory exercise)
- Length of time is dictated by package advertiser picks
- Ensure there is appropriate labeling (on the homepage) and in the story above headlines (use branded or sponsored content)



**CULTURE**

**10 St. Louis spots for adults to celebrate Halloween**

MELISSA MEINZER



**DINING**

**Sugarfire restaurant group opening a new Hi-Pointe Drive-In in Edwardsville, closes Chicken Out in University City**

GEORGE MAHE



**FAMILY**

**Charlie Rae children's boutique opens in Edwardsville**

EMILY ADAMS



**BRANDED CONTENT**

**15 things to know about Pappy's Smokehouse as it celebrates 15 years**

SLM PARTNER STUDIO


# All of the places you should distribute

- On your website
- Newsletters
- Social media
- Great SEO
- Add on opportunities











- Homepage
- Section fronts
- Story pages
- Clearly label


WOMEN'S WELLNESS 

## Eat the rainbow: Why vegetables of every color belong on your plate

 Sponsored by Texas Children's Hospital Pavilion for Women

OCTOBER 11, 2023



ACTIVE AGING Presented by 

## Fall Prevention For Seniors: 6 Simple Home Exercises

October 13, 2023



 Worries about healthcare? Transportation? Groceries?  
**Help is available.** 

Active Aging Presented by Public Health Seattle-King County

Balance and strength can diminish as you age, putting you at higher risk for accidental falls. The [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) reports that nearly one in four seniors falls

✓ **SPONSORED CONTENT**

## This is why you should get your Texas property tax bill paid in the next month

David Arkin | Dec 20, 2022 Updated Dec 21, 2022



Sponsor Content



## Empowering Choices: TD Bank's Doula Reimbursement Program Aims to Improve Birth Experiences

By TD Bank on October 3, 2023



SURVEY!



# Where the content should eventually live

TOP BUSINESS LAWYERS, TODAY'S BIGGEST TOPICS

SPONSORED BY



ChatGPT and AI are here to stay, the ramifications and restrictions surrounding them are less certain

What companies need to know about implementing DEI initiatives in the workplace

Hotly contested proposal takes aim at non-compete laws

Triangle transportation infrastructure is critical to steady growth

**What is Medicaid expansion and who will it benefit?**

[View More »](#)

## Example: Get creative and build pillar pages



# How to handle the content on social media

- Content should be distributed on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn
- Use the platform's tools to make it clear that it is a paid piece of content
  - Facebook and Instagram: Use their tools to tag a sponsor (today you are not)
  - Twitter and LinkedIn: Use hashtags #ad #sponsoredcontent (not posting to LI today)



# Feature the content on your newsletters

- Fold the content into the flow of your newsletters (between content blocks)
- Label appropriately, like you would in other areas of your website
- Consider using a tool like Site Impact to send a newsletter just about that client (display ad)



## PARTNER CONTENT

### Visit Effingham, and define your getaway

This spring, fill your cup in Effingham, Illinois. With so much to see and do, you won't want to leave this cozy, vibrant Midwestern getaway. Learn more [here](#).

## StLouis

Browse our St. Louis metro area doctors guide.

## DIRECTORY

### Browse our searchable doctor guide

Whether you are looking for a new doctor, dermatologist, cardiologist, or plastic surgeon, [search our interactive directory](#) featuring the most reliable doctors in the St. Louis region.

# Great SEO really matters

- Headlines should feature best practices to drive clicks, search:
  - Conversational tone to headlines
  - Use keywords in headlines
  - Fully optimized stories (meta data description, searchable photo files)
  - Unique URLs (not just the URL that's the same as the headline)



## Looking to sail out of NY? This local travel agent recommends these 5 cruise lines


By Ana Borruto One of the main reasons people love cruising out of New York is because they don't have to fly anywhere, said travel agent Keith Voets of Magical Dad Vacations. ...

# Use Facebook Groups

- Facebook Groups can have some of the largest audience gains for this content.
  - Identify the groups or niches that tie to the kinds of content you write and request to join
  - Be part of the group, so answer questions but also share links for these paid stories
  - Whoever you are writing about, find groups that connect

David Arkin shared a link.  
May 9, 2022 · 🌐

If you love all things Texas, Lone Star Roots is probably your kind of place with funny tees, tanks and tumblers that celebrate all that's great about our state. A fun profile on their business.




CHECKOUTDFW.COM  
With their funny T-shirts and unique apparel, Lone Star Roots is showcasing all that's great about Texas

👍 13 💬 1 comment

👍 Like    💬 Comment    📧 Send

Write a comment...

 **Carrie Ermence**  
Thank you for writing our story! We appreciate you! 🙌

Like Reply 46w



# Let's talk about the workflow



# Have a mid-month check in

- Don't wait until you get to the end of the month to understand performance of your campaigns
- Create a mid-month process to understand how everyone is doing
- Evaluate these things: Page views, users, impressions, newsletter opens, social media reach
- Add more budget, change up your headlines, social language

Features	Basic	Deluxe	Premium package
Story on website, unlimited photos, placement on homepage	✓ Homepage story, 1 section front (1 week)	✓ Homepage story, 1 section front (2 weeks)	✓ Homepage story, 1 section front (2 weeks)
Social post (Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook)	IG Stories 2X Twitter 2X Facebook 2X	IG Stories 2X Twitter 2X Facebook 2X	IG Stories 3X Twitter 3X Facebook 3X
Paid social media campaign			✓
Digital display ads	✓	✓	✓
Story featured in newsletter	✓ In 1 newsletter	✓ In 2 newsletters	✓ In 3 newsletters
Print branding ad		Quarter ✓	Half ✓
<b>Pricing</b>	<b>\$750/1 story</b>	<b>\$1,000/1 story</b>	<b>\$1,500/1 story</b>

# How to drive additional revenue

- Paid social media campaigns
  - Audience campaign promoting their article
  - Capture email for the advertiser
  - Use social media for promoting their ads

Social News Desk is a great tool to use



Charter College  
Sponsored · 🌐

Train for a career where you can help others everyday in Charter College's Medical Assistant Program!

**CHARTER COLLEGE**  
WE WORK TO GET YOU TO WORK.

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE**


**Finish in a year or less!**  
Medical Assisting Certificate [Learn More](#)

👍❤️ 37      9 Comments 7 Shares 143K Views


👍 Like      💬 Comment      ➦ Share

# How to drive additional revenue

- Third-party newsletters
  - Send your entire newsletter out in a Site Impact deliver
  - Run display ads through a similar tool



MetroParent



**Your child deserves to learn from Michigan's experts in virtual learning**

Watch your child thrive through a combined approach of virtual and personalized learning through *Virtual Learning Academy Consortium* — the experts in virtual learning in the state of Michigan. VLAC provides online courses, teachers and technology to K-12 students in participating Michigan schools.

Through VLAC, your child will engage with flexible, asynchronous, home-based learning — and benefit from the full support and guidance of expert teachers and mentors who are focused on their unique needs and learning style.

Discover the difference expert instruction makes to your child's education. Learn more about what VLAC can do for your child — and for your family.

[Enroll in VLAC Today](#)

**OaklandVLAC**  
VIRTUAL LEARNING ACADEMY CONSORTIUM

# How to drive additional revenue: Reels



Find venues that want to promote

Use video and/images to help drive visitors

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C0uGdzAvFbg/>



Find fun and unique approaches

You can create Reels and sell them for topics that are more traditional

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C0M6QypP4GJ/>

# How to drive additional revenue: Reels



Bright Star  
Academy



HERALD  
**LONG ISLAND CHOICE AWARDS**  
PSEG  
Scholarships  
2023

**VOTE FOR US!**

In 3 Categories

-  Day Camp
-  Day Care
-  Nursery


LICHOICEAWARDS.COM

## Promote your Best Of contest

You can upsell advertisers in packages you offer for special editions or contests

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C15MGTMPbGN/?hl=en>



\*  THELIVINGNEAT.COM

LIVING NEAT  
*Home Organizational Services*

"FINDING HAPPINESS WITHIN YOUR SPACE IS LIVING NEAT"


Focus on content even when encouraging someone to vote

This video shows off why you should vote for them

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CyUFVFzvQAq/?hl=en>

# Report results monthly and quarterly

- Hold regular (first month after campaign runs) meetings with clients.
- Hold quarterly and extension meetings.
- Monthly send simple one page data (right)



**CLAIRMONT CREST**

SPONSORED CONTENT

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## Active senior living community in Decatur feature newly renovated units, common spaces

Promoted via a run-of-site impression campaign, newsletter spots, various placements on roughdraft.com and more

BRANDED CONTENT

**Meet two St. Louis families who turned their kitchens upside down and couldn't be happier with the end result**

Callier & Thompson Kitchens, Baths and Appliances can take your remodel to the next level.


JUN 27, 2023 6:28 PM SLM PARTNER STUDIO

CALLIER & THOMPSON

Rough Draft Atlanta - Follow

3:11 PM · 6:30 AM · Q

Clairmont Crest is now leasing newly renovated senior living units for those aged 55 and older to find a community where they can live independently and truly thrive. The Decatur active living community recently transformed 50% of its living units, and is in the process of remodeling the common areas now. Fully renovated units: Those 52 units are now open for tenants, and to celebrate, Clairmont Crest is now offering the first two months.....



ROUGHDRRAFT.ATLANTA.COM

Active senior living community in Decatur feature newly renovated units, common spaces

Learn more

6 comments 2 shares

BRANDED CONTENT CAMPAIGN

Timeframe 6.27 – 7.18

Article pageviews	XXXX
Time on page	XXXXX

BRANDED CONTENT SOCIAL CAMPAIGN

Posts	X
Accounts Reached	XXXX
Engagements	XXXXX

BRANDED CONTENT NEWSLETTER CAMPAIGN

Total delivered	XXXXX
Total client clicks	XXXXXX



# Top takeaways to leave with

- Understand that branded content is a new kind of marketing
- Use resources (not newsroom) to create to specialize in this content
- Position the unique opportunity to use your audience
- Build a clear program with the right distribution



# How we help publishers with branded content, audience growth



We provide branded content services for newspapers, city magazines, parent magazines, TV stations and more

- We have a branded content bootcamp that's al a carte allowing you to decide what you need (strategy, content, pitching)
- Editorial and leadership assistance (managing a team, filling in for open positions)
- New product development: A real estate vertical, newsletter, social media



## *Let's chat*

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