
InTransition Episode 76 – Martin Schipany

David Pembroke: Hello ladies and gentlemen and welcome to In Transition, the podcast that examines the practice of content marketing in government. My name's David Pembroke, coming to you from East 4th Street in Cleveland, Ohio the day after the end of Content Marketing World. I'm in a fantastic little part of downtown Cleveland and I'm going to speak to a good friend of the program and a good friend to Content Group who co-presented with me at the government and public sector lab here yesterday, Martin Schipany from the city of Vienna in Austria. We will discuss Content Marketing World 2016 but as we do each week we start with the definition of content marketing as it relates to government and the public sector. Content marketing is a strategic, measurable, and accountable business process that relies on the creation, curation, and distribution of useful, relevant, and consistent content. The purpose is to engage and inform a specific audience in order to achieve a desired citizen and/ or stakeholder action. There you go, that's the definition.

It's Saturday morning, it's quite a nice day. Both Martin and myself in a couple of hours will be heading in different directions. He'll be heading back to Vienna. I'll be heading back to Canberra. Martin thanks very much for joining me here at the Erie Island Coffee Company.

Martin Schipany: Thanks for having me again David.

David Pembroke: Okay. End of Content Marketing World, your first Content Marketing World, how would you sum up the experience?

Martin Schipany: It was an impressive week with a lot of good insights especially from the strategic sides. I really loved the keynote speeches and the closing speech, Mark Hamill was great. Meet a really couple of great people here.

David Pembroke: Tell me in terms of things that you take away, things that you were sitting and thinking, "That's going to be really relevant to me," what are some of the insights that you're going to take home and incorporate into your work?

Martin Schipany: The problem or the challenge in such weeks is that there's so many stuff just to settle down before you really know, "Okay, is there some things that you can take with you?" Thinking about it probably some new approaches for our data measurement were really interesting. Also some insights I've seen in the area for newsletter marketing. We already have some newsletters in the city of Vienna but the real question behind is how can we improve their efficiency? I've seen a lot of sessions at the CMI and the Content Marketing World with interesting approaches.

David Pembroke: From your point of view arriving here, what were your expectations of the conference and did it meet your expectations?

Martin Schipany: Basically yes. There were many interesting people, very interesting sessions. What I

would really preferred were a little bit more strategic insights so my expectations were definitely to see how other companies, maybe those in the public sector, public institutions, how do they do their work on a strategic level when it comes to corporate communication. We had a great presentation and co-presentation that was with the Peace Corp. An interesting talk with our smaller municipalities but I would rather have seen to emphasise more the role of content marketing or possible role for content marketing for public institutions.

David Pembroke: You have developed quite a sophisticated approach and innovative approach with the supportive C3, the agency from the German content marketing agency, which in fact was named as the global content marketing agency of the year. Which is great and your presentation yesterday was very impressive and we will have it up on our slide share channel so people will be able to have a look at that. We'll also publish the recordings from yesterday's presentations but there's still not a lot of government people turning up at Content Marketing to understand how they can use it.

You've taken the approach, you've embedded into the city of Vienna, it's getting lots of results but there doesn't seem to be that many people who have yet understood the benefits and have felt the need to come to a place like Content Marketing World to learn more.

Martin Schipany: I think that one of the main problems is that when you have a look at it historically that many of the government communicators and the public communicators in the public institutions are simply used to do the work through traditional media. The point here is when they have to work or do the communication work through traditional media they are dependent on them. The really interesting thing content marketing is is you can build up your own channels, your own sustainable channels, you can measure them, you can get your own ... Getting your own findings out of it and you can, and it's the most important thing, build direct communications, connections to your target groups. I'm totally convinced that in the next few years we will see a lot of more governments following this approach because at the end it is worth.

David Pembroke: Yep, you're speaking to the converted here. I'm with you, I just don't see that there is any alternative approach. If anyone actually does have an alternative, I'd be happy to listen to it. To me, there are a couple of things that I took out of this year and I think one of the big themes was really quality over quantity. The era of just jamming and spreading and creating and sending as much content as you possibly can shows that you in some way hopefully gaming the Google algorithm and in order to improve your search results. That's finished and there's emphasis on getting it right, getting it clear, putting the audience at the centre of what you do. How is it that you find or what is the challenge for you in terms of sustaining quality in your organisation and how do you put in place the systems and structures that help to produce that quality content that people are looking for?

Martin Schipany: I think the most important thing is the structure behind your media channels. What

we did in Vienna is that we gathered all our editors in one editorial office. They meet everyday in the morning to have the exchange about the contents, the appointments, press conference so the political stuff or the municipal stuff so they can plan, so they can produce, so they can also assure the quality of what's being produced and combine this content before channel approach. They're talking about the content before they're talk about the way in which channel it's being published. Combined, it's content before channel approach on a regular basis of data measurement and just build your KPIs and check them on a regular basis.

David Pembroke: One of the other presentations that I enjoyed was Mitch Joel at the end of the first day and this notion of taking a network approach or adopting a network approach of it's not about one channel or the other channel, it's about all the channels that you decide to use to distribute your content and taking that network approach. I thought that was quite a good insight. What did you think of that?

Martin Schipany: It's quite similar to what we have in the city of Vienna. We have on the one hand this content before channel approach combined with a cross media strategy approach. We try to take our customers, our target groups in their hands and do with them the journey. Each content item leads them to another content item in another product. This is a cross media approach so it can be a content item in the print product that leads them to a content item in another product. The decisive point here is that you have to define before what's the goal of this communication project so that all of these different content items lead in the same direction.

David Pembroke: In terms of, I suppose one of the other discussions that was taking place was really, and it's something that we're starting to address our minds about, is how do you communicate the effectiveness and value and benefit of a content marketing approach into the senior executives. There was a session with Robert Rose and three senior executives, one from Visa, one from Schneider Electrical, and another one from GE Lighting, I just can't quite remember their names but it was about this challenge of how do you sell it in? How do you get people to understand it? What's your approach when you started your transformation of your communication in the city of Vienna? How was it that you were able to explain to your political leadership and your executive management leadership that this was the right way to go? How did you sell in those benefits?

Martin Schipany: It was an ongoing process because we started very early to set up a structure that's very very useful now to do content marketing or content marketing oriented approaches. We've oriented our communication structure very very early. An old medium and it's just a little bit of given thing so to have the right decisions at the right time because our CO level in those are political offices, there's the whole governmental team, they've seen the possibilities in it, the opportunities in it to what's the decisive thing of being a municipal, of being a public institution. You want to be a good service provider for your citizens, for your target groups. You're only a good service provider if you can communicate them what you're doing with their money. It's money of the tax payers, we have to act efficiently, you have to take care, and you have to be accountable with the money of the tax payers.

To communicate it, there are two ways, you can speak to newspapers, traditional media and to try to convince the editors that they bring the story as it should be brought because it's true and this is the way it should be. That's one way. It will also be in the future one way but combine it with direct communication channels so that definitely unfiltered versions of the public institutions can be portrayed and can be transported and delivered to the target group. Having these old media channels makes public institutions just more independent than in the past. That's the main difference in implementing a content marketing oriented approach.

David Pembroke: To undertake a content marketing approach requires a different skill set, a new skill set of many people working in government and public sector communications. How is it that you have introduced these new skills into your team in order for you to be able to sustain those old media channels?

Martin Schipany: Let's compare it with both. I would say our staff, our employees, they're very well skilled. It's not so much a question of how to give them more skills just to combine the teams in a way so that they can work and deliver the best work. Let's compare it to football for example, you need your quarterback, you need your linebackers, the wide pass receivers, and knowing this who's the best at what job and who's doing the best job. It's a question of HR planning, it's a question of guts to know people, and it's a question of how to combine them and how to set up them in a team so that they can deliver the best work in a commutation structure.

Of course you have to talk a lot, you have to train a lot when it comes to how do we measure success, what are our KPIs, why are we doing this, why is for sure the most asked question. It has been the most asked question this week at the Content Marketing World because it's the most important question. When you don't know your why, all the other things make no sense. Being clear about the why, telling the people, giving them context is the most important thing when you want to work in a structure that should be suitable or should fit for a content marketing oriented approach. Only then they will have the context knowledge and need to let the content flow into the right directions.

David Pembroke: Are you a generalist man or are you a specialist man in terms of assembling your football teams?

Martin Schipany: I would describe myself more in the generalists level. I've started very early with social media also building up websites from scratch. It gave me a lot of insight from the beginning and it's very very useful right now to know how digital products have to be developed. The work on a strategic level brings with you that you don't have time for each of the single decisions of each of these products. You really have to trust your team and it's always important that you have in to team additional generalists because then you can be sure that the work is being done in a manner so that it can achieve the goals, let's put it that way. You need generalists and you need specialists but you need the right balance between them.

Something to add, was very impressive to see the economy marketing of ... and when, I cannot remember her name unfortunately but one woman entered the stage and said, an introverts dream speaks in front of a big audience. You should take also a close look in your team who are the introverts and who are extroverts because there's also it's very important when you set up your team. Team that only consists of extroverts or on the other side, only of introverts don't work out. You also have to have this in mind.

David Pembroke: It's the skills and the personalities and to blend them in such a way that you're getting the best possible outcomes around that content and making sure that it's on track driving back towards those strategic objectives that sit at the heart of any effective content marketing plan. In terms of next steps, in terms of where you see how you may be able to ... Your next challenges in terms of this is very sophisticated system that you've been able to develop in Vienna. How do you improve? How do you get better?

Martin Schipany: Yeah, by visiting conferences like the Content Marketing World. No, without joking, just to have a regular exchange with other people to see what's going on in the world. Also to have a close look in your own data, to analyse them, to talk about it, to reflect it. To reflect your own work on a regular basis is just important as it is to do and to deliver quality, both things are important. Speaking about our next challenges, I would say that especially our community, in German, which is community consists around 150,000 people. It's something that we want to improve more in the next few month and definitely in the next years because this is also where content marketing happens in the direct exchange with the target groups, with your citizens, when you're a public institution otherwise with your customers. We have this community and it's just so awesome to see when you try to make guided tours, try to give them special offers, how many people are interested in them.

David Pembroke: With the numbers I suppose of government people coming to Content Marketing World they're still very lean and the big focus is business to consumer content marketing, business consumer marketing. How or what advice would you give to people listening to the program today when they're thinking, "Okay, I want to go to Content Marketing World, I want to have Martin's experience, David's experience." How do they shape a discussion with their leadership to get the travel approved?

Martin Schipany: I think speaking about content marketing. When the target group is your own leadership team, first to know what they are goals are and what they want so that so then put it the right way so that it can deliver the results that they want to have you to deliver. I think that's an important point. You have to do content marketing before you can convince them of content marketing because only when they know what they want you can deliver it to them. Basically I think it's important to show them what might be the possible outcomes when you implement such an economy marketing oriented approach, where are the opportunities in terms of reducing your own costs, where are the possibilities in building direct connections with people, where are the possibilities and opportunities in having old media channels

for a direct exchange with the target groups. There are a lot of approaches you can show them that are really worth to be discussed. At the end it always depends what the overall goal of your leadership team is.

David Pembroke: Yeah, there's no question. You got to content market yourself to your senior executive which really starts with understanding the needs, wants, and pin points of that audience. There we go. You'll be back, will you? In 2017?

Martin Schipany: I'm definitely thinking about it. Just a question of costs and flights.

David Pembroke: It's a long way home. How far for you to get home?

Martin Schipany: I think the first flight back to Toronto just forty minutes and to fly to Vienna nine and a half hours.

David Pembroke: Okay, I beat you. I've got a long way to go. I've got to go to Detroit, then Detroit to Los Angeles, Los Angeles to Sydney, Sydney to Canberra. It does take a long time to get home. Anyway it's worth it. This is my 6th year here at Content Marketing World and I love Cleveland. I love the Content Marketing Institute. I love the people. I love what they stand for and what they've done in terms of developing this practice.

Last questions before we close is just this notion of the name of content marketing as it relates to public sector practice. What's your view around the naming? I really enjoyed your, in your presentation yesterday, where your description of it was corporate communication with journalistic techniques which is exactly what it is. What do you think about this name and convention because my big fear is I don't want government and public sector not to be a part of the content marketing community. I think if we start calling ourselves something else, we'll start to perhaps fall away from and become a separate organisation when there is so much to learn if we can all stay together. There's no reason why we shouldn't be all together because we're all looking for the same sort of thing. Just what are your views around the naming conventions?

Martin Schipany: I don't think it's a contradiction because as long as the communicators are speaking the same languages and speaking about the same terms content marketing, it doesn't matter. It's not necessarily the CEOs exactly know how the correct definition of content marketing is. The communication people, they should speak the same language when they are together in the content marketing community, it's absolutely perfect and absolutely fine besides it really needs a universally accepted definition for content marketing. I think there are many good definitions out there but just not this one definition. Just don't stick too hard to the fact that you try to explain to your CEOs what content marketing is, you have to know on your own what content marketing is. What you have to show them is the possible outcomes and results, don't try to make a lecture or a theoretical discussion with them on communications issues, show them the possible results and outcomes that would be perfectly fine. When it comes to the discussion in the community

then it should be content marketing without doubt.

David Pembroke: Okay. Martin, thank you very much for joining us here on the East 4th Street in the middle of Cleveland, Ohio. It's a sort of humid sort of day. The wind's started to come up and there has been a bit of rain about but it looks like it'll be a nice day here. Noticing a lot of people around with the UFC, so I think there's a big ultimate fight, whatever they call that thing in town. Cleveland Indians I think are playing this weekend as well and they're going pretty well. The Browns, the Cleveland Browns start their football season this year but I think the predictions are that they, the Browns Martin tells me they start tomorrow but the predictions are that they could go through this season without winning a game.

A couple of years ago what I decided to do is because I didn't have any American football teams or sporting teams, I thought I'd support the Indians, the Cavs, and the Browns. Obviously the Cavs have been the champions which is great for Cleveland, certainly a wonderful lift. LeBron James leading them to the championship. Yes, the poor old Browns, they're thinking that they'll go through the season sixteen and 0 as in won't win a game. There you go.

Anyway, from wonderful downtown Cleveland, thank you very much listener for joining me once again. I've really enjoyed my time here. Over the next couple of weeks, I've recorded quite a few discussions with some of the leading strategists and thinkers about content marketing. We'll be bringing those to you, as I say over the next few weeks. I'm sure you'll be able to join that and bring as much of Content Marketing World 2016 to you as I have been able to do while still being able to go to the conference. Anyway, fantastic, thank you Martin. Thank you Cleveland. Thank you linesmen, thank you ball boys, and it's time to get on a plane. Bye for now.