
InTransition Ep 16 - David Hohnke

David P: Hello ladies and gentleman and welcome to InTransition, the podcast that explores content marketing in government. My name's David Pembroke and thank you very much for joining us once again.

Content marketing is a strategic business process that involves the creation, curation and distribution of useful, relevant, and consistent content designed to meet the needs of a specific audience in order to achieve a desired citizen or stakeholder action. It's a modern approach that combines the power of strategic communication planning with the distribution of online and offline channels.

Well, today I am joined by Mr. David Hohnke who is the director of communications for ACTEW Water in Canberra in Australia. And David, Thank you very much for joining us.

David H: Thanks for having me here. It's good to be along.

David P: Dave, let's get the David Hohnke story. How did you come from wherever you came from to be the communications director of the Water Utility for the Australian Capital to a territory in Australia.

David H: Well, in a weird kind of a way this is the complete loop for me now. I literally started off I remember as a very young child, my grandmother gave me a radio and the radio actually had a microphone with it and I just went around recording myself and my siblings; and I had a good time.

David P: You sound like a radio guy.

David H: Oh, thank you! I've got a face like a radio guy too, I've been told. I'll just do magic tricks for radio later.

And we did just have a ball with this radio which had a microphone and cassette, that's literally how long ago it was. For me it was just a real genuine interest in liking the sound of my own voice but literally recording conversations and getting into it that way. Then through my father and cricket being the great Australian game that it was, in the States it's baseball in other parts of the world, it's a bit different.

We grew up with cricket and cricket was always on the radio and for Australian listeners and English listeners even they would appreciate the great old times of Alan McGilvray, very popular Australian radio broadcaster of the world for 50 odd years; I'm calling the great game.

I grew up with a passion for cricket and I grew up with a passion for listening to it on the radio. We used to drive around of a car that didn't have a cassette. They just had the radio. So for me, I got into radio at a young age, literally then at the age of about 14, started in community radio. Then, I was fortunate enough to go to the Australian Film Television and Radio School later in life.

Then took on radio as that's just what I wanted to do and I had sort of my own career goals and things that I always just wanted to achieve. Then, after a while in radio I went from Sydney to Canberra eventually amongst other destinations around Australia. Got into television here in Canberra and then from that I did a number of roles on camera, off camera in the programming area as well; got a real deep understanding of how to use that medium and the Internet as it were.

After getting a real appreciation of what the radio just was to, the two of very similar but very different. So the way I'll describe in radio is the speed boat it can change direction, you're in total control. Television is very powerful but it's like QE2 or battleship; hard to change course; has a lot of engine room, a lot of people go to make the end product. Wherein radio, as we're doing now, you can sit down with a microphone or two, hit record and away you go, you're master of your own destiny.

From that, took a step out of television into a number of other roles and had held down marketing in journalism kind of roles as well. I finished an MBA, so tried to get the business sort of sense behind me. And then found myself with a bit of a tool kit that said, "When you can communicate and you got a bit of business now, where does that lead you to?"

I love thoroughly getting behind the microphone as were doing now but I really enjoy that commercial side of life as well and what it means to actually run a business, being involved in the business scene and all those areas, finance, HR, all the different mechanism that makes up a business output.

So from that, I a round about kind of way I ended out finding myself at ACTEW Water, the ACT Electricity Water-Water (that's a bit of a bizarre name). That's what I called water utility in town. We're in the process of changing our name to ICON Water and so that new brand and new identity is coming out in the next few months and in the next couple of years.

David P: Okay, we'll come to that in a moment because that's really is the purpose of what we're discussing is really water utility. Now, water utilities all around the world have the same sort of challenges. We'll come to that in a moment but what did you learn in radio that you're applying to your job today?

David H: Communication needs to be personal and relevant, tap into emotion and have a call to action. They're almost mind-sets that in radio, I did what you typically do in radio stations. You started out and you do every kind of job under the sun.

I ended up being a creative director at one stage; so learning how to write commercials and write promotions and putting together that side of life and learned from some amazing people in that sense from Australia. Also, a lot of time on air and a lot of time in the production studio.

So what it does, it really gives you the ability to find out what a message is; sell the message. That doesn't means selling the commercial sense but actually make it convincing, make it pointed and give a call to action out of it. That can be anything

from how you package up a product to literally sell for a client to how you tap into the emotions of an audience to help them get on board, raise money for charity or get behind a promotion or a theme or an event that you're actually pushing.

David P: But what's your method for distilling the essence of a simple message? How do you go about trying to pull it all apart to find that key bit that's really going to drive the action?

David H: You really need to know who you're talking to and the best way to talk to that audience, that's one thing I've found. So even in a corporate sense when you bring what you've learned in a typical commercial radio sort of sense. How do then pull that back out; make a relevance and tapping into emotion and actually make it relevant to the particular audience and what do they care about and why do they care about it and why should they care about what you're telling them?

David P: How do you actually then sit down and try to put yourself in the audience's shoes to try to gather those insights? Because really, what you're describing is content marketing. That it's really not about what you want to say, it's about what the audience needs to know and wants to understand.

David H: Yeah, it's very important that you understand the profile of your audience and the profile of the message and the intent behind the message. You really can't do the second hand car salesman trick of trying to sell someone a lemon or trying to convince them of something they can't be convinced of.

For example, in a corporate sort of sense it's really about saying, "What are we trying to achieve here and why are we trying to achieve this?":

So it might be something as simple as saying, look, the managing director, the head of a company, the head of the organization, really wants to be able to say to the audience; its own might be internal, might be external. That we need them to understand a certain principle or a certain issue.

Then once you understand the parameters around that and why that needs to occur, it sense sort of saying, "Well, who are we saying this to, why we saying it to them and also what's the best way to say it to them?" And that includes timing in messaging, how you message that and also the channels that you're actually using to.

David P: Okay, that's from radio, what about from TV. What did you learn from TV that's helping you to do a good job today?

David H: Sure. Radio and content marketing almost collide in a sense because TV is a very powerful medium in the sense that pictures rule, pictures mean everything in television. Hence, if you have a great news story but no pictures really in a sense you have nothing; that's when you see reporters talking to reporters and you see a lot of other issues. People are trying to cover up the fact that we don't have the vision that we'd like to have.

So where television is incredibly powerful with pictures and incredibly powerful with emotions but where television is just starting to turn the corner a little bit is we can't really interact with our audience that well or that efficiently. Radio it's a matter of just saying, "Call me now. Talk to me now. We'll get you in the air. We'll have a conversation and we'll get you to contribute."

Television we've got to get not just the audio but we have to get pictures and pictures in remote locations – big expense? It can be. Although, with the invention and the use of things like Skype, Facebook, Twitter, all those things that you can integrate into the program is being able to say, "For years you sat on the couch watching us. Having your own conversation; have the conversation now with us, about us and for us. "

David P: Now, you've arrived in a utility. So you've got this kit bag of media skills, you've got your MBA as well and you've arrive in this water utility. And it just so happens now that the great gift of technology means that this water utility can now be a media company.

So how do you go about starting to talk to the water engineers and the chief financial officers, and all these other people who've been in the business of delivering water services to explain to them that the great gift of technology now means that they cannot only do that but they can also engage with their customers directly on a daily basis through multiple channels should they so choose?

David H: It's a little bit scary but it's incredibly exciting as well so...

David P: Did they get it?

David H: They do and they don't. I think this is not just in the water utility since it's across the board in organizations and it's a generational shift as well. So what you tend to get in in a lot of organizations and I'm not just talking about ICON water in this instance; pick any organization you tend to get the senior management and the board and so forth, tend to be over generation which didn't grow up with the technology. Therefore, they tend to grasp little bit slower. How do we use these? What's the reason behind it? What's the best way? Are you sure? Etcetera. You always get that.

David P: Sorry to jump in but are they getting it better now?

David H: Absolutely.

David P: Because they're observing their own behaviours?

David H: I think so. And also they're observing the behaviours around them in a business sense but in a personal sense as well.

David P: Yeah.

David H: So when Facebook first came along and when Twitter and all these bits of social media came along, it was something that other people did. Now in everyday life it's

something that everyone does, whether it's your wife, your husband, your partner, your kids, whomever...

David P: Your grandmother?

David H: You don't have a choice.

David P: Your grandfather?

David H: Exactly right. Now, more and more, you are the one who is isolated from the technology, not you're the exception rather than the rule now. So the rule is we have to use this and the rule is your audience is using this. So I'd like to say internally to a lot of people I've talked to, the conversation is already happening in the room. It's your choice whether you want to go in the room and be part of that conversation. At times stick up for yourself, at times guide the conversation but at least you need to be there hearing what's going on.

David P: But you're finding those very intelligent people. These people are not board directors, they're not CEOs, if they don't have large amounts of intelligence and my firm belief is that we're certainly across that chasm, that people are now into it.

But it's how do we do it in a way that it is strategic, that is manageable, that is accountable, that is measurable in order for this activity, be it the creation, curation of video, audio, stills or text or graphics in order to drive back towards a business objective.

So how do you then start that process of saying, "Okay, you've got it. I've got it. This is what I want to do." How do you start to sell that in so it starts to happen?

David H: Well the channel is through Facebook, and all those sort of iterations. What we always seen is being exactly that social media; things you did in your spare time, personally you did at home. So making it relevant to the business sense and saying to the organization, "You know what? This just isn't a spare time hobby. This is actually a credible conversation and a credible tool and channel that you can use to actually get business results in a lot of different ways."

There are times when you need to almost tick and flick from the list to say, "We're not going to engage that way. We will in this way." That's all fine but once you've actually solve the credible option and the fact that it's happening; it's not a choice to get on the train, the train is the only train leaving now. You want to be on it or not, that's pretty much what it comes down to.

David P: Okay. Let's get into some real concrete examples of how you have used content and content marketing to achieve some business objectives within the water utility you work for.

David H: Sure. So we have an incredible story of being a water utility and most water utilities do, in fact I'll say all water utilities do, it just happens to be a different story depending on where they are.

David P: Really visual stories aren't there?

David H: They're incredibly and they're incredible because when water comes out of your tap all you think of is, "I turn the tap and it comes out." We don't actually have an appreciation of where this comes from. The water utility...

David P: As you take a glass of water.

David H: As you do. As a California water story is incredible but it's unique to California in the sense; they got a desert country. Similar story to what we have here in Australia with Adelaide. It's a different story again to what happens here in the ACT in this Australian capital territory. We're very fortunate, waterfalls in a very natural catchment in the mountains. It falls down; it comes down to our dams which are gravity fed.

We've then a very fortunate city; that were not a city that just happened, we're a city that was very well planned and catered for. Water was one of the very first things ever thought of for the ACT.

So in the water story, it was thought let's actually make the ACT where the water falls naturally in a catchment. So we're at an advantage. We didn't just happen to think, "Wow, we're going to find out how we're going to get water here." We actually had a very well thought-out, very well planned method in catching water.

So water basically falls in the catchment, we pipe it into quite a large network of dams. We then pump it in a treatment facility. It gets treated but we don't have to treat that heavily because the water falls so naturally and falls in naturally protected national parks, therefore it's not in farming lands, it's not land that actually denigrates the product to a degree.

Comes in, we pipe to reservoirs, 47 odd reservoirs around the ACT. It comes to your tap; you consume it. We regularly rate one of the highest in the country for water quality. And we haven't had to treat it too much.

You then consume it and then goes down to the pipes as waste water; it gets taken out to a sewage treatment plant. And we're in in land city, so again we can't just pop it out to ocean outfall. We actually then have to treat it at a very, very high standard and then we put it back into the river at a standard which is comparable to how it came in.

And so our water cycle story is incredibly unique, incredibly powerful. So good as the quality as it goes in that some of the older engineers will for a bit of a stunt; take a glass of water as it comes out the outfall pipe and take a drink because that's how confident they are in the quality that we've treated it to. It's an incredible story then goes downstream and then other towns and cities use it as it goes down the river system.

David P: But how do you make people care about that great story when really all I really care about is, is it coming out of the tap and does it taste okay?

David H: Well this is where our story in content marketing and social media really do collide very well. So for us traditionally, you'd really have to, traditionally maybe take a television crew camera out there and do something similar to that. It is a story that you can tell on radio, paint some pictures, you can literally get people in buses and we've done that before and take them out.

With the power of social media and sharing and people wanting this sort of content that is almost the hidden treasure of the story. We take turn to tap on; it just happens; we flush the toilet; it goes away. We don't understand what happens in the middle to a degree. If we are doing our job well; we're being taken for granted; that's another bonus.

So what we've done, we managed to get some real good content marketing around the bits and pieces that people don't know about. The way we treat the sewers is a great example and the sewage treatment plant that we had at Lower Molonglo here in the ACT.

It really tells us incredible story of how it comes in. We literally treat it with a furnace, with some bugs, with some chemicals and then we can actually put it out to a river system that actually has shortly downstream, a whole platypus colony that is well taken care of.

David P: But do you think people will still care about that? Do they still really want to know about what happens behind the clean glass of water?

David H: I think they do because it's a concept that people take for granted and we like to know, we're inquisitive by nature. And when you can actually tap in and tell them not just this is the story but this is what it means to you. And for us it's really about we build; we guard; we sustain the environment as well. We're here for generations to prosper here in the ACT.

So when you start to talk to them on their level about what matters to them. Here in the ACT, we're very environmentally aware; very environmentally conscious. When you start talking to them on their level and that's what we're doing for the environment then the penny starts to drop. They want to know more.

David P: And how have you told that story? Video's obviously a key component but have you used the personalities of the people? Who are the people, who are the guardians of the clean water?

David H: Very much so. Notionally, here in the ACT, we're a water utility who is this year 100 years old. So we have an incredible story to tell. We were here literally before the capital city was derived.

We have some people in the business and this blows my mind. We're 100 years this year. We have some staff members who have been here for 50 years in the organization and they're literally up to retirement date, but they enjoyed doing what they do so much they almost refuse to give-up. They're part of the system; part of the network. So we've used these characters and these personalities and these absolute astounding guardians of knowledge and corporate knowledge.

They are the people who look at pictures from the Second World War, and they'll say, "I was there that day and I was the person putting in that pipe or what have you." So it's an incredible story to tell. We've used those people. They really tell a story in a relatable way because we have 400 of people on our books in our employ, and they are our local Canberrans, every single one of them.

In some parts of the business, we have people who've been here for three generations. We have grandfathers, we have fathers, and we have daughters working in the business. And they have almost a family history within the business itself and we got a few of those people. Being able to tap into that local knowledge, that local personality, and that local relevance is so vital to our story.

David P: Are they reluctant to tell their story given that they've been water people and they're not perhaps story tellers or what's traditionally been seen as the story teller?

David H: And that's part of this new content marketing concept. So before, they weren't really the people you go to or if you got it, you maybe get a quote or two. You might put it in the media release. They might get a grab or two on radio or in television sense we might use that, seven second grab of them on the news, talking about a particular issues.

These days with content marketing you are really the curator of your own destiny in the sense that you can make the piece as long or short, as relevant as you need to. In an initial sense, yeah there a little bit fearful or little bit, "How's this going to play out."

Once they get into talking about their passion. If you've been somewhere 50 years, you're pretty passionate about it. Once they get in to tell their story, you find them bursting at a scene just to give over their knowledge, their advice, and their perspective too. So they've really come along the journey as well.

David P: So, no lack of story tellers, no lack of stories. How are you going to organize this in such a way that ACTEW Water is taking advantage of being a media company? So as you are out there through multiple channels everyday telling your story. How do you organize your team to deliver that output?

David H: Really it gets down to a few things, work out what you want say; why you want to say it; how you're going to say it; what channel are you going to say it; who you're going to say it to. And for us a lot of competing demands.

So for example, we might use Twitter in the sense of saying, we have a burst pipe, or we have an issue that we need highlighting, this is how we communicate that the issues happened, come back to the website for more details. We might use YouTube in a sense of wanting to explain things a bit further such as our longer content marketing pieces. And so the story goes on with our channels.

The best way to then pull that back and say, we're going to have a bit of a planned approach here. So the planned approach comes really down to a publishing calendar for us to systematically work out.

You know once or twice a day, we're going to publish here and what we're going to publish; how are we going to publish; and to whom are we going to publish; will then dictate the channels and what imagery we use. Do we use a voice, is it media grabs, is it media release, is it a still picture of something, is it a promotional or is it something that we engage with a trending topic or is it something we just have in Instagram itself?

So there's a lot of different levers we can pull; it's just working out which ones are the best to tell our story, which ones are the best to talk to our audience with and why.

David P: This is quite a modern way of going about your business of telling the story of the organization and in order that it can achieve its objectives. How have you gone about putting your team together to be able to do this? Given that only a short time ago, communications team - the job was to deal with the media.

David H: Exactly, right. That just really change the style of how you compose your team. Years ago it was always, like you've said you would have just a graphic designer; you would have someone who talk to the media and you might have someone else who, I'm not going to say general dog's body, but the all-runner in the team who is almost the junior staff member.

Nowadays, it's important that whoever is on your team really does have an appreciation for, not just social media but the way you can communicate broadly whether it's through an event, specifically through social media channels, traditional media or etcetera.

There needs to be a certain of level production skills that they need to have; they need to be able to set up a simple podcast; take a video camera with them and just take some clips that's able to come back and crop that up.

We don't have to win Oscars with our content. We just have to be able to communicate effectively and look credible with what we're doing. So they just need to have a base level skill. I call it; I rather have 10 boxes ticked at 7 out of 10, rather than 2 at 10 out of 10 and the rest sort of dwindling. So it's really important people have an appreciation for that.

Technology is also making it so much easier to engage. Years ago you have to have a graphic artist on your team that have to be highly skilled. Now there's a classic saying, "There's an app for that." It's so relevant because it becomes so simple and you can cut things on your phone now, the phone quality of audio is exceptional; it's good enough for broadcast quality.

So the way we get around so many situations before having to come out with these very expensive, very labour intensive options. For us it can be sitting in front of the managing director; asking him a few questions, literally getting the recording on the mp3 recorder on our mobile phone, editing it on the mobile phone; uploading that to a media release into an email and shooting it straight off to the media outlet and it's done within 10 minutes.

Previously, you have to come to a studio; you have to sit yourself up and you have the story. It would take literally a couple of hours just to get 3 minutes worth of content.

David P: Do you find it's hard to keep up with the demands?

David H: It is. You need to be structured and you need to be pro-active to minimize your reactivity. For us in the water utility space, we also have an emergency response capability and that falls under my communications remit.

So that itself is a totally different bag but it's so important because in a crisis or in an issue where something happens, communication is the most important thing. You can have any plan you want, but we all know that – what's that great saying? "Plans go out of the window once first contact with the enemy is made." And that's literally true.

Communication is paramount. It doesn't matter how good your plan is, unless you can communicate internally and externally and then inter-communicate with the other government agencies, other emergency responders, and indeed the general public; you're dead in the water so to speak.

So for us, the social media aspect of that is incredibly important. Being able to be proactive to be able to have content ready to go to explain why things would happen is just as important to say, "XYZ issue is happening with our network," that's okay you get 100 questions back to say, "Well, couldn't you, shouldn't you, haven't you." To be able to say, "Yeah, I understand that. Here go and have a look at this piece of content, media outlet, consumer, stakeholder. This will explain why this is such a tricky issue."

David P: Now, since you've adopted this content marketing approach to the way that you publish information on behalf of the water utility for Canberra in Australia. Have you measured the results and how have you measured the impact of what it is that you've done?

David H: Yeah, we're looking at a number of ways in which we can measure impact on. Some more technical or I guess more precise way is where we're looking at how we can poll and survey our customer-based on the people who we interact with. Well, so looking at how we can heavily monitor that, social media landscape as well and get an appreciation for that a little of a brand sentiment but also how we're being received not just in the news and in social media but also from our customers interacting with us.

The next step we're looking at taking is really a look at how we interact with our customers at that customer service social media interface.

David P: Yes.

David H: It's a very tricky one to get down because there's an expectation that you will be very quick with social media. We accept that but we can't run 24/7 like we're not an airline and we're not resourced to that. So that's where we get a little bit of work to do in that aspect.

So, it's really a bit a finger on the pulse measurement; measured by some true figures that we can do through actual polling and talking to people and surveying as well.

David P: So since you implemented the program, what sort of feedback have you had from the higher ups, the CEO and the others? Are they impressed with what you're doing?

David H: Yeah, very impressed and they're really starting to see the level of engagement really does pick up. It is a wonderful thing; how do I engage with my audience in a traditional utility sense? It was very much well, let's hold an open day, let's shake some hands. How many letters have we received, how many issues have called our phone line and general inquiries line? What are they're being about?

Something we do, with every single inquiry that comes in and every single issue that's dealt with, we then follow-up with our customers in the ensuing months to actually call back and survey every single one to say, "How did we go? Did we measure up?" And that's also a good measure of your brand sentiment as well, and also your brand values and your customer service values.

David P: Yeah, did we answer your question?

David H: Exactly right. Was it solved?

David P: Did we solve your problem?

David H: Yeah, exactly right.

David P: Lots of people listen to this podcast who work in utilities. It's a podcast, it's directed towards the interests of people who work in government and really water utilities are government at the end of the day. What tips would you give? Or what advice would you give to people to say, okay, to get started I really want to stand up a

content marketing program within the organization. What are some of the things I need to do to get myself started?

David H: I think one of obvious things people say is, "How do I convince someone higher up typically older than me that this thing is actually credible and works?" I think just to cover that briefly, that will change and solve itself in a generational change. The kids of today who grow up...

David P: They haven't got time. They need to do it now.

David H: It will solve itself in generation, what do you do next week? You really have to get into the mind-set of your boss so to speak and work out what are their objectives; how can I solve that simply, easily with a measurable result? And that's I think your first starting point. And you got to build blocks of credibility for them to start giving you more rope to say, "Okay, I can see where this is going, I can see how this can work."

It's always a fearful thing and it's the big risk. They will see the downside, you will see the upside. It's how you can mitigate those risks for them in their mind-sets and help solve their problems.

David P: And what generally are the problems that they're looking at? What are the problems that you've seen where they've mirrored back to you saying, "Oh, but we can't do this for X reason." What is it?

David H: Sure. Budget will always come down to it and in social media you're fortunate that your budget can be pretty well covered off. Also, social media is a little bit airy fairy. It's a little bit x-factor, its untouchable. If I buy an ad in a paper for example, I can see that ad in the paper. I can physically see it, it's tangible. To a degree, social media isn't because tends to sit in your hip pocket. It's only a mobile device typically, being able to prove that it does have value and that it is connected.

And their first point of call I would try to make an issue is get your boss connected. Get them set up. Get them having a dip of their toe in the water. Even if you're managing the account for them, but you're walking, you're talking them through so they're exposed to this and they understand it.

Another great technique is actually showing who in their landscape, who in their level is actually on the social media and what are they doing? There's nothing worse than being, "Oh, hang out a minute. I'm the only one not in this room. I better get in the room. How do I get back in this conversation? Because look at my competitors they're already here. I better get in there too." So that's another good technique to say, "You know what? People are solving this as well. I better get in to start engaging."

David P: Okay. You've made lots of progress. It's fantastic to hear you speak so clearly about the content marketing plan that you have in place and how you're executing it. What's next beyond being consistent?

David H: It's really is starting to grow your message and looking at your... this is always a bit funny, it's looking at the strategic plan of the organization, really sitting down with your boss. And this is where it really becomes exciting when they buy in and they start saying, "Comms, I've really got to sit down with you guys because I really want you to help us sell. This is the message that I need; these are the issues that are coming up. How are we going to combat them?"

When you can come up with a plan that includes whether social media, traditional media, other communication methods; I think it's when you've really got it cracked when they come to you saying, "I think we can do this. I think we can do that." And they start having ideas; that's really the exciting time and that's the next stage for us.

David P: Now we've focused on external but quickly, let's just turn the same approach internal.

David H: Sure.

David P: Have you used it exactly the same way?

David H: Yes, we have and it's really about mobilizing and looking at your workforce, looking at your issues that you have. For us, water utility has lots of different people. So we have people with PhDs, we have people who are in corporate side of life with suits and ties. We have people who are in personal protective equipment, high visibility clothing who are knee-deep in mud digging up pipes. They're all across different locations across the Australian Capital Territory. They can be kilometres and miles apart.

So they quite disparate, they also work in different time shifts. Literally sometimes the easiest way to get to some people will be a post-it notice as funny as it sounds. However with technology now, the mobility strategy that we have which is saying, "Let's give all the mobile workers their own personal iPad device." It just changes the game dramatically for us.

So now, I can walk into the managing director's office. We can walk outside. We can record a piece of content within three or four minutes. We can cut it up it just quick time, we can have the message literally in everyone's palm and in everyone's iPod whether you're in a truck, whether in your office space, whether you're at home, within minutes. And the same message can be consistently applied to everybody and everybody gets the same consistent personalized message.

So that's the place we're talking it. You can then upload that same message or that same interaction across the board whether it's publically or even privately as well.

David P: And just think, only a few short years ago, your job used to be picking up the phone, pitching stories to the press and if they didn't pick it up, you had nowhere to go.

David H: You didn't. The game has changed so much where they now talk to us about what content do you have, and that's a great one. So a lot of the media outlet, everybody

knows that it's a competition for eyeballs with them or for ears. And typically the eyeball conversation is great because they're literally scouring for content.

So when you have a local provider who nowadays is not just a television station. You can look at any television station website, and if they are worth their salt, and the newspapers; they're not just doing the traditional channel; they're now broadcast platform.

What they need is content. If they're local provider; they need local content; they need local stories; they need local angles; they need local engagement.

David P: Well, David Hohnke you are smacking it out of the park.

David H: That's great.

David P: It sounds that you've really taken out the content marketing approach of understanding your objectives, understanding your mission, really getting into that audience. You really understood whether it's an internal or external audience, taking advantage of multiple channels, publishing, measuring, evaluating and getting some great outcome.

So it's really exciting to hear someone in Canberra doing such great work around content marketing so it must be exciting for you to look ahead.

David H: It is very exciting and it's just exciting to see results. And you see them incrementally and sometimes you see them as a big burst but it's important to just keep making progress. Sometimes things works, sometimes they don't.

It's just important to continually re-evaluate and just look at the next option, the next way of doing it and it is about consistency and it is about just familiarity as well.

David P: But I think that's a really good point to end it. I think people need to understand that what's working today might not necessarily work tomorrow. As technology continues to change, as broadband continues to speed up, as the internet of things starts to take hold; we know it's going to be different.

So testing and learning and having that attitude of, "Let's have a go." Let's base it on some really good solid strategic thinking; let's measure and evaluate, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't but pick yourself up, make some better decisions, and go again. But always be testing and learning but always measuring and evaluating just to see exactly where you can go with the content marketing.

David H: And it's great to look back as we do. We've been doing this for a couple of years. And you look back and you think and say, "Wow! I can't believe that when I first started we did it that way." And then in 6 months' time we look back and say, "Wow, we have come a long way now."

I'm scared to think of what will happen in 5 years' time when we look back and think, "Ah, I can't believe we were doing it that way. And look at the wearable technology,

look at the mobility that we have, and look at the speed of things of communication that we can actually perform."

David P: But I think what will never change is the audience and the needs of the audience and really getting that focus on who it is that you're trying to talk to, be it internal or external. I don't think anyone will ever go wrong if they continue to take themselves back to the needs and the questions, and the pain of the audience that they seek to serve.

David H: Exactly, right. There's always that inherit need to know.

David P: Okay. Dave Hohnke thanks very much for joining us InTransition. It's been a great episode and I know many people working out there, not only water utilities, but in government will take a lot from today. Thanks very much for joining us.

David H: Not a problem. Good to be here.