

Episode 15

How Content Marketing Could Help to Promote Positive Actions Against Climate Change

The show notes: www.houseplanninghelp.com/15

Ben: We are going to chat to a man who is a remote camera specialist for Remontech in Canada and he's done an incredible job of using content marketing to promote his company. Let's welcome Cesar Abeid. Hello.

Cesar: Hi Ben. How are you?

Ben: I'm very well, thanks, and I'm really interested in hearing a bit more about your story today. Maybe you can start us off by telling us who you are and how you got into Internet marketing, content marketing?

Cesar: Well, I'm an electrical engineer by trade and I work here in Canada in our family company. It's a small, small company and we provide a service to the construction industry. We basically provide a remote monitoring service, kind of hard to explain in just a few words, but we install cameras on construction sites and we provide a live feed to parties that are, you know, stakeholders of the project. We also record the progress of construction in a time-lapse manner and we link the time-lapse video to the Gantt chart or the schedule of the project.

It's a unique thing, which is the motivating factor for me to get into content marketing and we can get into that a little bit. See, the service that we provide is not a service that people are looking for yet because it's kind of new. So they're not Googling what we do and not finding us that way. So content marketing is a good way for people to find us and that's why I got started with that.

Ben: How did you find out about content marketing?

Cesar: Yeah, it's an interesting thing but I was trying to think about this but honestly I don't exactly remember. I think what happened is I was listening to other podcasts, I really like podcasts, it's a great way to consume content. It's not just passively listening to the radio. You

go out and search for topics that you're interested in and you subscribe and you listen and there is a podcast that I listen to called Internet Business Mastery, I don't know whether you're familiar with it?

Ben: Yup.

Cesar: And they talk a lot about that and I think that was the first time that I got that idea that I'd learned about content marketing was through those guys.

Ben: I think that we should point out at this stage that a lot of people are showing you how you can make money online and what you are doing, which is quite interesting, and what I'm doing which is quite interesting is we're using the same approach but trying to get it off the Internet and into the real world.

Cesar: Right. And I think that's one of the criticisms, I guess, that content marketing gets and blogging and podcasting is that the only people who can make money with it are the people who are teaching other people how to make money with it. It's a vicious circle! So when guys like you and I use content marketing in another niche that's not the make money online niche, we stand out.

As you know, I was just a speaker at the New Media Expo here in the US, which is a very difficult thing to do. There's so many bloggers who wish they could have this opportunity, yet me, I only have 37 episodes of my podcast, I was accepted to speak there. I think one of the reasons why I was accepted was because I'm using content marketing in a different way to promote a service to an industry that is not very much versed into content marketing. So there's not a whole lot of people out there that are doing what we're doing.

Ben: So you used podcasting to create a programme for the construction industry. You called it The Construction Industry Podcast which I think is a stroke of genius, but how come you're doing The Construction Industry Podcast and not a massive construction firm?

Cesar: Well, because I was the first, you know! [Cesar laughs] And nobody thought about it. In fact this is one of the things that I brought up during my talk there. The construction industry is a massive monster. The numbers I shared, I think in the US alone, is a \$1.7 Trillion industry and there are 750,000 construction companies in the US alone, which employs 7.5 million people. Any one of those

people, any one of those 750,000 companies could be doing what I'm doing but they're not.

I'm not even a construction company when you think about it. My expertise is for IP cameras and IT in a way but because I took the initiative now, our little company here, Remontech, we are the hosts and producers of The Construction Industry Podcast. So you see, immediately when you take the initiative to do content marketing like this, it really helps with your authority within your sector. While before we were a 3-person company that's not a construction company, now we're in a position in which people look for us and they listen to my voice. So it's really working well for us.

Ben: I'm interested that you have focussed just on podcasting. Would you ever want to expand your platform to include video?

Cesar: Yeah, I'm not opposed to it. In fact when I started, I started with just a blog. It was called The Construction Bridge and the idea was a bridge that would connect construction professionals but what I found is it was not my favourite way of creating content, you know, sitting down and writing a blog post once a week and it became a chore for me. [Cesar laughs.]

Now audio, I really have a blast doing this podcast. I get to talk to people from all over the world. I had the architect for the Burj Khalifa on my show, you know, the tallest building in the world. I had the project manager for the Sydney Opera House, for the Panama Canal and to get to talk to these people, it motivates me to keep doing it.

I had worked with audio before a little bit. I was a recording technician when I was going through university so I kind of knew how to work with a mixer and microphones and things like that. Now video, it's not something that I'm very familiar with. I know you are.

One thing I learned recently is that you need to know what your strengths are and spend your energy and time improving those strengths that you already have instead of trying to learn something new or create strengths that are not there naturally so that's why I'm focussing on audio but I'm not opposed to going to video at some time in the future.

Ben: It's interesting that all of this information is on the Internet so even if you're a beginner you could start to learn, couldn't you? You could find out about podcasting and it's all there. They describe online . . .

There are certain people, aren't there, who lead you through this process. I don't want to teach this. It's not where my focus is in what I'm doing but I'm particularly interested in anyone who's listening to this podcast at the moment who might give a different viewpoint on something in their life. I'm particularly thinking, in the introduction I gave the example of my local town and how we could better promote that and then I started to think about the bigger picture of climate change and some of the mass change that is coming our way. So, where can we learn all of these things?

Cesar: There is a number of people . . . and here's the thing because content marketing, if we take a step back and define it, is to provide content so you educate or entertain people who are in your target market without selling the services and products you provide directly to them.

So over time it creates this trust between you and your target market so when they are ready to buy what you provide they will trust you and buy from you. That's the whole idea. There's a number of people doing that on how to do content marketing so it's a kind of Inception kind of thing. [Cesar laughs.]

I mentioned Internet Business Mastery. That's a good place to start. Those guys, I think they provide a weekly podcast on creating an Internet business which is based on providing value. Not 100%, not all the time in terms of content marketing but they do cover it there.

There were also a number of books that were helpful to me. One of them is Tribes by Seth Godin. It's a great book that talks about how when you have your platform, you are the leader of a tribe and he describes the behaviours of the tribe and how you can lead them and help them.

There's another book by Gary Vaynerchuk called Crush It, which was really helpful to me as well. It talks about dominating a niche and using content to do that. He used to work for his dad's liquor store in New York City and by using content marketing he just became a really well known celebrity here in the US and Canada. He had a YouTube channel on wine and the way that he taught people about getting to know wines and what wines were all about were very different from your traditional wine connoisseurs. They used to be very, what's the word, stiff! [Cesar laughs.] If you know what I mean? Gary is very down to earth and he even uses curse words here and there. So he used the content of creating a video to promote his own business and he became a millionaire. I mean, he is really well known here for that.

There's a number of other resources, too. There's Pat Flynn with smartpassiveincome.com. That guy is really helpful. He shares a lot of ideas on how to create content and help a community. I could go on . . . There's a group of guys from out of the UK, sitevisibility.com, they have the Internet Marketing Podcast, which is really helpful to me as well.

There's a few others. There's Albert Hathaizi, who happens to be a friend of mine. He has the Local Method Podcast. He talks about marketing on the Internet for small businesses and he has some great interviews there as well. Those are just a few names that come to mind right now.

Ben: Do you think there is a core of these people who will only escalate in importance or will other people come up to that level because I understand it takes time to build this platform, which is why I'm thinking for wider issues, people need to be building it now?

Cesar: Yeah, it does take time. And that's the thing. When people start with content marketing they want to see results right away and the truth is you won't. There is another book called Platform by Michael Hyatt and he goes through all the, almost like a step by step on how to create your own platform but it does time because it all comes down to trust.

The whole thing about content marketing is trust. Over time people learn to trust you, trust that your content is good and you're out to help them and not to sell to them. With any relationship it takes time and it takes effort but it's worth it and I think that's the advantage here for people who stick it out. 9 out of 10 people who get into this, they get discouraged after a few months because they check their statistics for site visits on Google Analytics and they don't see the results, they don't see engagement. They quit right before things start to gain critical mass and that's what I'm seeing right now with my platform.

At times I thought nobody was listening but now I know that they are. I can see the downloads, you know, how many downloads I'm getting. I have enough material on my website that people are finding me through Google using keywords that I did not intend for them to use. They're finding me in different ways. I'm being invited to be on podcasts like this [Cesar laughs], so it takes time but it's worth it and it does work if you put in the effort and the time.

Ben: Has all of this peaked or can you see it getting bigger?

Cesar: You know, that's a good question and I think there's still a lot of room for growth but I don't know whether you've heard this expression that *marketers spoil everything* [Cesar laughs] so I think eventually professional marketers will really understand how this works and maybe it's going to come to a point where this is not going to be as effective as it is today but I think there's still room for growth, especially when you look at different industries, for example the construction industry, there's so much room here for growth because very few people are doing it. So I guess it depends on your niche.

When it comes to climate change and environmental issues I think, we were just talking about this off the air, but I think there is an opportunity here to reach people who are not in tune with these issues by providing content that they're interested in. When you start talking about issues that are somewhat controversial I feel like eventually we end up preaching to the choir. You know you don't reach other people who are not in the same circles.

So content marketing is a great way to get more people into your own, how can I put this, circle of influence so eventually they can hear your message while before they wouldn't have found you because you guys are not speaking the same language.

Ben: Climate change is something that I see as being a big . . . big, big, big change that is coming our way in the future and I'm aware that people aren't really talking about it or they don't want to talk about it. Maybe we should've had this discussion, the discussion we had off the air, in the podcast because creating content from every person's viewpoint . . .

Say for example, I'm focussing what I doing very much on house building because I believe that's where a big help can be. If we can be more energy efficient and have that as the first thing that we do, then I'm hoping that I can do my bit there. You've got to have this niche, haven't you?

This has been quite a difficult podcast to do because I'm not sure what my main message of it is, whether it's just to ask people to start to learn a bit about content marketing, but I do feel it's got a bigger role to play in a huge thing that's coming our way.

Cesar: Yeah, I see what you're saying. I think what, for the listeners, we all have a message, we all have something that we care deeply about and we want to tell the world about and if you don't I think maybe

you should have something. I think the way to think about this is, take a step back and think what is my message, and who do I want to reach. Then you think about the people you want to reach and you try to think about what motivates them, what compels them and then create content for them.

It might not even be related to climate change at all, if that's your passion. But it is content that people who you want to reach and talk about climate change are interested in. Then in a secondary way you do talk about your passion and you talk about your cause that way but you're reaching that target market with content that they're interested in. So we need to think about things from their perspective and then serve them in that way.

That's the way to earn people's trust. That's the way I see it. As I say, I'm not really, even though I'm in the construction industry I'm not building things, I'm not a construction guy, let's say, but my target market is. So the topics that I bring to my podcast are topics that, of course I'm interested in, but they're even more interested in these topics than I am because that's their day to day professional life.

That's how I get my target market to listen to me. Oh, and by the way, I install cameras on site and I get business that way. [Ben laughs.] That's the way I see this whole content marketing thing. Think about the target market, serve them and earn their trust.

Ben: I think you do it really well and you also understand it. Maybe that's what I'm proposing here that people discover more about content marketing so that they can make their own assessments.

I am concerned that probably the biggest niche online that uses content marketing is the *how to make money online* but I do think there's an opportunity on there for it to completely open up. You've said it too about the construction industry. There are no voices. You are effectively the voice. Maybe I'm another voice over here in the UK but I feel that we need to have more people focussed in that way and you've put it really, really well.

Can I ask that maybe I could put you on a special mission? [Cesar laughs.]

Cesar: Sure.

Ben: And that is, just for me, on our podcast here. Maybe we can check in with you at another time and find out but you probe some of your

guests into energy efficiency, every so often, where appropriate and just find out if they're doing everything they can and if they're using the best methods and what those best methods are?

Cesar: Yeah, I can do that. I can make a point of doing that every single time but I have covered this in a few of my episodes. There was an episode, I can't remember every single question that I ask my guests but there is one episode that we talked about construction waste. I don't know if you listened to that one. I had Duane Craig from constructioninformer.com. Here's another guy who's doing content marketing as well but he talked about some interesting uses for construction waste, especially in the Middle East and places where there's a lot of bombings and a lot of rubble, wasted concrete. Basically using rubble to make new concrete and they save so much energy doing that because it's stuff that's already there, so there's less waste. So that's just one.

And you know what, there's a lot of interest in energy efficiency and climate change out there so I think it's a good point. I should make a point of doing more of that type of work and asking these questions of my guests because of the value of it and also because there's so much interest in this type of content out there.

Ben: Cesar, you are a legend. Where can we find out more about you?

Cesar: Well, you can find my podcast on iTunes if you search for Construction Industry Podcast. I'm also on the web at constructionindustry podcast.com. Feel free to drop me a line there through the contact page and I'll be happy to talk to you.

Ben: And I think it's strange that we've met through the Internet, doing different things but become friends and I know that one of my friends was also at this NMX conference and he came back and said you are such a good guy and I know that you are. And I hope that we can hear from you again at some point?

Cesar: Thank you, thank you. Yah, for sure. Just let me know.

Ben: Cheers, Cesar.

Cesar: Bye bye.