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## Episode 28 Joe Pulizzi Podcast - Transcript

David Pembroke: Hello, ladies and gentlemen. My name is David Pembroke, and thanks for joining me once again for this very special edition of InTransition. The podcast dedicated to examining the practice of content marketing in government. Today, we speak to the founder of the Content Marketing Institute and someone who has had an incredible impact on my professional life, Mr. Joe Pulizzi.

To explain myself, I will start with a story but before I do that, I will begin today's episode as we do each week without definition of content marketing as it relates to government. Our definition which is a respectful adaptation of the Content Marketing Institute's definition is as follows. Content marketing is a strategic and measurable business process that relies on the curation, creation, and distribution of valuable relevant and consistent content to engage and inform a clearly defined audience with the objective of driving a desired citizen or stakeholder action.

Ladies and gentlemen, that is content marketing and don't let anyone every try to convince you of anything else. The one story, I want to take you back to is from 1997. I had just finished 10 of the happiest years of my life working as a current affairs journalist at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. I'd love my time as a reporter particularly my time as a political correspondent in the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery in Canberra which is the Australian equivalent of the White House Press Core. It was time for me to do other things, I had spent ten years as a current affairs reporter.

I studied at one of Australia's leading business schools at the University of New South Wales where I've achieved an undergraduate degree in commerce with a marketing major. I've worked for the American multinational 3M for three years, marketing audio and video cassettes. Before that, I've worked for many years in my family's hotel business. My future was going to be something that combined business, marketing, and journalism. Now, during my research about what was next, I started to read about this futuristic notion that one day in a not too distant future videos, audio, stills, text, and graphics which was then being referred to as content would soon be able to be distributed across telephone lines by a technology called broadband.

Computer monitors would become like television screens and everyone would be able to create and distribute a high quality content. It was a compelling vision, so I named the company the contentgroup and set out to use my journalism skills to create content that would tell the stories of

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their clients in order that they could achieve their business objectives. Now, it was a good idea at the time but the promise of the technology was in the future and it wasn't then. For 10 years, we stumbled and bumbled along and really just morphed into more of a strategic communications agency as we waited for the promise of that future to arrive.

Fast forward 10 years to 2007, I was sitting in my office surfing the web when I came across a presentation given by a guy named Joe Pulizzi from the Content Marketing Institute to an audience in Eastern Europe dressed in orange with a big grin on his face. Joe's presentation was the single most compelling and articulate explanation of the business process that he called Content Marketing. From that moment on, I was hooked, I read everything that I could, I devoured his books, I read his blogs, and have become an avid follower. Dare I say it I became a disciple of Joe Pulizzi and the Content Marketing Institute.

Now, as I sit here at contentgroup, another eight years on from that moment of discovery of the Content Marketing Institute with a thriving business, with a healthy seven figure turnover, and annual growth rate in excess of 30%, 13 full time employees, and many, many more contractors is perhaps best that I say a very public thank you to Mr. Joe Pulizzi. Joe Pulizzi, thanks for joining me InTransition.

Joe Pulizzi: I'm totally humbled by that introduction. I didn't know a good portion of that story. That's fantastic.

David Pembroke: There you go. That's what you did. That is the impact that you have had.

Joe Pulizzi: Who would have thought that it all started with one blog post on April 26, 2007. I remember that one really well, it was called "Why Content Marketing?" Basically, it was my mission statement for why I'm going to call this industry that we're in that's so confusing to everyone content marketing. Luckily, worked for both of us it sounds like. You've been a great support all the way along. We're all in this together. I'm just glad to see that we're finally in a point where we're making change happen.

David Pembroke: It certainly is but I just want to take you back to 2007. Where did you get that clarity from because that was a thing that really came to me that moved me? I was working in this space, trying to paste it all together, and I remember going home to my wife thinking, "This guy has cracked the code. He's worked it out." How is it that you came to understand it clearer than anybody else on earth?

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Joe Pulizzi:

I'll tell my own little story that I started in publishing in year 2000. I started working at a large independent international trade publishing company called, "Penton Media." I started as account manager, so I was working with advertisers that wanted to do story-telling, they wanted to do webinars, they wanted to do custom magazines, newsletters, and we created the content and executed those projects for them. It was unfortunate for Penton but I guess fortunate for me that Penton went through some really rough times in 2001 as you could possibly imagine they were heavy into trade shows. The trade show business after 9/11 just sank to the ground.

When I started at Penton, there were eight people between myself and the chief executive officer of the company, and 18 months later I was reporting to the CEO. It wasn't because I was masterful or smart, it's because I was cheap and it was the biggest thing. Eighteen months later, I was running Penton Custom Media and I was the sales guy, it was all business development. I move from account management, all the way to business development. As I'm going out and meeting with chief marketing officers, I'm throwing everything that I could think of from custom publishing, custom content, custom media, customer media branded content, you name it. I'm trying everything just to get them to light up a little bit, and to have some kind of a connection with what I'm trying to tell them or sell them.

David, nothing worked and then when I started to throw content marketing out there. That was the one that resonated. They didn't know necessarily what it was, but they said, "Oh, marketing. Well I'm a marketer so it must be me. That seems relevant to me." Then he said, "Oh yeah, content marketing. That make sense." It's such a simple term. It's such a simple phrase that people started to get it and that's when I realised "Uh-huh. This is it. That's the hook." It's all around content marketing and although we couldn't unfortunately change our name from Penton Custom Media to anything else, it really didn't matter.

We used content marketing in a lot of the conversations we had, and then of course in 2007 when I decided to leave and start what is now Content Marketing Institute. I went all in content marketing. I said, "There's no way that that's not going to be the term," and really did believe if we used content marketing ourselves, if evangelised using the promise that we really believe the giving value, and build and audience overtime using this term called content marketing that, that would be the accepted term. I just believe that deep down in my heart I got to tell you though David, there were couple of times when I was like, "Oh my God, the business is hurting. I might have to go like get a real job somewhere."

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David Pembroke: When did you get to the point though around the strategic element of the content marketing? For me, yes they were the tactical elements of the webinars, and the trade shows, and the books, and all the other bits and pieces they have. The real majesty of content marketing is the fact that it is a strategic, repeatable, accountable business process as the definition at the top of the program says. When did you make that link between the actual activity and that strategic planning element which is really grounded I suppose in traditional strategic communication thinking?

Joe Pulizzi: I'm a big fan of Don Schultz, the father of integrated marketing. I read all of Don's stuff. I love him so much. I called him and I was coming to Chicago and I said, "Don, would you meet with me?" He did know me from Adam, but he was nice enough to meet with me and then I met with him several times since then. It's just a very strategic communications process and it was Dan, what I loved about what Don said and I actually have an article from him that was in B2B Magazine in the year 2003. He said, "Here's what's happening and what's going on to happen." He said, "Everything that we do as companies will be able to be duplicated except for how we communicate."

Basically, he said the only difference we have is how we communicate and that's our content, that's what we create. As I took that into some of the things that I was writing, and how I pitch this, and how I put presentations together. I was working on a book at the same time. It was in 2007 where the book came together, "Get Content Get Customers," it was deeply embedded into that. I mean Get Content Get Customers, it talks all about looking at content as a strategic asset in the organization. Even before that in 2003, we did a research project at Penton Media. It was a marketing initiative and we looked at it and we tried to compare who was actively using content marketing in their businesses right now and compared that to stock price for public companies.

We actually found out that there was a lot of value. It was just hard to find the examples back then, but from the beginning David, probably 2005, 2006 into the book in 2007, 2008 really believing that that's the only way to look at and we don't look at it as just, "Oh, I'm going to do a blog. I'm going to do a white paper very tactical." It was always about the strategic because when you do this too, we're trying to sell long term programs here. I'm not trying to sell a six month or a one year program, I want you to do content marketing forever. I want you to commit to it as an asset in the organization.

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Now, that means we change it everyday, that means we want feedback everyday, but that means we are, like you said in your definition, consistency. Overtime it's a promise to your customers that we have to keep and that's the only way to do content marketing.

David Pembroke: Now, our audience for the InTransition podcast is very much in the government space. It's my very firm belief that content marketing is the future of government communication. Absolutely no question in my mind, and I know that CMI is very much focused on the B2B and the B2C space, but certainly it's growing and it's emerging. One of the big challenges we do have is getting government people to accept that they are in the marketing business. This notion of content marketing in government, it does jar with some people.

We're certainly holding the line very heavily. We're not going to invent another name for government. It's going to be called content marketing. Do you believe from what you know and understand that you would agree with me, that it can be applied just as equally with government as it can in B2C and B2B?

Joe Pulizzi: Let me ask you this, are there human beings that work in government? If there are human beings that work in government, we're trying to market. It's interesting. I know there's differences, you know there's differences because you're the experts around the world when it comes to government content marketing. The issue is, is that whether it's B2B, B2C, not for profit, B2G, whatever, you're always marketing to a person. That person has emotions and they also have a rational side, but they desire something from you. They want to solve their problems, they want to do things better, they want to live better lives, get better jobs, whatever that is, and you as an organisation can help them do that.

It's probably no better than the government space because you're really trying to compel them to make a political decision in a lot of ways from that side of it, if you're looking at the citizen side of it. If you're looking for the B2B side, that's really, really hardcore business to business model if you're looking at trying to sell into government, something like that. You can make the lines straight across the B2B. Absolutely, I don't think there's a difference.

The issue is I think is change. I mean to make content marketing happen is really talking about a cultural change and that's why even in the new book, you might do book Content Inc where we looked at really startups some small business. It's easier for them to make this change because you have a CEO or a content champion in a small organization saying,

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"Yes, we feel we should do this. We feel we should actually not sell so much to our customers but build really valuable relationships and deliver them value everyday. Ultimately, they'll know, like, and trust us more, and then they'll buy more from us."

That's a much easier decision for an entrepreneur or small business owner to make because there's no red tape. It's just that person making that decision as you get into a bigger organisation or an older culture. Let's say a company that's been around 10, 20, 50 years that have been doing things the same old way. It's very hard to keep that change to move. It's not a resources issue, it's not an investment issue, it's not a people issue, it's a change issue and that comes right down to culture.

David Pembroke: It's also around education and again a big plug upfront to CMI to everyone out there listening to this podcast, get on to the Content Marketing Institute, become part of the family, become part of the community, and start to learn and educate yourself about the process. Come to contentgroup as well, but I defer to the Content Marketing Institute because really that is the single source of truth around a lot of the content, with content marketing in government.

I'm convinced and I know it, and we're seeing it in our business. We're seeing the growth, we're seeing the movement, we're seeing the pilot projects, which I know is another favourite of yours. We're starting to see them start to take place, so it is going to happen and we're going to go along on this ride together. The reason that I've got you on the podcast today other than to say a big thank you for what you've done for the contentgroup over the years, is to let the audience know about this little thing called Content Marketing World that is on in two weeks time in Cleveland, Ohio. I'm coming for the fifth year in a row and I would like you to give a bit of a background as to Content Marketing World in this event, and maybe a little bit of the history of Content Marketing World?

Joe Pulizzi: I think the first time that you and I met was when I gave a book I think it was "Managing Content Marketing" which is Robert Rose. My new book out to the person that travelled the furthest and it was you.

David Pembroke: Yeah, that's right. It was. I couldn't get there fast enough and the reason I've got you on today is because attending Content Marketing World has changed my life and it's changed my business. I want people who are listening to this to get met, and to get involved, and to educate themselves because they will learn. They will become much more effective in their jobs if they can come to Content Marketing World.

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I'm not getting paid to say that, I'm just telling people and that's why I want you on this podcast to explain to them and to give us a bit of outline of what we can expect this year?

Joe Pulizzi:

First of all, thank you for your loyalty. It certainly means a lot as you come in every year and we've got quite a contingent this year actually coming in from Asia Pacific which is just fantastic. This is our fifth year, we started in 2011. I remember we were hoping for a 100 to 150 people, 660 showed up that year. This year, we're going to be well over 3,000 delegates from 50 different countries coming in September 8th through 11th.

I think there's a couple of reasons, if you're considering going, first of all it's the education which is critical as you said. If you need to be educated on any part of the content marketing process, from documenting your strategy to specific parts of multi-channel community, to integrating it with your paid media program, to native advertising, to whatever the issues, to staffing, to workflow, to process we have. Eleven concurrent sessions will be going on over every possible area that you can think of. From the education standpoint, I think that total we have 237 total speakers, 123 hours of programming. It's unbelievable how big it's going because I remember the first year we had three tracks. Now, we have 11 tracks going on that covers everything you could possibly imagine.

Of course we've got amazing key notes this year from John Cleese from Monty Python fame. If you're familiar with the show Parks and Recreation that Offerman is going to be there closing keynote, if got Barenaked Ladies that's our concert for networking. That's the other thing that I think you and I have seen probably. I mean the education is important but what blows me away every year is the networking, and the camaraderie, and the fact that you're going meeting with people who really believe in this thing called content marketing and they're really working it.

I mean these are the ones that are doing the work that are learning. What I love to see when delegates come in from all countries all over the world, is you meet up with people that are going through the exact same challenge as you are and that support system is built. You and I, we've been able to get amazing friendships and camaraderie with these people that we wouldn't have the chance to meet in the first place but we're all getting there. We of course get plenty of opportunities and there's a wonderful exhibit hall with a 100 exhibitors that will be in there, so the latest technology and all that stuff.

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That will be all be there like a regular conference but I love the fact that first class education, you can't beat that. The second thing is the networking and meetings in people that you'll never have a chance to meet. That you will leave with relationships that will surprise you. They will be valuable to you for years and years to come. That's sort of my pitch. It is expensive if you're coming in from ...

David Pembroke: You know it's not. In the context of what you learn, I would pay double, triple.

Joe Pulizzi: Well I'm raising the price my friend. You're right, I mean if you're looking in, we look at it like a master's degree. Like if you're going in and you're getting that kind of I think basically you can go for a thousand dollars US if you really wanted to go for the two days. Now, the issue is like depending on where you're listening from. If you're in North America, it's easy. If you're coming in from Europe, not so bad. If you're coming in from Canberra or Sydney, it's a little bit more of a hike. I mean I've done that trip a few times and it's not the easiest trip in the world.

I know you've got listeners all over the world, they're listening to this podcast. You're right, I think that if you value it and you care about the future of marketing, and you care about your role in marketing, you should care about coming to the conference.

David Pembroke: I think it really is about learning and being able to come away with dozens of insights. I've been in this business now for a long, long time and I come away every year thinking, "Ah, that's a good point. I didn't think about that. Oh, that's an interesting way of doing things." There is so much and there's not a specific government track but there will be in the years to come as we start to build that out.

Joe Pulizzi: Next year. I need your help with that by the way.

David Pembroke: Again, this is part of one of the other things I really want to commend you on is the way and the very personal way that you and Pam, your wife as your partner in the business, and the rest of the CMI team, you're so friendly. It's not impersonal, it's a very personal experience. I know it's now getting to the thousands but I think we've all been sort of infected with the CMI virus, and we all sort of come together in a way where it is like a coming together of the tribe, of the family on an annual basis. It's an uplifting and it's a very warm experience.

I like to congratulate you and commend you on that, but is that point of specific thing that you've done or is it just the way that you are?



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Joe Pulizzi:

First of all, thank you. The thing that always concern me and I've been in the event business for 15 years. I know it better than most things and an event grows I always get concerned about the impersonal nature when an event gets to a certain size. We always vowed not to make that happen. We're very cognizant of it because we want this to be as closer in that group as it was five years ago, even though we've quadrupled the size of it. Can we continue to have that close feeling?

I can't tell you how many list we have going on here of certain people need certain things. We know this about this person, they've got to deliver this to that person on this day. We've got to introduce these people. We know that to make change happen in these organisations, introductions have to be made, people need to feel a certain way. I believe you have to have an entertainment factor because if somebody's having fun, they're more likely to learn, and I'll always believe that ever since I was teaching back 20 years.

Those types of things are important and you see it, our team just cares. They just flat out care about the people, they care about the industry. And when you have that much, that much pride in what you do, and that much caring and sensitivity over the art that we call the event business and the content marketing industry, good things are going to happen. That's how we treat it every year, and you know this is my baby. This is the thing that I do. I do the agenda every year and I don't do much for the organisation but be more besides the fact that I work on that agenda. I mean I'm already working on next year's agenda believe it or not which is crazy to me.

David Pembroke:

Give us some insights into that strategic thinking for this year. When you were sitting down, what were the problems that you were seeing that needed to be addressed at this year's conference?

Joe Pulizzi:

A couple of things, first of all, it's a horrible shame that the majority of marketers do not have a documented content marketing strategy. In a lot of cases, there's two reasons why.

First, they don't know how to do it. That we can teach them.

The second thing is they don't know why content is important for their own organization. That's just a learning process that they have to figure out.

They don't even know what it's going to move, how you're going to affect your audience, who is the audience, those types of things.

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We got to make sure we not only give the building blocks for how to get to a documented strategy, but once you get that and you have all the information, how you actually proceed and then how do you evolve that document on-going. We've got tons of sessions on that, measurement is always a huge issue. Now, we've got a measurement track this year. Robert Rose of course is overseeing that one, and I feel really strong about making sure that you will clearly understand and set the right metrics for your organisation as you go.

I think lots of other things, but the third thing that I would say is, the thing that upsets me most is the positioning around content marketing ROI, or metrics or measurement, whatever you want to call it around things that don't matter around likes, and fans, followers, website traffic that I really don't care about for the most part, unless it's changing behaviour.

David Pembroke: Yeah, but I don't know if I totally agree with you on that because I think they can be, they're not an absolutely but I think they are contributor.

Joe Pulizzi: Correct, but look at it this way. They're lower level indicators. They can indicate behavioural change but you have to take the next step. The concern is and you see this with a lot of media planners, I've seen it forever. They'll only look at engagement metrics and they won't take it the next step. What we're trying to do is get people to take the next step, great. You got some web traffic, you got some likes, you got some followers, that's great. What does that mean? Why is that happening? I need you to ask the questions that take the next step.

What I really want to look at is audience building. This is really, really form. I mean there's no holy grail metric when it comes to content marketing or doing it for all different types of business, reasons and objectives, and we've got hypothesis around that. What I really want more than anything else is to build a loyal audience. If I build a loyal audience, I should be able to tell how they're acting differently from somebody that's not in my audience. We've got a lot of sessions around building audience, as well as what technology to use, and some other things like that.

Those are sort of the key things that we put into the 2015 planning and I just got the research back for this year as I'm going to present it again as they open the Keno. There are still some challenges there, so we still have a lot of work to do but I'm hoping Content Marketing World is one of those things where you really sphere head it, get them into an on-going training that we have, and have them take the next step.

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David Pembroke: In terms of people listening now because I think this is valuable. I now need to go and make the case to my boss. On the Content Marketing World website, there is some justifications there out there that you can go and write for your letter that you're going to submit or you're going to get out from your desk now and walk in. They can find those on [contentmarketingworld.com](http://contentmarketingworld.com)?

Joe Pulizzi: That's right. There's two things. One is that I love, this is the thing I love just about the job that I do. One is go to Justify Your Trip, it's on the navigation. You can download it, it's Microsoft Word document, and you can edit it however you need to, but it basically makes the case for your trip and expenses and why it's not so bad, and why it's going to be really important because you're going to come back and you're going to make change happen in the organisation. It's going to be well worth the expense.

The second thing is if you need like, and I do this on occasion. You need me to send an e-mail through your boss, you need me write a letter, I'll do that personally and I still do it all the time and I love doing it. If you need me to make a call, I'll make a call. If you need me to make Skype call, I'll talk to him, I'll talk to her. It doesn't matter. I like doing that kind of stuff because I figure if I could get somebody on the phone I could sell them and I could help you do your job.

It's tough that you got to be out of the office for a while. It's not a boondoggle, somebody's got to make the case for you so I'm happy to do that. There's two ways if you really want to go is to go to "justify your trip," or send me an e-mail at [joe@contentinstitute.com](mailto:joe@contentinstitute.com) and let me know how I can help you.

David Pembroke: Okay. Cleveland itself, I love going to Cleveland and I remember when we first arrive in Cleveland, I didn't really know about Cleveland and a lot of the other people were at the conference going, "We're in Cleveland. I come from Canberra" so the people sort of to think the same think about Canberra. It's a great city isn't it, and it's such a warm city, full of so many wonderful people.

Joe Pulizzi: I'm a Cleveland homer. I love Cleveland. I'm one of the city champions, so I try to convince other people to come in and do their events. Most people, if you've been to Cleveland before then I don't need to even talk to you about it. You already know it's a great place because there's so many people that maybe leave and go to college, they end coming home, they raise their families, cost of living is incredibly low compared to some other major cities in the United States.

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It has everything that you could possibly want in a big city but it's got the smallest city feel to me. I love the downtown area, the way it's come alive. I can't say enough great things about it. I may live the rest of my life here. The only thing I could do without is the winters get often chilly. It gets really, really cold. In the winter time we see a lot of snow, so it wouldn't be hard to see 140, 160 centimetres in the winter time, maybe more sometimes.

Anyways, but the good news is, is that Content Marketing World is in September. September is the best possible month ever in Cleveland, very moderate temperatures, you get sunshine most of the time. It's almost always pretty good weather when you've been here.

David Pembroke: The weather is fantastic. It's beautiful weather for the event itself. Will it always be in Cleveland?

Joe Pulizzi: Well we have to go through negotiation with the city every year at the 'Convention Center,' so I can't say yes every year but you know me. It's always my first option, if it possibly can, and we were getting to a point with over 3,000 delegates that we have to open to looking at other venues. We have west coast event now that will be in Las Vegas in March called the "Intelligent Content Conference." We have two very different conferences and is that the Content Marketing World is the big one. I'd like to keep it in Cleveland as long as we possibly can.

David Pembroke: Yeah. I'd like to keep it in Cleveland, so even though I have to travel 30 hours to get there, I just think it adds to the event. It makes me feel like I'm at Content Marketing World so I just arrive. I remember years ago talking to Joe Kalinowski and Peter Loibl, two of your team there at CMI at the first Content Marketing World at an event. You won't be surprised that it was very late at night. It was in that bowling alley actually, we were in the bowling alley.

Joe Pulizzi: Oh my gosh, yeah.

David Pembroke: We were having a conversation, I was saying, "Don't move it. We got to keep it here. It's a real thing about. Let's hope that over the years, you'll be able to continue stay there." Fantastic. I can't wait. I'll leave and I'm actually coming via Washington quite a bit of our audience for this podcast is in Washington, and we're going to make some opportunities to hook up with people there. I'm also going to make sure that people who were listening to this podcast, please go and make the case, go and do the argument.

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Joe Pulizzi has just told you, he will ring your boss on your behalf to make sure you get there. Now, you can come from anywhere. There's still a few weeks to go, there's all the time the world and I promise you, you will remember it, you will learn from it, it will be a life changing experience. Every year I go, it just create so much value that I'm able to bring back to then give to my staff, and to the clients, and to the whole content marketing community.

It's growing, it's emerging, and particularly those of us who are in content marketing in government, we are behind, we know that. The Mary Meeker report this year told us we are at least a couple of years behind, so get there now, get a hit of the curve. You will be the ones who will lead the change in government communications globally so make sure you get to Cleveland. Please, do it because it will really change your life.

Now, Joe Pulizzi thank you very much and thanks again for everything. It's been just tremendous. I love the fact that we are connected. I love the fact that you've been able to teach me so much. I love the fact that you, your family, and your company are so generous and it's just been great. From the bottom of my heart, thank you very much.

Joe Pulizzi:

I should be thanking you David. Your support has been unbelievable and I appreciate this, I'm going to have to hire you as part of my marketing team because you're a fantastic. Just keep doing what you're doing. Thanks my friend.