

## Becoming your own media channel: the Ticker TV interview



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I recently chatted with Ticker TV's **Ahron Young** about all things content marketing for PR and becoming your own media channel and telling your stories like a PR pro.

Topics included building brand visibility, the importance of developing owned media assets, and the persistence required in building a culture of content in your business.

**ABOUT TICKER TV:** Ticker is a new source for news in Australia. It broadcasts breaking news live on Facebook and Twitter, and soon via its forthcoming app.

### TRANSCRIPT

Here is a transcript of the interview:

**Ahron Young:** Let's talk about content marketing for PR and for many companies of course in the space and many of us, like here at Ticker, for more we're joined by Trevor Young, no relation of course, from Digital Citizen Group. Thank you so much for your time.

**Trevor Young:** Thanks, Ahron.

**Ahron:** Talk to us about the book. This is it right here.

**Trevor:** It is indeed. It's called Content Marketing for PR. What you see on the tin is what's inside ...

**Ahron:** How to build brand visibility, that is one of the biggest concerns for most companies, right?

**Trevor:** I think it's a massive concern. There's so much noise out there and people are blocking left, right, and centre. They're getting information from everywhere.



**Ahron:** Absolutely.

**Trevor:** They're a distrustful lot, the public. We don't trust a lot of the information that we get. So, how can we build not only just recognition for our brand but also our reputation?

**Ahron:** I guess one of the points is that the barriers have never been lower to start your own company, your own business to brand out, to quit your job, to off you go, but to actually get noticed for what you're doing is the hardest part. So, what's your tip?

**Trevor:** Well, the tip is probably, there is no one tip. There's no one silver bullet and I think a lot of businesses and entrepreneurs, they're looking for that, the latest growth hack and all of that and I get it. I think to cut through effectively today you require a foundation of intentional sustainable communications. I believe in content first, becoming your own media channel, and looking at what we call owned media. That's blogging, podcasting, video, being able to create your own communications, your own content first and then everything else ...

**Ahron:** So, kind of be President Trump when it comes to that then where he's gotten into it and decided to get rid of all the other channels, which is the traditional media and to do it himself essentially.

**Trevor:** Well, I mean he uses Twitter very effectively in that regard and social media is a tremendous way of being able to get your message out there, but you still don't own the channel. So, you could build, as many companies did ... build a strong following on Facebook, and then Facebook changes the rules and makes you pay to reach your audience. So, that's why we believe your own media channels first then distribute your content out there.

**Ahron:** So, what would your own media channels be then if it's not Facebook?

**Trevor:** Yeah. Well, it's those channels that you own and control. So, that would be your website, your blog, a podcast that you have on it, your email lists. Going old school, your email list is an incredibly ... in this day of social and everything else.

**Ahron:** Absolutely, and it's direct.

**Trevor:** Email list, your list is ... subscribe it. For people to opt in, to receive information from you is a very powerful and privileged position to be.

**Ahron:** I guess for a lot of businesses, it's pretty tricky though, right? Because they're time-poor, they're not a media company like say what we are here at Ticker where our job first and foremost is information. Let's say that you are running a small business and you're just trying to keep the wheels going, it can kind of fall out of your top priority list kind of doing your social media.

**Trevor:** It certainly can. Where we see it work really well with companies and small companies that sometimes do this better than

...it's certainly not there to see it work really, not that companies and small companies that sometimes do this better than the large organisations. It's part of their DNA. They become a culture first, content-first culture within their organisation.

**Ahron:** Because your content of what you put out is essentially the only way that people know who you are.

**Trevor:** Well it is, and the more you can do that and build your own audience, the less you have to spend on marketing and advertising. So, it's a long-term game. It's something that has to be sustainable over the long journey.

**Ahron:** We have that saying that if a tree was to fall in a forest, would anybody hear? If you have your own newsletter but you're struggling to build up the numbers of people signing up to it, if you have your own website, but you have a look at your Google statistics and three people and two cats and a dog are the people who are logging onto it, how do you I guess get those channels to the next level so that it is worth your while? Obviously, Facebook has millions of people on there, so people obviously think that if they get their family and friends involved in their Facebook, then they're halfway there. What's your advice to people who say, "Well, I do want to have my own newsletter, but after 6, 10, 12 months of operating the newsletter, there hasn't been much growth."

**Trevor:** Yeah, and this truly is and I really understand the challenge around this for businesses and as you said, you're doing your own business as well and now you need to be a media channel as well.

**Ahron:** Persistence becomes key, but it's the first thing to go, right?

**Trevor:** Well, yeah, but the ones that stick at it, and it's not about doing everything at once. Again, people want the quick hits. It's about doing a lot of little things over a period of time, but doing it in a way that's strategic and also doing it in a way that adds value, because if you're always banging on about your products and services, people aren't going to ...

**Ahron:** No one cares. Yeah.

**Trevor:** Who is your audience? What's of interest in relevance to them? How can you make their life better, more interesting, more productive? How can you make them more money? Whatever it is that your sphere of conversation is around, how can you do that but do it with genuine ... be generous and be over-giving? That probably freaks a lot of businesses out because "Oh, I get paid to consult in this space." How do people know you're any good if you're not actually demonstrating? So, it's the ones that go that extra mile that I see again and again, it doesn't matter what industry, they are nailing it over the journey.

**Ahron:** So, if you run a coffee shop for example, it's not just enough to be telling people that your product exists. So, you perhaps want to be looking at things like coming out with promotions and that is a way to value add, but also you might be talking about the coffee bean. You might be talking about how you actually source these sorts of things, right? So actually, showing people and entertaining people is a big part of it.

**Trevor:** It is for that sort of business. Obviously, that's different for professional services.

**Ahron:** I'm just coming up with an example.

**Trevor:** You're 100% right. Taking people behind the scenes of your business. People like to see behind the face of an organisation. Smaller business got that bigger opportunity because they're closer to the ground. There are no layers of hierarchy and they can take ...

**Ahron:** Is that a big problem would you say for larger corporations where they're so worried about taking away the veil that you might find out that they're the Wizard of Oz?

**Trevor:** Well, there's plenty of research out there that suggests that if a company's leadership and their CEO, et cetera, is out on social media, out and visible and adding value, then people are more predisposed to that brand. So, getting leaders out and doing content and being on social is a challenge for big organisations. Again, when you see it work and the companies that do it well, what they're doing is they're breaking down the barriers and that's what people like.

**Ahron:** Do you think that 's CEO driven in a lot of ways ... these kinds of companies that do that, do you think that they have a CEO who perhaps wants to get places or is a CEO who is a great communicator and wants to maybe be seen not just by the people within the company or behind the scenes? Do you think it's CEO driven or is this something that marketing teams within companies should be doing?

**Trevor:** No. Well, obviously the PR and marketing teams need to be across it, but it has to come from the top. It has to come from



the top. You either want to communicate and connect with people, or you don't. There's no halfway measure. So as the CEO – and I believe that being leadership is communications, as Anita Roddick once said – if you're not out there communicating and using all the tools at your disposal, you're actually not leading effectively.

**Ahron:** So if you look at business in Australia at the moment, I'll ask you in a second to name a few that are doing it well, but I don't want to throw you on the spot. While you're thinking about that, would you say that larger or medium or smaller businesses are doing it better when it comes to their online communication and marketing?

**Trevor:** I think it's ... when I say small, not necessarily the tiny ones, but the fast-growing entrepreneurial companies ... I do a lot of work with those, who are probably between 50 to 150 staff. They've got budget, they've got things happening. The CEOs and founders and directors are on board. They're pumping on all cylinders but they haven't got much necessarily of a marketing department, so they still run pretty lean. They're the ones that I'm seeing do well, but yeah, up around maybe it's 30 to 150 that side of things where there is momentum, and a few people to spread the load. It's not just the one person who comes to work and works all day and has to try and do this at night. They can do terrifically well, but that's where the pressure is because it all comes on them when you're a one or two-man show.

**Ahron:** When I think of companies that are doing well, I usually think of overseas companies. American companies seem to be right on top of this and the importance of it. Can you think of some Australian companies that do a really good job?

**Trevor:** Yeah, I can. There's a couple that I use in the book there. One, in particular, is Firebrand Talent, which is a recruitment company. They've been doing this forever because they had no marketing budget when they started. A guy called Darren Woolley runs TrinityP3 and has now grown a global consulting business.

**Ahron:** So, what were the steps? So, you just hit on something really important. Marketing budget seems to be the thing that people think you need to have when you're starting off. Others say just hack it and come up with ways to get attention. Then we think of the kind of famous Richard Branson do a stunt routine, which is kind of a little bit old school these days. I'm not sure that jumping out of a hot air balloon is going to sell ...

**Trevor:** There's only one Richard Branson!

**Ahron:** You'll end up dead would be my luck. So, if you're a company that doesn't have a marketing budget, you have your website. You haven't used things like that. Can you give us some tips as to what is the best way to go?

**Trevor:** Well, I think the thing that you don't want to do is try and do everything, be on every channel. You might want to specialise in one area. Now, if you don't mind video, maybe really doubling down on video is the way to go or ...

**Ahron:** My view on video is that it can be an absolute trap, right? So, you can make your company look absolutely terrible if you don't do video well.

**Trevor:** True, but what we also find is sometimes it doesn't need to be overproduced as well. I think we fall into the trap that if you need to put a big budget behind it all the time, A, it'll never get done and B, it'll break the bank and what working ...

**Ahron:** Stay away from those templates that just look so cheap.

**Trevor:** Well, of course. You've got to be as original as possible. You know what? The first time, the second time, the third, fourth, 10th time you do stuff, it's got to be awful, but you get better and you have to find your voice.

**Ahron:** It's when you know that you're enjoying doing it, that you've kind of found your niche, right?

**Trevor:** Well, if you hate video, don't do it because everyone says you have to be on YouTube. I mean, you might be a really great writer or you rather a podcast. I mean, all of these channels, we're seeing people go in and do one thing well and then once they build an audience they're sort of known and trusted, then they start to extend from there.

**Ahron:** Also, I think it would come down to ... and you may or may not agree with this, but understanding who is your audience, but where are they likely to be. So, YouTube we're told has a lot of men whereas Facebook has a lot of older women these days, and Twitter has a lot of journalists and not many other people, perhaps people who watch the news and don't like who's reporting it from my experience. What's your advice when it comes to choosing as you said don't put all your eggs ... Well, I know you said put all your eggs in one basket rather than you said focus on something.

**Trevor:** Put someone on those channels.

**Ahron:** So, how do you choose which one?

**Trevor:** Well, I think where you're ... there's that combination, isn't it? Where your audience isn't 100% right. If you're after young men, then they're probably not going to be on Facebook. If you do it that way and then ... but also what are the channels that you're more comfortable with too as well. So, it's being able to find those two. If you could have three or four different social media channels, put three or four different content strategies for each one given the audience that's on it. So, you need to know your audience and what's of interest and relevance to them, but also where are they hanging out and how can you attract them to you.

**Ahron:** Absolutely, 354 pages I've just read. He dies at the end. So, thank you so much for coming and I really appreciate your time today.

**Trevor:** Appreciate it.

**Ahron:** Of course, if you want to get it, Content Marketing for PR, and how do they find the book by the way?

**Trevor:** Oh, it's the marvel of today. Amazon gets everything, but pretty much any online retailer has got the book.

**Ahron:** All right. Trevor, thank you so much for that.

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