

Grow Your Business Using Content Marketing – With Joe Pulizzi

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Today we are going to be discussing an interesting topic about an exact match domain name. I am going to introduce you to the person who coined the phrase content marketing. We are going to learn some useful tactics about content marketing, which will benefit your business, and we will also discuss why he passed up the opportunity to buy arguably the best domain name for the industry segment he helped create and name.

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Michael Cyger: Hey everyone. My name is Michael Cyger, and I'm the Publisher of DomainSherpa.com - the website where you can learn how to become a successful domain name investor and entrepreneur directly from the experts.

Today we are going to be discussing an interesting topic about an exact match domain name. I am going to introduce you to the person who coined the phrase content marketing. We are going to learn some useful tactics about content marketing, which will benefit your business, and we will also discuss why he passed up the opportunity to buy arguably the best domain name for the industry segment he helped create and name.

I am pleased to welcome to the show Joe Pullizi, Founder of Content Marketing Institute, the leading educational and training organization for content marketing. Joe's organization produces Content Marketing World, the largest content marketing event that is held ever September in Cleveland, Ohio, and Chief Content Officer, a bimonthly print magazine that I get every two months right here. Fantastic magazine. Joe is also the author of Content Inc.: How Entrepreneurs Use Content to Build Massive Audiences and Create Radically Successful Businesses. Welcome to the show, Joe.

Joe Pullizi: Michael, thanks for having me. I hope people are still awake.

Michael: That was a long intro, but the problem is when you do so much, I feel like it is a disservice unless I talk about all the different areas that you hit because they are going to think well, Joe is just a blogger, maybe. So, it is funny. You and I have been acquaintances. We have known each other professionally for probably over about ten years.

Joe: Yeah, I had a lot more hair. It seems like the more I do, the more hair I lose, which if that is the way it has to be, that is the way it has to be.

Michael: Yeah, I know. Mine just turns gray.

Joe: You are looking good, my friend. I would take yours in a heartbeat. It is fantastic.

Michael: So, I met you for the first time in the early 2000s. I joined a business-to-business (B2B) association called American Business Media. My blog that I started - was not even called a blog back then - took off and was serving as the place where Six Sigma professionals went on a day-to-day basis. We started replicating that across different verticals, like outsourcing

and structured innovation, and I am like I need to figure out how to become a professional business publisher.

So, I joined American Business Media. That is where I met you, as well as other CEOs and leaders at companies like Pearson, Hanley Wood, Wiley, Penton, the companies that pretty much dominate the B2B space. At that time, you were with Penton, right?

Joe: That is right. I was with Penton Media. I was running their custom media division, which now we call content marketing.

Michael: Yeah, so it was called custom media, custom publishing. Those were the phrases that were used. At that time, what was custom publishing and what problem did it solve for customers?

Joe: So, basically it was an interesting department at Penton because I started in 2000 at Penton Media, so one of the largest independent business-to-business publisher in North America. Penton Media. Right now I think they have something like 130 different verticals they are in or something like that. And so, I was lucky enough to land in this department called Penton Custom Media, and at the time executives in the company did not think much of it. We were like if we can get revenue from it, that is great, so basically if we could not sell an advertising program, sponsorship program, event package to a large B2B company, they sort of throw it over the fence to us and said well, maybe Penton Custom Media can get some revenue off of it, so we basically helped those companies who wanted to tell better stories by targeting different groups of audiences. Maybe their customer or prospect base.

So, we would do newsletters and blogs, as you were talking about. Webinar programs. A lot of it was print magazines at the start. Of course this was 2000 to 2003, so print was still pretty heavy. And we were just trying to help them tell better stories because they were really bad at it. They were really good at talking about their own products and services. Really bad about connecting with an audience around their pain points, so we would help them do that on a consistent basis, working with companies like Chicago (Unclear 4:11.1) Exchange and Microsoft and National Association of Manufacturers and

whatnot. So, that was a great learning experience for me to just grow up in publishing, but grow up in the custom media side.

Now, people called it custom publishing, custom media, customer media was huge in Europe, and when I went in to senior marketing officers, pitching them things like hey, you want to buy some custom publishing, I mean they were already sleeping. So, they were like, first off, I do not know what you are talking about. Second of all, are you talking about books? Custom media. What the heck is that? Is that a widget? What the heck is going on? So, as I went on, I took over the department in 2001 and started selling directly to these chief marketing officers and I would go in and I would be testing. Like branded content, custom media. I am testing everything.

And I started using content marketing in like 2001/2002, and they would kind of pick up in their chairs a little bit and say oh, content marketing. What is that? I think we do that. And they had no clue, but here is the thing that I learned. If you are selling marketing services to a marketer, you have to call it marketing. Direct marketing. Search marketing. Social media marketing. Content marketing. It is not rocket science. This is the thing you learn by going out there, and we were calling it custom publishing. No. What? Custom content. No. What? I do not know what that is.

So, that is what I really learned and that is when I started to think this whole industry is called something wrong and that there might be an opportunity there.

Michael: Exactly, because what do magazines do? We produce content. Useful content for end users. And you are trying to sell it to your customers who buy advertising or maybe do not buy advertising and they want to do marketing on their own. They want to be the thought leaders, and calling it custom publishing sort of makes it feel like well, that is what we do as Penton, so we are going to force that label on to you, our customer. Yeah, it made perfect sense.

It is funny how things have come all the way around or at least halfway around. Back then, custom publishing used to be sort of not the desired product line to run. If I look at the total revenue of Penton, and it was very

similar at my business because we did custom publishing for companies as well that wanted to be known as thought leaders, but did not have the know how to do it themselves, and so we would help them do it. It was a very small sliver of the overall revenue of the business

Joe: Well, you are being nice. That is where careers went to die is what it was. Really because a media company wanted to own all the assets, and custom publishing was contract for hire. So, basically we did not own that. We did not know if it would come back, although it is annuity business. If you sold two or three or four deals, those could be substantial multi-million-dollar deals, but they did not look at it that way, and this is the crazy thing, Michael. When a business medial company valued their company, they rarely looked at their custom publishing department. They just said whatever we can get, we can get that, like they did that was reprints. They did it with content syndication. Whatever we can get, we can get.

Well, now, today it has changed. I mean you have got companies like Buzzfeed. That is their entire business. So, who knew 15 years later.

Michael: Yeah, and that was my point. Today the focus on content marketing is so great, everybody talks about it. And how many people do you have going to your annual event?

Joe: We had about 35 hundred last year. We are shooting for four thousand. I think we had 55 countries in attendance last year.

Michael: Wow.

Joe: Yeah, it is just taking off. It is unbelievable.

Michael: Yeah, that is fantastic. So, you sort of figured out that the paradigm needed to switch. The label needed to switch when you were at Penton. And then you left Penton, and I remember when you left and you started a company called Junta42 because there used to be a blog aggregator at the time. I cannot remember what it is, but they covered you and they said he is leaving. He is going to go start this business called Junta42. What was that and what did you want to do with Junta42?

Joe: Okay, so I never tell this story anymore.

Michael: I love this story.

Joe: Everybody forgot but you. You are the only one that remembered that I had that (Unclear 8:26.3).

Michael: I think it is still on your LinkedIn profile. Oh no, it may not even be on your LinkedIn profile.

Joe: I think I took it off. We wiped it clean. It is gone. So, basically I had this executive position. I was VP of Penton Custom Media. Left in 2007. I always wanted to start my own business, and I had this idea to well, let's create a matching service, so basically an eHarmony for content marketing, if you will, to match up agencies that offer content marketing services, content services, and match them up with brands that are looking for agencies to help. And I was like this is brilliant. This will be awesome. Agencies would love to pay for this. Whatever. I was like what is the name?

The original name was - nobody knows this by the way - CustomPublishers.com. And I had the logo and everything, but then I remembered why am I using custom publishing when I know content marketing is the term, but I was like it is not there yet. I do not know if I can go in with content marketing. And I was like okay, well, let's think of the best web 2.0 name, because if you remember, there were these crazy names going on out there that have numbers in it. They made no sense, and I was like oh, shoot, we could do that, and I said oh, Junta. It is a dual meaning. It is revolutionary meaning, so I was thinking hey, this is a content marketing revolution, and then it actually means meeting. A sub-meeting. It is like getting two sides together.

So, I was like oh, we are trying to connect two sides, but Junta.com was not available and I did not want to pay the five or ten thousand bucks for it or whatever it was. I had no money at the time, so I was like oh, well, I just read Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, where 42 is the meaning of life in that book. I was like just put a 42 on it. It is perfect.

Michael: Exactly.

Joe: Everybody will think it is fantastic. So, okay, there you go. I went that direction and I will never do that again. I learned a lot, but it is very hard to brand yourself as sort of an obscure name, because if you are going to do that, it is fine, but you have got to put a lot of dollars against that to have people even to start typing that in. Then of course it was: is it Junta42? Is it Junta42? It does not matter. It is gone.

Michael: So, if the idea would have taken off, and it is easy to say taken off, like Uber did not take off till years later, but if the idea would have taken off, if both sides of that marketplace would have said yes, here is a lot of value and revenues went up, and I do not even know what your business model was, but you took a percentage let's say, could that have been a successful business name? Do you think you would have stayed with Junta42?

Joe: I probably would have changed it. I probably would have changed the name, and here is the issue. By the way, we matched up over a thousand companies with agencies, so it was working. The problem was that - okay, I will say this nicely - agencies and publishers are the cheapest people in the planet, and I have a lot of agencies that are friends of mine, but they do not spend a lot on marketing. So, we would deliver six-figure and seven-figure projects to them that they did not want to renew after it was done because they did not want to pay five or seven thousand dollars. And I was like are you kidding me?

So, anyways. It was the financial model because we were going after the agencies for the money, so basically that is how Content Marketing Institute evolved from Junta42, because all the money that came from the brands that had the big budgets that could pay for education and training and those types of things. So, we probably would have changed the name because every time I was going into a conversation, and this does not happen anymore. They say oh, where do you work, Joe? Oh, I am founder of Junta42. Okay, what is that? Now I say I am the founder of Content Marketing Institute, and they all say oh. They know. Content Marketing Institute. You are some kind of education, training. They get it right away.

So, now I am a believer that boring names are much better. Just tell them what you do and then you can get by that whole five-minute educational conversation and get to the real meat of what you want to talk about.

Michael: Yeah. Do your customers assume that your organization is a not-for-profit because it has a content marketing institute at the end?

Joe: So, it is interesting. In North America, not so much because there are so many for-profit institutes out there. In Europe, I get a lot of flack. They think that we are doing something deceitful in some cases.

Michael: Really.

Joe: Because an institute in parts of, I think, Germany or in the UK, you have to be a regulated body, not-for-profit, those types of things, so it is much, much different. Now, what is interesting is I got that idea from Peter Hoyt at an American Business Media meeting, because he started the Point of Purchase Institute from his media company and he said this was the greatest thing ever because it added more credibility just by changing the name from Hoyt Publishing to Point of Purchase Institute or whatever. In-Store Marketing Institute I think it was for a time, but he still uses that institute. Works really, really well for him, and I am like oh my gosh, maybe that is what we should do, and so I always thought about that.

So, as we evolved to an education and training model, we used that and it has worked really well.

Michael: Yeah, okay. So, you changed everything basically. You created a lot of relationships at Junta42 on both sides of the marketplace. And then what made you think I want to change my business model and instead of trying to pair them together, I am going to teach everybody, teach both sides how to do content marketing?

Joe: So, I can go on for a half hour with this, and I promise you I will not, so I am going to give you the very short. So, basically this is in September of 2009 and the Junta42 business was struggling. We were losing money and I

am thinking oh my gosh, I might have to go back and get a real job or something, but this entrepreneurship thing is not going to work. So, one of our agency clients who had been paying the annual fee did not re-up. And I looked to see who it was and I was like this was the one we gave our best million-dollar case study to, to a really big brand. So, we delivered them business that they only had to pay the five thousand dollars for, for a multi-million-dollar account and I was like there must be some kind of mistake.

Michael: Yeah.

Joe: Why wouldn't they re-up? And I called the CEO on the phone and I said to her. I was like is everything okay? There must be some mistake. Can I get your credit card information? Can we put this through? Get your membership going or whatever the case is. She says no, I think we can get better ROI somewhere else. And I literally almost dropped the phone, and I was like better ROI. If you get better ROI somewhere else, tell me.

Michael: Because I will go buy it, yeah.

Joe: I am going to go do that because I do not know how that is possible, and that is when I hung up the phone and I said oh my gosh, this is it. It is ruined. Two years wasting my time. I felt really sorry for myself for about two weeks. And then I started to go through all the feedback we were getting from the people engaging in the blog, and I was blogging about three times per week. All educational stuff, as you do. And all the emails and all the interest in me was around consulting, advisory work, training and education, and I was like oh my gosh, it has been hitting me the whole time what we should be selling. They have been telling us. The audience has been telling us, and I have been trying to sell this other product that nobody wants that has a terrible business model.

So, that is when I basically sat down. There is a (Unclear 16:27.7) can and I started to say we are going to have the number one online destination for content marketing education. We are going to have the number one event for content marketing education and content marketing. We are going to have the leading magazine in the industry, and that was in 2009. And then, by the middle of 2011, we had accomplished all three of those goals.

Michael: Yeah, and I do not think there was anybody at the time that was doing what you were doing in the B2B space. Was there?

Joe: You mean from like content marketing education?

Michael: Yeah.

Joe: No. So, the Custom Publishing Counsel, which became the Custom Content Counsel, had a little event. We worked with them on some stuff. I served on the board for a while, but everyone was dabbling in it. All the marketing media sites, like B2B Magazine, Adage, Advertising Week. They were all covering it, but still very small, so we saw there was an opportunity that we could own that category and just keep doing it. So, basically took what we had built in Junta42 and the blog and then just transitioned it over and over a period of six months just made that transition. Hey, ContentMarketingInstitute.com. It launched May 21, 2010, and right away it took off, and thankfully so because now I do not have to work for somebody else.

Michael: Exactly. Well, you do, but now you work for your staff and now you work for your customers that come to the events.

Joe: That is right. I always work. I work for my wife and my staff, and all that. That is a given, but I do not have to work for somebody else.

Michael: Exactly. Exactly. So, it is funny you say I am with Content Marketing Institute and it makes sense. It rolls off your tongue. People can understand what it is. But Content Marketing Institute. It is 25 characters. Three words. You tack a .COM on the end and that is a relatively long URL. I know you go by Joe, but if you went by Joseph, Joseph@ to the beginning of ContentMarketingInstitute.com and it has got to be like an 87 percent chance that somebody is going to type a graphical error or something on there.

Joe: Yeah, well, email addresses are shorter. So, we have ContentInstitute.com, is all the emails, so nobody would type in that. So,

basically we have ContentInstitute.com redirecting to ContentMarketingInstitute.com, so it works really well, but I really believed that we were going to dominate. The good part is I had a post called What is Content Marketing from Junta42 that was doing really well. It was always number one, two, or three in Google search terms, and I thought oh my goodness, if we started talking about content marketing on ContentMarketingInstitute.com, of course you get the double exposure there. Google really, really loves that. I was like this could really work out well as long as people can type that in.

But knowing, and you know this, most people do not type it in anymore. They go to Google or they get it or they click on it from a referral somewhere else, and it works really well. And it was a thought because I thought we could really get ContentMarketing.com to start, but I had no money at the time. Could not get that domain name. Somebody else owned it and what they wanted for it was just out of our price range and could not do it. So, I was like okay, this is what we are going to do. This is what we are going to do with the email, and it worked out pretty well.

Michael: Exactly. So, you knew your business plan, you had your business model, and you knew your path going forward. And if you could not get the domain name you wanted, you were going to go forth with whatever domain name you thought would work and just run a business.

Joe: Well, the great part was that ContentMarketingInstitute.com was available.

Michael: Hand registration.

Joe: Yeah.

Michael: Ten dollars. You cannot go wrong with that price.

Joe: I used a GoDaddy coupon code or something.

Michael: You probably got it for like two dollars.

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Joe: Yeah, it was real easy. They were giving it away. They were like nobody is going to buy that one. Are you kidding me? And by the way, we have all kinds of variations. I mean you put content marketing anything.

ContentMarketingAwards.com we have. We have all kinds of things.

Michael: How many domain names do you think you have related to content marketing today?

Joe: It is over 50. It is over 50 different domains that we have. Of course we have Intelligent Content Conference. It is our other brand that we have, because any time we would think about anything related to content marketing, I was like I have got to get that domain. At least just to have it to protect ourselves because of some of the issues we went through before and ContentMarketing.com not being available.

Michael: Yeah, and I did the exact same thing. I think today I probably own close to three hundred related to Six Sigma, the process improvement methodology that we publish on, so yeah, as a defensive registration you want to have it. You do not know where you might go in the future and having something that allows you to do special reports or salary surveys or whatever, you want to have that opportunity.

Joe: Well, some people collect stamps. Some people collect baseball cards. You and I - we collect domain names.

Michael: Exactly.

Joe: You obviously are more of an aficionado than I am.

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Michael: Yeah. So, Joe, in 2014, I got an email newsletter that listed different domain names for sale and one of them was ContentMarketing.com, and so I connected you via email with Andrew Rosener, who was the broker of the domain name, ContentMarketing.com. I told Andrew that I thought you are probably the perfect buyer, and I connected you two, and then I sort of dropped off the distribution because I did not want to make you feel uncomfortable or pressure anybody. It was not even my business. I am just a connector.

So, what happened after I connected you two via email?

Joe: Yeah, so I mean I of course had always been interested in that domain name. I do not want to go through the specifics of it, but if it would have been a reasonable price point, I would have probably jumped at the chance. I felt that it was overpriced, specifically because if you want to make that work, you cannot just put up Google ads and put up some redirected links and think that you are going to get any kind of significance with that site. I mean you would have to really do something with it. The only thing we would have done with it is redirected it to Content Marketing Institute.

Now, because we have over two thousand amazing articles that are really well indexed into Google already and we built that asset at ContentMarketingInstitute.com, I was doing the math and I was like you know what. Whoever owns ContentMarketing.com would have to be prolific over a five-year period of time just to even come close to catching up with us and to what we were doing. And so, I was thinking this is not strategic.

Michael: Hey Joe, hold on one second. The audio had a little bit of a lag.

Joe: Can you hear me now?

Michael: I can. Okay, so you were saying that somebody else, if they wanted to try and reproduce what you were doing at ContentMarketingInstitute.com on ContentMarketing.com, it would take an enormous amount of effort over an extended period of time, like five years, to try and get the same sort of love and backlinks and notoriety that you have.

Joe: Yeah, and as a defensive move for us only, we did not think it was worth the money. Now, granted, if somebody came back to us at a decent price point and said Joe, now here it is at this price point, I probably would be a buyer, but I still think it was unreasonable because the asset was only in the name and the work would have to be done. Now, if somebody is willing to do the work, great name. Absolutely.

Michael: Yeah, sure, and that takes a lot more money besides just buying the domain name. It takes time. It takes staff. All that takes money.

Joe: Yeah.

Michael: So, just to set some context, and I do not know exactly what numbers were quoted or anything, but I think they were asking two to three hundred thousand dollars originally for the domain name.

Joe: Yeah, that is right.

Michael: And this was not quite two years ago, right round two years let's say. At that point in time, that kind of expenditure did not make sense from a business perspective for you. If it would have been in the hundred thousand dollars, would that have made sense for you?

Joe: It would have had to be less than that.

Michael: Less than that.

Joe: It would have to be just because there is no way that I could get return off of that because of the fact, and you know this. I mean you look at the data. Fewer and fewer people are typing in the domain. They are not typing in content marketing. So, all the value is how you are found on the web. We are found pretty well in just about any site on the planet because of all the work that we had put into it, so the only benefit would be if somebody actually typed in ContentMarketing.com or one of our competitors cannot get it. So, we had a team meeting about it. What is the value of one of our competitors or one of our sponsors let's say not having that? It just was not there.

Michael: Yeah. So, you never thought let's just change the URL, because some people do type it in, and what if we just had ContentMarketing, which matches the exact same thing that we defined. This is our segment of the industry. That was never really the primary discussion for you.

Joe: Let me put it this way. Maybe this will answer it better for you. If I had the funds, let's say I was a funded startup, going back to 2010, I probably would buy it at let's say that hundred thousand number. I am like oh, this is great. This perfectly positions. I am Joe@ContentMarketing.com. This is everything we would want. That is perfect. But since we went four or five years and really built this asset already, we already did all the hard, heavy lifting. People already know who we are. It did not make sense from that standpoint. But yeah, if I was going back in time, I would be a little more anxious to get that, because yeah, typing in content marketing. I get it wrong sometimes. Oh man, I missed that. You type fast. You miss some.

Michael: Right, and you know people are going to go to Content Marketing World. I do not know. It is shorter. It is still not that short. It is not CM.com or something like that. Did you ever discuss a payment plan for the domain name, Joe? Did that every come up?

Joe: It never came up.

Michael: Never came up.

Joe: Yeah, I did not even know. I mean do you know how much it sold for?

Michael: No, I do not.

Joe: Yeah, I should probably check on that and see. I mean it would just be interesting. I just saw the number right away and I told the guys if you can get that, good luck.

Michael: And that was it.

Joe: Because somebody has got a pile of money laying around and I am like I do not know. If somebody would want to use that as a microsite. Now, if you are going to use it as your main business, that is something altogether, but I will tell you what. There is actually Content-Marketing.com that just became available too, and I did not think that that was valuable enough to put into.

Michael: Go for that.

Joe: Yeah.

Michael: Yeah, okay, so it is interesting. I asked you on here because you are a businessman, but you also understand publishing and you understand the value of a brand and a domain name as well, and a lot of people I speak to do not realize that this is a high-value asset that could significantly impact, improve your business, but they do not realize that, just like a home or a car that you can make payments on, you can on domain names as well. And leasing a domain name with a payment option may not have been presented to you, so that is why I wanted to ask.

If it would have been presented to you, Joe, if you had negotiated a reasonable amount, and I think probably around one hundred thousand dollars probably would have been reasonable, and they said hey Joe, if you could pay two thousand dollars per month for 12, 18, 24 months and then a balloon payment at the end, would that have made you think like my business is growing, cash flow is manageable, and I think if I get to where I want to be, then I could buy that domain name? Would that have been something you would have considered seriously?

Joe: You are having me have second thoughts about this now. You know this, right? Now I am thinking maybe I should get it. What are you trying to do to me? Yes, I would have considered it more, and I guess that is the issue in maybe the person who was selling it. They probably had some interest, so they did not care about me. So, if they had interest at that two hundred or three-hundred-thousand price point, great. They were like okay, Joe is not interested. We will go on. But if there was not that interest, it would have been interesting to say hey, here is how we can work with you, just like you do with a house or a car, or whatever the case is.

So, yeah, I probably would have investigated a little bit more, saying hey, it is not that risky of a deal where I am taking two hundred thousand dollars in cash right out of the account and have to worry about doing something with that immediately. I could tuck it to the side and we could fit it in strategically over time.

Michael: Yeah, cool. All right, Joe, let me ask you about your new book, Content Inc., which people can go check out on Amazon.com right now. Most people have heard of Copyblogger. I cannot imagine anybody that is running an online business today that has not heard of Copyblogger, the website that taught others how to be better online writers for businesses. I almost look at it as the individual version of your B2B training organization at Content Marketing Institute.

In your book, you present a new content marketing model. Why was Copyblogger featured as one of the prominent stories in your Content Inc. book?

Joe: It is interesting. So, of course this is my fourth book, and the third book, Epic Content Marketing, was all about the enterprise, so for really, really big companies. And when I would go out and do speeches and talk to small businesses, they were always like Joe, Epic is great, but it is really for big businesses, and I am like yeah, it is. It is absolutely. I mean you can get value out of it, but it is for complex content marketing challenges that enterprises have to deal with. And they would always say boy, I wish you would have

one just for small businesses, so that was the one thing. I would always get that question, so that is my next book.

I have to write the one for small businesses, and I am starting to think. I am like okay, well, we could talk about the story of Content Marketing Institute. How we used very little funds and how we built. How we used this particular model to get interest, to build an audience over time, and then to monetize that audience. And then I am like oh, well my friend Brian did this. Brian Clark at Copyblogger did the same thing, and so interviewed him. And then we went out to about 25 other businesses, whether it was YouTube or iTunes, or however they built that and leveraged it with their website, and we looked at every one of those models.

So, all these 20 to 25 companies had all become multi-million-dollar companies, successful, and they all did it the same way. They built an audience first and then they added on products once they had the audience that knows, likes and trusts them, and then they started to sell stuff. And I was working with the editorial team and I was like let's see if they are all doing the same things. Is there a model here? We went back, and this was the most exciting thing, Michael. Yes, there was a model and they all followed six steps. They were not always in the same timeline, but they all followed the same six steps from the sweet spot to the content tilt to building the base to harvesting the audience to diversifying to monetization.

And I was like oh my gosh, this is amazing. This is like a blueprint for any company that would want to build basically a publishing platform, but do it with little or no resources. As long as you have got patience and time and you focus on that content niche, you can make it happen. So, that is what the book is about. It goes through here are the six steps. Here is how you can make it happen. We have got ultimately about 50 case studies in there and B2B and B2C and non-profit, and it is probably my favorite book of the four just because of the fact that I think it could help more people.

There are so many people out there that are struggling. They are creating content. They are kind of all over the place, and I am like do not do that. Do this. Be really focused. Focus on a particular audience. Find your content tilt, where you actually are telling a different story. Pick a platform. Pick a

content type. Be really diligent about that. Focus on driving email subscribers. That will be your key to revenue generation. And it is a really simple model that most people do not do, and so I am just out there kind of spreading the word, saying just do this. Do not screw around anymore.

Michael: Yeah, and it is so smart. I was chatting with an industry colleague just the other day, Adam (Unclear 33:25.9), about how long it takes to build that audience of fans. And I was remembering back to my early days starting iSixSigma.com, when I was in Corporate America, working on it at night. I would get on a schedule. I would find out what I am doing differently than the industry organization. I would write it with a really authoritative sort of practical approach to getting into Corporate America and doing these process improvement techniques. And it took two years, but at the end of two years, I was now generating enough revenue to match my salary at GE, and that was the point where I said if I leave now, I could probably focus on it one hundred percent. I can focus on it one hundred percent grow it even more, and I took that leap.

Two years. How long do you say in your book it takes somebody to focus and build that audience?

Joe: So, this is perfect. Actually for us, it was 24 months and the average of all the case studies we looked at from start to monetization was 15 to 18 months. So, the shortest one we have in the book is nine months. The longest one is about 36. So, if you look at that, and that is where I basically tell anyone. It is like hey, if you want to see results in six to nine months, do not do content marketing. Do not do this model. Go buy advertising. Go do something else. But if you have patience and you want to build a long-term asset that you could monetize for years and years and years, do this model, but you have to be patient.

And by the way, that is why large businesses are really bad at this, because they just do this in campaigns. And if it is a nine-month or 12-month campaign, they build up a little mini asset and then they go do something else. And I am like why are you doing this? Do not do that. Act like a media company.

Michael: Right, the strategy is in the corporation and they do not have the patience to put somebody on it and have them really dedicated and focused for 18 months to 24 months.

Joe: That is exactly right. I should have used you as a case study. I totally forgot about it.

Michael: Well, it is funny, because I feel the exact same thing on DomainSherpa. I started it because I wanted to help entrepreneurs figure out how to get the best domain name for them, and I thought here is this domain name industry that is opaque, that people cannot figure out the rules. It is hard to understand. It is hard to value. And what I realized by getting into it was that people in the industry had that exact same feeling as well, and so I bring on industry experts to talk about it, to shed some light on it.

I still have plenty of people. I go to industry conferences nowadays and people still say what does DomainSherpa do, which is fine, but I feel like I actually have got traction and our traffic started to grow more significantly at probably about the 18-month time period, just doing it regularly. Week in, week out, and I started off publishing twice per week and then moved now to once per week. One really good show, like a Joe Pullizi. How often should people that are following your methodology in Content Inc., Joe? How often should they publish? What is the right number?

Joe: So, first off, I just have to say as long as you have a different story to tell, like that is the first thing. Do not just think you are going to create any old content. Does not work. You have to be telling a different story to a very particular audience, like you and I are trying to do. Okay, great. When you get to building the base, which is the third step, there are four parts to that. One is focus on one content type for the most part. Is it audio? Is it video? Is it textual? Be the best at one of those. One content platform. Is my blog a website? Is it iTunes? Is it YouTube? Whatever. Consistently deliver. So, this is the whole thing.

Now, my thing is there is no frequency holy grail here. It is just that you have to be consistent. So, with you, you are doing it once per week. You are doing it once per week at the same time. Every week you are delivering that value.

Great. We blog seven times per week. Every day it is released at seven 'o clock Eastern time in the morning like clockwork. John (Unclear 37:21.5) of Entrepreneur on Fire. He is on his something like 1300th podcast in a row. He delivers a podcast 3:30AM Eastern time every day, and he does records eight podcasts every Sunday, at least that is what he was doing when we interviewed him. I have been on his show a couple times.

Sometimes it is two times per week. Sometimes it is five times per week. Generally you see at least weekly. You see at least weekly. A weekly podcast. A weekly video. A weekly blog post. If you are there every other week or monthly, it is just hard to get enough traction to have them think about you consistently. So, I would say at minimum weekly, but whatever you do, make sure it is consistently. So, if you are just going to do a month, whatever the case, make sure it is the same time every month, but I would probably say at least weekly. Same time every week.

Michael: So, is that really the key, Joe? That you are creating content that your audience looks forward to, maybe cannot live without, maybe looks forward to, maybe really enjoys, but you want to actually modify their weekly schedule in some way so that they can figure out when they are going to consume your content.

Joe: Yeah, you have to be must see TV.

Michael: Right, exactly.

Joe: People think today that because of social media it does not matter. It absolutely matters. My kids who follow some of these YouTubers. My sons are 12 and 14. By the way, these YouTubers are following the same model that you and I are following, which is crazy. They know on which day they release at what time, and they go to the computers and wait right there and they are one of the first ones to watch it. That is brilliant!

Michael: Yeah. Are they following Dan and Phil on YouTube?

Joe: Yeah.

Michael: My 13-year-old daughter does the exact same thing. And so, for those that are maybe from outside the U.S., watching this show, Joe made reference to a must see TV, which back in the - I do not know - '90s, '80s.

Joe: '80s, yeah.

Michael: Late '80s, early '90s was like every Thursday night, starting at 8PM. 8PM was sort of the major time.

Joe: Yeah, it was Cosby Show, Family Ties, Cheers, and Night Court. And then Friends came in later. They kept rolling it around and then Friends and Seinfeld came around, so they just moved into that. They did it for 20 years. It is unbelievable.

Michael: Exactly. That is must see TV. People would get together. They would make sure they ate dinner before they would sit down in front of the TV, on the couch, as a family and watch that series of shows. They had a lock on it. And that is what you really want people to do with your content from what I take from your book, is that you want them to change their pattern. If you are producing such good content, they are going to make sure that they download it before they make the trek into Corporate America in their commute or they are going to set aside time to watch it at night, or whatever it is, but they need to know which days are coming out, what time, and you need to be consistent.

Joe: So, I will give you an example. I mean this is a terrible example for us, but it is amazing how you get people programmed to this. So, our podcast, This Whole Marketing. So, we are on episode 123 now for that, so we have been doing it for over two years. We had some technical glitches with the server, and it usually goes out Monday evening. Every Monday evening like clockwork. About the same time depending on when it sends and hits the server. If, for some reason, it got held up and it did not go out until the Tuesday morning, I have got so many complaints on social media.

Where is it? Where is it? What happened? Where did you guys go? I am really disappointed. I was on my commute this morning and it is not there. And I am like well, first of all, this is terrible. Who is in trouble? Who is

going to get fired over this? And the second thing is oh my gosh, this is working.

Michael: This is awesome.

Joe: This is awesome. We are getting people complaining, and it is marketing by the way. It is a marketing show. We are marketing our products and services, and they actually want it like it is going to help them with their lives, jobs, and that is what it is for. So, that is what everyone needs to do with that, and you do not build that relationship, as you said, right away. It takes time to do that. That is your promise to your customers, that content consistency, and you cannot just be like a lot of other companies, like oh, hey, it is blog post time. Who is doing the blog? We better go get it. Is Bob doing it? Is Sue doing it? Let's go get that, and then it ends up being not very good and you get what you pay for.

Michael: Yeah, speaking of must see TV, I think the TV behind you that is embedded into your wall there, Joe, was the one I used to watch must see TV on back in the '80s. It looks like you have the knob that maybe you pull out to turn it on and the channel changer.

Joe: Yeah, it is a beauty. Actually the whole back end of the other room is all exposed, so I am still trying to figure out how to get it to work, but I am going to do it. I am going to absolutely do it.

Michael: All right. So, if somebody - maybe they do not consider themselves a marketer. Maybe they are an entrepreneur. Maybe they are just somebody that is trying to build up their following. What do they need to know about the difference between producing useful content and just producing content?

Joe: Well, it has to be useful, relevant, and compelling. And if you are just producing content, I mean anything is content. Anything we engage in is content. What we want to do is we want to make an emotional impact on a person in some way so that they maintain or change their behavior. It has got to be useful. It has got to be interesting. So, 99 percent of the businesses out there are just creating content. They are just the regular old blog post. They

are putting up Facebook posts or Twitter posts, or their podcasts about their products and services.

And you have to remember, and this is the hard thing for a company because when you are an entrepreneur of a small business, you think well, this is a great business model. This is going to work. You have got all this energy, but you have got to remember that nobody cares about your products and services. You have got to get them to care, but you are not going to do that by talking about your products and services. You have got to do that by solving your customer's pain points. So, once they know, like and trust you, because you are talking to them and you are giving them all this, then they will say oh, I really like this guy, this company, this whatever, this brand. What do they have to offer?

Back to the Copyblogger example. Brian Clark blogged about online copywriting and search for 19 months without selling anything. Now I think they are going to do 15 million dollars plus in business this year. And from basically just blogging and just delivering value he has over two thousand email subscribers now by following the same Content Inc. model we talk about and now we are there. So, the point is you have got to make sure if you are creating content that this is not for you. Yes, you have a business goal. You want to drive sales, save costs, deliver to loyal customers and make them more loyal, but the content has to be about the audience just like an Inc. Magazine or an Entrepreneur Magazine, or like what you were doing at SixSigma or what you are doing right now. It has to be of value because if it is not, you are never going to sell them anything.

Michael: Yeah, definitely. And when I think about Copyblogger.com, the promise that he made is right there in the domain name. He is going to teach you how to write copy for your blog and he has got some of the most shared headlines ever. How to get your emails opened, and he would give you examples of how to do that, and each one of those would be a blog. So, he really understood who he was writing for and what they wanted and the types of content that would get them to be loyal followers.

Joe: So, think about this. You and I met at the American Business Media meeting. American Business Media. Another thing. Boring name, but says

what it is, right? All the companies there for the most part - I would say 95 percent - had very boring name that said what they are. Microwaves and RF Magazine. Industry Week Magazine for manufactures. Really boring. And then, when you think about domain names, it is the same thing. And so, when I was like oh, it has got to be slick. It has got to be new. It has got to be different. Sometimes when you just tell them what it is, it just makes everything a lot easier. At least that is what I have found. So, as we continue to launch new programs and new sub-businesses or whatever, I always think about that to just say if you can get by that educational process and just say what you do and then fulfill that promise of the domain name, it makes everything a lot easier.

Michael: Yeah, and so in today's day and age, and you made reference to it earlier, the domain name plays less of a function because people do go and immediately search or they get a newsletter for content that they like and they just click on the link to read it on their phone or wherever. What advice do you have for entrepreneurs that are looking to take your advice that you just gave? Just tell them what you do in the domain name. What advice do you have for them starting business that are thinking about getting great domain names that are maybe more imaginative versus ones that describe what they do? Would you always recommend that somebody get a ContentMarketingInstitute.com type domain name?

Joe: So, there is no one way to do it. I cannot say that one is right and one way is wrong, but this is what I can say. If you are going with a name that you have to get out there that does not necessarily mean anything, like a Nike, what is Nike? That does not mean anything to anybody. I have got to put a lot of money behind that so people know that they sell outdoor wear and shoes and whatnot. You just have to be prepared to spend a heck of a lot more money on marketing to get that name out there then because you have got to remember.

So, we do not have to do that at Content Marketing Institute. You do not have to do that. Copyblogger does not necessarily have to do that. Media companies do not have to do that for the most part depending on how it works. So, you just have to be prepared for that. So, if you are going to go the sexy domain name way, which absolutely may work - you have got some

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great business cards and great logo and whatnot -, I would put some more money on the marketing side in the budget to make sure that you get more awareness out there because people are not going to know that right offhand what you do.

Michael: Great advice. If you are watching this show and you have questions, please post them in the comments below the video on DomainSherpa and I will Joe to come back and answer as many as he can.

Joe Pullizi, Founder of the Content Marketing Institute and Author of the book, Content Inc.: How Entrepreneurs Use Content to Build Massive Audiences and Create Radically Successful Businesses. Thanks for coming on the Domain Sherpa Show, sharing your journey, helping us learn more about how content marketing can help us grow our businesses, and thanks for being a Domain Sherpa for others.

Joe: Awesome. Thank you. It was great. A lot of fun.

Michael: Thank you all for watching. We'll see you next time.

Watch the full video at:

<http://www.domainsherpa.com/joe-pulizzi-cmi/>