

Fables

Case Study: Positioning, Brand House
Alva Labs Tone of Voice, Application

The Brief



Working from a basis of validated, peer-reviewed academic research, the Big 5 comprises a better way to screen early-stage job applications.



Alva Labs AB is a Stockholm based SaaS scale-up, providing psychometric tests based on the Big 5 Model of Personality.

Knowing they needed to launch content marketing to engage potential customers, increase retention and create thought leaders to market their value proposition



Friction

A commitment to hard science. Science's triple checking. Start-up mindset & pace.

Many of their leadership team have PhDs, or are licensed psychologists; they came to Alva straight from academia; successful scientists evidence every point you want to make, do not exaggerate and balance every claim. You are calm, measured and reasoned. This is not the mindset that will help a start-up to solve the problems they see.

This mindset was seen in their existing style guidelines: they were strict, academic and terse. No-one felt empowered to write.

The team were all writing and working in a second language which, even for the most conversant expert, can add an additional layer of self-doubt and hesitation.

We needed to communicate the validity and superiority of the Alva Labs assessment over its non-scientific peers, the Meyers Briggs & DISC, locate our writing confidence and share our ideas. Trash-talking the competition was never going to be our strategy, and we needed to integrate warmth and wit, and bring a new confidence to a team of superlative talent.

Process

Uncovering

- Desk research
- Stakeholder interviews with C Suite
- Surfacing concepts

Reflecting

- Landing tonality concepts with leadership

Creating

- Co-creation of brand house
- Identifying Tone of Voice and securing buy-in
- Recommendations for content marketing

Actioning

- Creation of 6-month content marketing strategy, including blogs, case studies, long-form, talks
- A/B testing of content
- Identified Thought Leader
- Coaching in-house talent



Resolution

Sharing intellect, skill & differentiation. Doing that without lazy smack-talk?

Alva's new head of marketing, Gustav Wallberg, had big targets, but needed someone to handle a complex brief: understand the science, help coach the academics and start telling complex stories. Through our background, we have expertise in the Big 5 Model of Personality.

Collaborating with the freelance Brand Strategist on 1:1 co-interviews with senior leadership we uncovered tonality, areas of interest and surfaced gaps. We created the story that informed the brand house, and secured buy-in at board level.

Taking the refreshed brand-house and Value Prop, we proposed a multi-vertical content marketing strategy combining team strengths, communicating brand pillars, and finding the absolute joy in the geekiness of our love of rigorous, evidenced science.

With a brief to experiment with learning strengths, building confidence and building crawlability through creating a reliable content machine, we launched Alva's content marketing.

Using a mixture of coaching, editing and ghostwriting, our content marketing increased leads, hits and launched Alva's thoughtleaders into the market.

The Brand



Brand values

Confidence through evidence
Inclusive by design
Time well spent
Beyond good enough

"Where opportunities and individuals never get the chance to meet, and where the job market fails to unlock the value of the right person in the right role."

Brand House

Alva Labs Tone of Voice

We want the world to know that we are expert scientists, researchers.

We remember our audience and place them front and centre every time we write a post, a blog or an email: what do we need our audience to understand? What's our objective here? How do we help them get there? And where do we need them to go next?

We are proud of the limitations of the science. Because we are scientists.



From

To

Passive, might
never happen

We want you to realize
what your potential
is and how to get the most
out of it. Potential for me
is the ability to utilize your
strength with the proper aim.

Wooly

Jargon

Confusing
metaphor

Heroing the client

We, the partner
& guide

Active, what
future clients
could expect
from Alva

Strategic

Detail

**Jens and Alva collaborated
to reverse engineer the
Service Engineer vacancy
and reframe the problem.**

Strategic

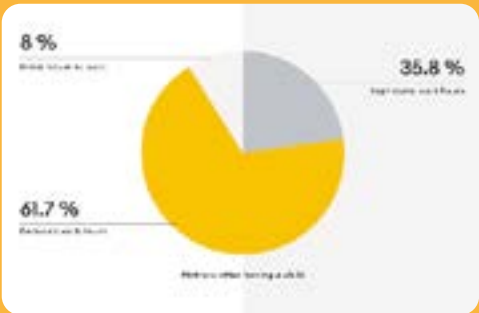
Customer
problem

Applying the brand: Content Marketing

The content machine

The brand signed off, we needed to start harnessing the significant expertise of the Alva team and the brand.

Proposing a strategic content marketing calendar to drive both sales and retention of existing customers, through blogs, newsletters, case studies, talks, lead magnets and video content, we delivered a nuanced and varied calendar that radically increased read time, entrances and nurtured audiences.



Key Copy

"Candidates are as potent
brand ambassadors as customers -
avoid your communications
being the latest buzzfeed horror story."

Ghostwriting

"Working with future potential is about realising both people's strengths and their limitations. We might all have periods in our lives where try to become something we're not."

Ghostwriting

Deep dive blogs

Is your choice of psychometric test creating noise - and wasting your time?

Are all psychometric tests as good as each other?

Not all psychometric tests are created equally - not all tests are even psychometrically validated. Sure, there are tests based on what your favourite colour is (red, yes, thanks for asking), but that doesn't mean that they have any scientific validity to be measuring something as important as personality or decide someone's trajectory.

They're super fun when you're bored on a train and doing a magazine personality quiz as your coffee goes cold, but potentially less helpful when you're trying to decide who is going to make your interview shortlist.

So if we're going to use psychometric tests, how can we know that what we're using is actually refining the lens that we need - and not creating more noise?

When can statistical noise be a problem in hiring?

More than wasting the time of candidates and recruiters, the additional data that is created by repeated tests simply adds to the 'noise' that the recruiter has to sift through. The repetition can give the sheen of uncovering insights; however, humans are complex and not every nuance can be measured (which is great!). ensure transformation nonetheless.

Deep dive blogs

Why Independent Contributors are key to your success

Soft skills for leadership

Imagine a world where the people who are on your managerial track are the ones who should be on your managerial track. Who are motivated by helping others to succeed, who understand how to harness team strengths; how to juggle in-house, freelancers and consultants; how to spot mental health needs, and how to really listen to their colleagues? Who knows how to manage both difficult business and people decisions, and how to deliver bad news with compassion - but aren't they so affable that they won't give out the bad news? In short - those that have the soft skills necessary to be a good manager.

When we base our placement decisions on soft skills, we're able to avoid large human and economic costs: one-third of all promotions fail, costing businesses at least £45,000 a year. We need to look past our conventional chains of promotion, our stereotypes of what managers look like, and who is shouting the loudest to get ahead. Instead, we need to focus on those broad, personal characteristics that give someone the right potential to develop great leadership.

Managerial potential

Employees with high potential for a certain role will make much more of the training and experience they receive. For decades, research has shown that when work aligns with our strengths and our interests, we are so much more likely to develop: employees who see good opportunities to learn and grow are 2.9 times more likely to be engaged at work.

We've all experienced a terrible manager, one who doesn't thrive on balancing team needs, delivering tough news with compassion or remembering birthday cards. Will their leadership skills become better over time? Not necessarily - since the work isn't really in concert with their natural strengths. They won't pick up on feedback as effectively. They won't notice the subtle signals. And they won't spend as much time and energy trying to improve.

HERO & GUIDE CASE STUDIES

Within the heads and hearts of the Alva team (and their address books and contracts) lived a wealth of compelling case studies.

Prioritising personal stories with clients, we interviewed customers to learn about their personal drivers and missions within their practice.

One existing case study was passive; it did centre the customer, but talked about theories around recruitment and EDI: no results, no success stories, no stats.

Whether it was learning a story about signing contracts on the eve of lockdown (and a company-wide hiring freeze), convincing hiring managers to stop looking for one perfect unicorn candidate and then making someone's dreams come true, or increasing diversity in a male-dominated sector, our case studies radically increased performance.

Alva Co.

Hiring for potential

Fredrik Wong had been working with FLIR for almost a year, employed on the assembly line technician in Production. With a degree in Industrial Engineering and a background in retail and on-the-job experience, Fredrik loved learning more about the role: "I became the adjustment maker ... even on a production line, something can go wrong. I was the one who'd look into the problems and try to solve them."



After almost a year of excelling in Assembly, Fredrik was wondering how to make the move into Service Engineering. "It's very repetitive to assemble a camera and make a quick fix," he says.

"In Service Engineering the problems are more complicated, and I wanted the chance to show my potential."

The chance to thrive.

Recruiting for specialised roles in niche industries creates problems with an ever-decreasing talent pool, salary cost and increased time to hire. In



"Being a growth company within e-commerce ... it's not acceptable to feel like you've been sent back to the eighties when trying to apply for a job."

Moa Wictorén

Chief Human Resources Officer at LYKO

Key Results

Success was measured
in confidence, rhythm
and readability.
But impact matters.

63%

Decrease
in page exits

500%

Increase
in read time

2600%

Increase
in monthly readership

32,025%

Increase in monthly content entrances

A refined brand and increased awareness helped secure strategic G2 badges.



Growing a Thought Leader

Linnea Bywall: The People Coach

As part of establishing Alva's growing presence, we presented a B2B newsletter as a quick win. We could learn more about our audience, increase brand touchpoints and increase retention.

With the right blend of pragmatism, rigour and bold personality, we suggested Linnea as our persona.

Through story sessions and ideas sharing, Linnea flourished; our 1:1 interview sessions allowed us to capture her ideas, aspirations and character, forming them into newsletters, blogs and talks.

We pitched her to our PR agency as our chief persona, blending authenticity in combatting bias, psychological rigour and great sense of humour.



"Ever read a CV with a word that was misspelled?
Found yourself mumbling things like 'sloppy',
'dumb' or similar and then
put that CV in the rejection pile?
Well my friend, then you have
fallen victim to the horn effect!"

The Horn Effect – what is it and how
you can prevent it from damaging your organisation

"If you want to be smart
about your corner-cutting,
perhaps dare to completely
cross-out out reference checks?"

The 8 steps in the hiring process you should cheat on
(and the 5 you can't afford to miss)

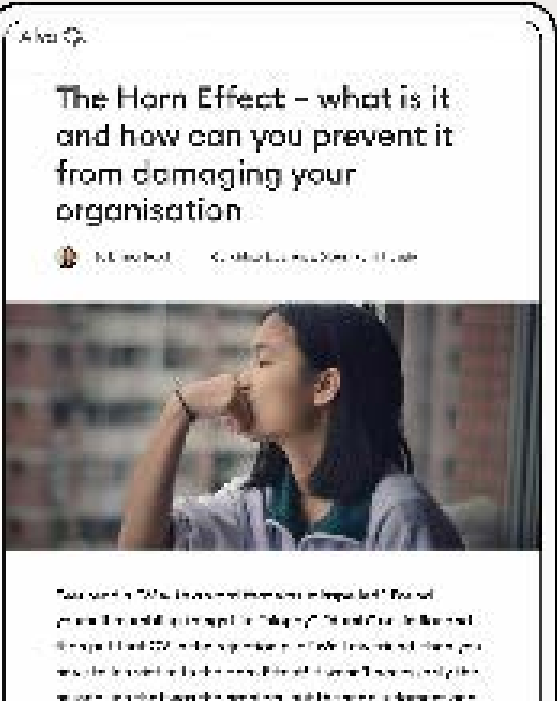
Results: Linnea's thought leadership lands coverage in strategic UK markets

Linnea is fully committed to Alva's mission to decrease bias and succeed. Monthly creative sessions began as a deep-dive in understanding the needs of HR leaders - how to save them time, argue for more budget and increase diversity.

Our sessions developed into an intimate back and forth, with free-sharing of ideas, playing with big topics and strategic application, and how to phrase new ideas for our readers and audiences.

This increasing confidence and ability to articulate ideas quickly and have them researched, evidenced and written allowed Linnea the latitude to go a level deeper.

Op-eds in Start-Ups magazine and Sifted, noted mentions as a woman to watch in TechTound and AIHR, Linnea's increased confidence in telling her story has landed Alva significant and strategic press coverage.



The Reviews Together Ann and I have written newsletters, blog posts and plenty more. By writing drafts that really has captured my tone of voice and backing everything up with solid sources and fact checks, she has made the content creation both easy and fun.

Ann never stops to amaze me on coming with great examples for content, asking the right questions, being super open to feedback and discussion and really pouring her heart and soul into the process. Everyone that gets a chance to work with her should consider themselves lucky. You will have a blast, while getting your message across!

Ann's work has enabled me to become a thought leader, and I'm loving it!

Linnea Bywall
Lead, People & Operations, Alva Labs

The Reviews

It's not always you get to work with individuals who look beyond the job description and take responsibility for the wider business outcomes - especially not when hiring freelancers.

Ann, however, did just that - always putting the business needs first and helping us in the best way possible.

Gustav Wallberg
Head of Marketing, Alva Labs

Thank you for reading!

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