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JUST**MEDIA** 



"A **VIEW** FROM THE TOP"


FEATURING MARIA SIPKA, CO-FOUNDER & CEO



INSIGHT INTO B2B MARKETING TRENDS, KEY INSIGHTS FOR MARKETERS AND PREDICTIONS FOR 2015

Briefly describe Linqia and how it fits into the B2B Media landscape?

As brands shift to humanizing their marketing efforts, they understand that reaching people at their passion point with an authentic story is incredibly powerful. An ad or one well thought out content piece created by the brand doesn't cut through the attention barrier. People spend on average 5 hours a day consuming content across main stream social networks and niche communities. Stories are the connective glue amongst like-minded people. An effective story needs to be told by a trusted person, nuanced to the person's interest and offer an informative, educational, inspiring or entertaining experience. With over 300 million interest communities in the form of channels, groups, blogs or pages on YouTube, Wordpress, Tumblr, Facebook and LinkedIn. Linqia's technology helps discover and match the most relevant communities and the storytellers who lead them and efficiently activates them at scale without compromising the human touch.



The screenshot shows a blog post layout. At the top left is a banner with colorful triangles and the text "A Million Moments" next to a camera icon. Below this is a paragraph of text: "After that you can fill in your box with a 50/50 mix of mushroom compost and topsoil and then add in your plant." To the right of this text is a photo of a person's hands holding a green Monrovia planter box. Further right is another paragraph of text: "I went to pick out plants for his garden I asked him what kinds of fruit he wanted to grow in it chose a raspberry bush. This kid adores raspberries, so what's better than having his own bush from? Raspberries are a pretty sustainable plant - they don't require extreme amounts of sun or nd they are fairly low maintenance. Traditional raspberry bushes can get super big, but I ed to find this adorable Monrovia dwarf raspberry bush at Lowe's that isn't supposed to get any han the planter box we built. I know the plant looks small in it now, but give it a month and it will t." To the right of this text is a photo of a young boy in a blue and grey jacket planting a small green plant into a green Monrovia planter box.

Let's bring this to life with an example of a campaign you are running now that is a perfect example of how a brand can activate bloggers on their behalf.

Let's use an actual example we are running with one of Just Media's clients! For Monrovia, which is a premium plant brand for dedicated gardeners, we have activated 74 storytellers who are writing stories and social blogs promoting the qualities of their range of different varieties of plants. Some are focused on Zen gardeners, some on home, garden and lifestyle choices, some are more generic for the highly motivated gardener. In each case the blogger writes with their unique style and voice, still adhering to Monrovia brand guidelines, ultimately creating clicks from links in the post, back to Monrovia's site. It's a great way to add this social dimension to the other tactics the agency is deploying.

Easy to see consumer related use of this marketing solution - Can you give us a few examples of how this has been used by technology or B2B companies?

Western Digital inspired SMB to share a story about 5 Reasons Your Business Needs a WD My Cloud EX2. Selected Storytellers received and experienced the My Cloud EX2 and highlighted use cases and tips for using the My Cloud EX2 directing their Storytellers to the Western Digital landing page to learn more about the product.

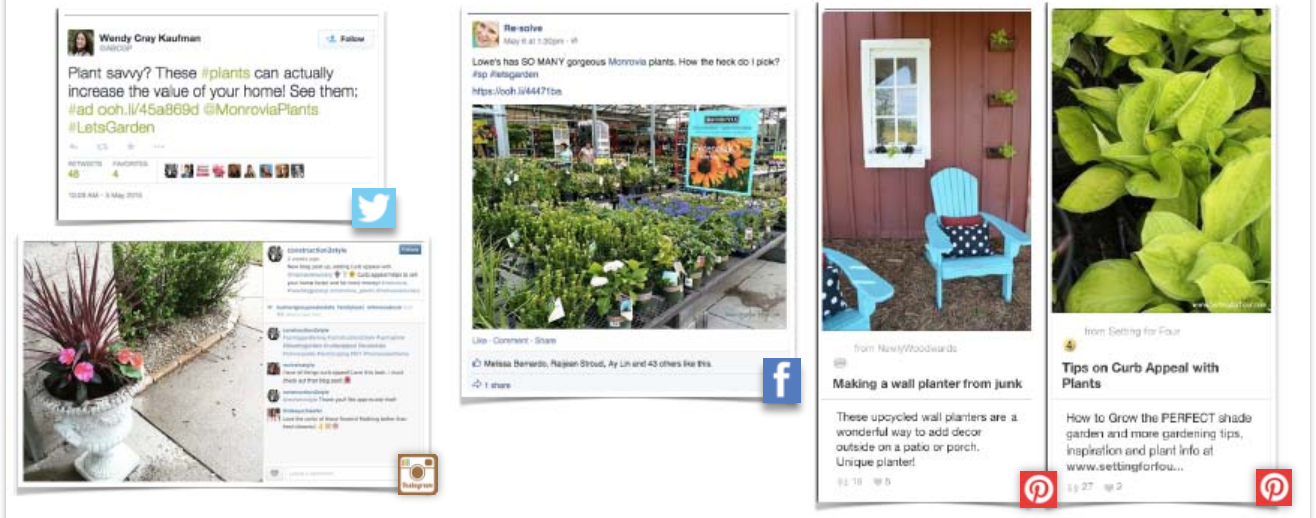
Do you feel there are any risks with having company's products or solutions discussed by bloggers and how are those risks mitigated in your model?

Highly regulated industries such as banking, pharmaceuticals and food are more challenging than other industries, however through a careful selection of well matched storytellers, a comprehensive brief and transparent lines of communications, these risks can largely be mitigated. Specific guidelines around the product are featured in the storyteller brief, product/ image guides are made available to storytellers and on-going support throughout a program ensure storytellers are fully aligned to the expectations of the brand.

What challenges exist in terms of controlling the quality of the content created and how do you help monitor that?

Until recently, Brands have controlled every detail of their content creation with the exception of PR/ main stream media and consumer generated content. So placing a brief in the hands of a stranger can be daunting. On average, Linqia's storytellers create 9 social posts including the main blog story. To safeguard quality output, Linqia's technology matches brands to storytellers who meet strict criteria and following selection, they are verified by a community manager and invited to participate. A thorough, well-constructed storyteller brief including requirements and guidelines are prepared by the brand with Linqia's support. As stories go live, they are streamed into a transparent dashboard for review. Direct communications is made available between the brand and the storytellers through the dashboard or Linqia's customer success team.

ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA



Long term what is your goal for the company and how it develops within the digital media landscape over the next 12-18 months?

Linqia's mission is to activate marketing programs that deliver superior business results and move towards a CPA offering. Linqia has been working closely with customers to track conversions across their campaigns and has been developing an algorithm to match the best storytellers against expected business KPI's. Customers have started implementing a Linqia conversion pixel on their destination pages to enable greater insight into the conversion funnel by Linqia's storytellers. The pixeling of destination pages allows Linqia to optimize campaigns real time and improve the matching of storytellers for future programs.

Finally if you have advice for a B2B CMO for 2015 what would it be?

Not only is storytelling powerful but it is also permanent. With any powerful tool, you need a powerful strategy. How your story is told will become the pillar to your marketing ecosystem. At the core, you have your brand values, your narrative and key brand messages. You have multiple audience segments and they are at various stages of your customer funnel. What is the story that you want told to emotionally connect with the people that matter. Where do they engage and how will you inspire dozens, hundreds or even thousands of storytellers to tell your story. The stories and content they create will form your search and social footprint and a rich, treasure chest of content you can repurpose in a myriad of ways.

ABOUT MARIA SIPKA



Australian entrepreneur Maria Sipka is the CEO and co-founder at Linqia and has been featured in Forbes as a women in tech leading the charge. She's deeply passionate about authentic storytelling and its incredible power to disrupt the \$132 billion advertising market. Linqia is a venture backed technology company based out of San Francisco whose mission is to redefine how brands engage their audiences through storytelling. Storytellers who lead interest communities emotionally connect with their audience through stories and inspire action leading to real business results. Prior to Linqia, Maria founded and lead a content marketing agency in Sydney, Australia focused on designing and implementing customer acquisition and retention strategies. Maria then took on the role of COO at XING (Europe's leading business network), where she focused on launching and monetizing XING's communities and premium group offerings prior to its IPO. Maria is co-founder at Linqia - her third company since starting her first at the age of 18. Maria lives in San Francisco with her husband and Lyla (4) and Ollie (2).

ABOUT linqia

Linqia helps brands establish a meaningful presence within the heart of the most active and thriving interest communities spanning across blogs, twitter, facebook, pinterest and other social channels. Linqia's native advertising technology is unique to market and enables brands to connect directly with the storytellers who lead the mid to long tail of interest communities with a reach between 10,000 - 100,000. Storytellers curate and share the brands content directly in the stream of conversation driving quality traffic, increased SEO, a deeper emotional footprint and higher conversions. Since launching early 2012, Linqia is powering storytelling programs for over 120+ brands including Nestle, General Mills, Kimberly Clark, Land O'Lakes, Microsoft, Black & Decker and Lindt. For more information, please visit www.linqia.com.

ABOUT JUSTMEDIA

Just Media was founded in 1995 in London, England before opening its doors in San Francisco in 1996. Today, we've moved into bigger spaces, opened new locations and added more staff, all in service of your business. Our heritage and core is technology marketing, but we don't live in this box. Our success stems from expanding into diverse markets and handling campaigns domestically and internationally for leading brands. Our planning is more creative because it's grounded in hard-won experience across these markets. And our approach is more global because we bring in media experts from the countries you're running in so we can negotiate well, deliver quickly and have the benefit of being truly local. This means that no matter which audience you need to reach, we can help you do it and do it successfully. www.iustmedia.com

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