Don’t underestimate the power of enriched content and its impact on your business

Every business that sells a product has product content. It’s much more than just the name of the product or its specifications; product content also consists of the product image and features, as well as supporting information like instruction manuals, MSDS sheets and how-to videos. And there’s more. When you sell products on your website, the organization and naming of categories of products becomes product content, too. In other words, anything that describes, markets, classifies or explains a product is considered product content.

Now that you know what product content is, it’s time to ask yourself if your content is rich enough to help sell your products online. Enriched content, also known as commerce-enabled content, features better, more unique product information that is more searchable and desirable for online buyers. Enriched content enables you to stand out from the crowd because it helps drive more people to your site and gives them everything they need to make an informed purchasing decision.

So, what constitutes enriched, commerce-enabled content? You may think your current product content housed in your ERP system has what it takes to make a sale, but it may be missing the type of information that is considered valuable and helpful to buyers. That’s why Carl Persson, Client Partner at Unilog Content Solutions, suggests you develop an ongoing process to define, build, present, analyze and refine your content. Persson notes, “Keeping track of how your own customers search and navigate your site will give you the ability to refine the taxonomy and content to optimize the experience for your end customer.”

Since your customers help drive your content, let’s delve a little deeper into the B2B buyer’s shopping habits.

How buyers search for content
Currently, 89% of B2B buyers perform online research before making a purchase – whether they end up buying online or with a sales representative. That number is up 70% from just two years ago, and it continues to increase.

In the past, people typically searched for products by entering a part number or model number in your site’s internal search bar. However, long-tail searches are becoming more widely used by the younger generation of buyers out there, especially Millennials. They utilize detailed keyword phrases that are more specific to what they are looking for, such as a 2-pole, 10-amp, wall-mount circuit breaker. This type of search narrows their results so they only see products that fit their search
criteria. If your product content – in particular your product name – doesn’t reflect this key attribute information, your products won’t be found.

Likewise, buyers also perform searches using product information filters on your website. Product navigation in the form of on-site filters is only useful, though, if attribute information is populated for all your products. If you offer 15 circuit breakers that feature 10 amps, but only five of those items have the amperage populated in the product specifications, then only five of those 15 products will appear in the navigation.

When you omit essential product information, you create missed opportunities for a sale, so be sure to include comprehensive attribute information and descriptors for all your products. By doing so, you’ll help make the buyers’ jobs easier because they’ll find the right products faster, which will help them make a purchasing decision sooner, and will make their user experience with you a positive and memorable one.

**Manufacturer content vs. human-centric content**

As B2B e-commerce begins to develop and evolve, so does the content. Companies are finding that their buyers are not that different from B2C customers because they, too, are looking for an online buying experience that’s engaging and adds value. Therefore, B2Bs are beginning to incorporate a more “human-centric” approach to their e-commerce, starting with their content.

Many distributors just use the information they receive from manufacturers in order to provide product content for customers. But this data is far from human-centric. It’s considered basic, core product data that usually consists of nothing more than a laundry list of technical specifications. Human-centric content, on the other hand, highlights the features and benefits of a product to help sell it. It describes how a product works, what it is used for, and how it will help the buyer. This content comes in different forms as well: from product bullets and detailed descriptions to in-use product images and instructional videos. E-commerce sites cannot succeed on manufacturer content alone; buyers demand more information that’s easy to understand and relevant to them.

When utilizing manufacturer and human-centric content, it’s important that the information is presented to buyers in a consistent manner. Brian McCarthy, VP of Content Sales at Unilog, explains, “All manufacturers provide their product data differently, so if you simply ingest the information into your product information management system, or PIM, without normalizing, standardizing or enriching it, you’ll create an inconsistent and incomplete user experience.” He stresses the importance of developing a template and/or guidelines for creating your content so that it follows a uniform format, displays terminology consistently and invokes the tone that best reflects your company.
Unilog leads the field in data enrichment. They enhance over 240,000 products a month and transform their clients’ data into robust, searchable content. In addition to creating unique, SEO-optimized product descriptions that attract search engines and potential customers, Unilog also finds and fills in gaps in manufacturer-provided content to offer complete, consistent product information for buyers.

**Enriched content benefits buyers and employees**

We’ve told you how enriched, commerce-enabled content has the power to drive customers to your site, but did you realize your employees can benefit from your optimized content as well? A content-rich e-commerce site is a valuable resource for people working in support roles – from sales to customer service. Sales reps can use a mobile device while on a customer call to search and find products easily. It gives them the opportunity to show customers new items, share promotions and even check inventory status. Customer service staff can access the content online to answer customer questions on the spot, including specific manufacturer information that is normally found on MSDS or data sheets. A robust e-commerce site – one that offers rich descriptions, numerous images and videos, detailed specifications and relevant supporting documents – gives employees the power to provide an even better customer experience.

Don’t underestimate the importance of enriched content on your website. It powers user searches, directs customers to your products and provides employees with a beneficial resource that’s just a click away. The majority of today’s B2B buyers are researching products online before making a purchase. When you provide enriched, human-centric content on your website, you’re not only helping those buyers with their research, you’re increasing your chances of converting their visits to sales. Learn more about the services Unilog can provide to improve your content – from attribute enrichment and data cleansing, to taxonomy development and digital asset collection – by contacting a member of their Product Content Services team today.

**About Unilog/CIMM2**

Unilog is a global technology and services company that specializes in e-commerce solutions and enriched product catalogs for the B2B marketplace. Unilog’s flagship product, CIMM2, is a fully integrated e-commerce platform designed to fit the unique requirements of the wholesale distribution industry.