
InTransition 136: Pat Duffy

Speaker 1: Welcome to InTransition. A program dedicated to the practice of content communication in the public sector. Here's your host, David Pembroke.

David Pembroke: Hello ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to InTransition. The podcast that examines the practice of content communication in government and the public sector. My name's David Pembroke, and thank you for joining me once again. Today we have a great guest. Someone who's been around the business for some time, and a wonderful experience across different parts of government and information technology. But we'll come to her in a moment, because we are going to go back for the definition of exactly what content communication is. Because it is a strategic, measurable, and accountable business process that relies on the creation, curation, and distribution of useful, relevant, and consistent content. The purpose is to engage and inform a specific audience in order to achieve a desired citizen and/or stakeholder action. So there you go. That's what we're talking about today.

And we are talking about that topic today with Patricia Duffy. Now Pat is a great friend of mine, and also someone who has had widespread experience, probably 30 plus years working in marketing and general management in information technology, telecommunications, financial services, defence, and more broadly, in government. She's worked in B2B, in B2C. She had a very senior marketing role with Telstra, which is the national telecommunications carrier here in Australia. But more recently has spent the better part of probably about a decade helping the Australian Defence Force recruit the right men and women into the services. And so we are going to talk to her about that as well. But probably more interestingly as well today is Pat's first day on the job here at contentgroup. So welcome, Pat, to the contentgroup team!

Pat Duffy: Thank you, David, it's a pleasure to be here.

David Pembroke: Yeah, it's nice for you to come along and join us and join contentgroup as we continue to march on this journey. I look forward to working with you over the weeks and months and years ahead.

Pat Duffy: Thank you.

David Pembroke: Yeah, so listen. Looking at your particular experience, how about you take us back and give us the Pat Duffy Story. Where are you from?

Pat Duffy: My goodness me. Well I'm from Nashville, Tennessee, but kind of by way of the US Army. My dad was actually a career army officer in the US Army. And I came to Australia straight from Germany where my father had his last postings.

David Pembroke: Not from Nashville, straight from Germany.

Pat Duffy: Not from Nashville, straight from Germany. Where I actually went to university. I attended the University of Maryland in Germany while I was living there with my dad. And then came out to Australia.

David Pembroke: So University of Maryland has the university for the American army families. Still to this day?

Pat Duffy: As far as I'm aware they do, yeah. It used to be very widespread, it's probably less so now with budget cuts and everything, but yeah. And then I came out here. So I came out here as a bit of a sprog, and I came out here with a terrible degree, a Bachelor of Arts in sort of next to nothing and no idea of what I wanted to do. I was really young, I was 20 when I got to Australia. And was very, very lucky to, just in responding to job ads, basically, to meet a group of South African Australian IT entrepreneurs who had started a business in South Africa and then brought it over here. And they were more interested in potential than in experience in whatever, so I joined them as a very junior marketing type person, and kind of grew up from there.

David Pembroke: What company was that?

Pat Duffy: It was called Sigma Data Corporation, it's long out of business. But they distributed US products, and were partly owned by a US Defence contractor.

David Pembroke: Okay.

Pat Duffy: And then I joined another Australian distributor organisation called The Lionel Singer Corporation. Now for old people like me, Lionel was a legend in the Australian IT industry, and I was with him for about eight or nine years, and we at one time or another distributed everything that was hot. We had sun microsystems, we had all those sorts of things. They were fabulous years.

David Pembroke: So was that a sales role?

Pat Duffy: No, it was a marketing role.

David Pembroke: Okay.

Pat Duffy: But marketing meant something quite different then in the IT industry. Obviously it was B2B. But yeah, it was great. And I got to do almost everything because they were both startups when I joined them. So I got to do contract negotiation with software providers and inventory management and pricing, you name it.

David Pembroke: Yeah. But interestingly, content is really as old as the hills. It's sort of been re-packaged, probably re-positioned because of the ability of technology which now means that we can all be in the publishing business whether a brand or a not for profit or a government agency department, whoever it is. But when you think back to those times, what role did content play in that B2B process when you were working for Lionel and for Sigma Data?

Pat Duffy: Well, let me tell you something about Lionel. He was a legend because he actually had the first television advertising for a computer in Australia. And his TV star was Tom Baker, who was one of the early Doctor Who's. You might remember David.

David Pembroke: I'm not a Doctor Who fan.

Pat Duffy: That explains it. And Lionel had been an accountant, I mean he just had a knack. But if you think about what content means in those days, today we think about content in a very kind of technology base, with content distribution and curation and so on. But content was important back then, it's just that it took the form of brochures and presentations. And that sort of thing. But content's always been important, because you can't convey whatever it is you're trying to convey to a potential client or user or whatever without some delivery of content.

David Pembroke: Yeah. And it's interesting at the moment, we're doing quite a few consulting projects into the federal government, and there is this notion at the moment that content is digital. And they're not, and we're saying to them, well yeah, it is. But it's also offline as well. It's about that face to face engagement, and it's about public relations. It's about, the content is the content, as in that sort of atomic particle of the story. But it can be distributed through offline and online channels. So trying to get people to think of content as a non-digital is quite an interesting challenge

at the moment, because again, websites and content seem to live as much in ICT as they do in the communications areas.

Pat Duffy: But if you look at the blurring between the CIAO and the CMO in organisations, it's quite amazing. I mean to me, digital's massively important, but it's a distribution channel of content, it's not content itself. We distribute digital content, but we also distribute lots of other types of content. And back in the day, way back in the day, back when dinosaurs roamed the earth, I used to actually write stories for a US-based IT magazine, user stories. Just interesting things that we were doing down here with products.

David Pembroke: Like case studies.

Pat Duffy: Case studies, absolutely. So yeah, content's always been there. We probably didn't call it that. You didn't think about it as content, but that was what it was.

David Pembroke: It's interesting, I do tell this story, and I have told it a few times before on the podcast, when we started contentgroup back in 1997, this was the idea, I was lucky enough to get a voluntary redundancy out of the ABC, so I had a bit of money to sit around in my pyjamas and grow a beard with my dial up at the time. I was tooling around and looking into the future and understanding that there was this notion that one day there was going to be the information superhighway, if you remember that. And this notion that we were all going to carry around supercomputers in our pockets, and we were going to receive media-rich files.

But interestingly back then, so I was like, okay. The contentgroup. That's what we're going to do. Mix of journalism and marketing. Anyway, I would hand out the business card, saying The Contentgroup. And people would go, well that's nice. The Contentgroup. Back then it wasn't a thing. When do you think content became a thing?

Pat Duffy: Certainly in the last decade, I think. I don't think we talked about content much prior to that.

David Pembroke: It was never content, was it. But it is now. And it's a huge thing. And it sits at the heart of an organization's capability, I believe, to achieve its objectives, because it is about that story. It's about building the audience. It's about building trust, over time.

Pat Duffy: It's about connecting.

David Pembroke: Yeah. Cause the only way you can do that, really, is through the effective distribution of content. So in terms of, you know, your career then. So out of IT and then into-

Pat Duffy: Telecommunications. Yeah.

David Pembroke: Okay, to Telstra?

Pat Duffy: Well no, I went to Optus first. And then to Telstra, which was an unusual path back in those days.

David Pembroke: Optus, for everyone who's not from Australia, Singtel, the Singapore national carrier, that's the Australian branded version of Singtel.

Pat Duffy: Yeah. When Optus started in Australia, it was off the back of a telecommunications monopoly by Telstra, the government decided to deregulate, well not deregulate, but to open it up to competition. And Optus, as it was then, was not owned by Singtel. It was owned in part by-

David Pembroke: Who was it owned by?

Pat Duffy: Well I'll tell you David, I'm glad you asked that question. It was owned by BellSouth, which was one of the baby Bells. It was owned by Cable and Wireless, out of the UK. And it was owned by a consortium of Australian businesses who, AMP was one, I can't remember- businesses that had a massive appetite for some competition in the telecommunications environment. And it was a green fields environment, it was exciting, content was absolutely, although we didn't call it that, critical, because we didn't have anything to begin with. No service, no customers, no nothing. So you basically were telling people what you were going to do. But I chose to go to Telstra, and in many respects it was the best move I ever made, because I got in while it was still fully government owned, so it had migrated already from Telecom to Telstra. But it was pre-the beginning of privatisation.

And it's interesting, when I think back- and I had a very big marketing team. So I covered all the marketing functions, I mean PR, sponsorship, events, advertising, direct marketing, you name it. We used to, once the first tranche of shares had been sold, we used to get together every Friday and talk about well what did you do this week to create shareholder value? And that was, you know, I'm talking about in the early '90s. People didn't really talk about marketing in those terms, it was much more about advertising and that sort of thing. But we were very focused on what were we doing to

grow the business? And that's really important. But again, content, although we didn't call it that, was key to what we did.

David Pembroke: And how did you measure whether or not you were creating value?

Pat Duffy: Well, you had fewer sophisticated tools back then to be able to do it. We certainly didn't have, for example, the digital channels now that are quite accountable in terms of what sort of result you're getting. But we could tell, I'll give you just a simple example that's going to sound really kind of strange now. But if we ran promotions, talk as long as you like to Hong Kong this weekend for \$2, we could count the network minutes that we generated, and we could compare them to previous weekends' network minutes and you could say, well that was a success. So very practical.

David Pembroke: Well that's very practical.

Pat Duffy: Very, very practical sort of things that you could do. So you're basically promoting services looking at the growth in those services or the growth in revenue attached to those services. Always looking for new ways of driving value out of existing services.

David Pembroke: How important was it to adopt that mentality of testing and learning? 'Cause essentially what you were doing was having a hypothesis, creating a test, running the experiment, and then evaluating whether or not it was- which is essentially what we need to do in content marketing is to continually to assess what is going to be the best channel, or piece of content or the time of the day, or whatever the format it is. And then work out, did that work, or didn't it work?

Pat Duffy: Well you had a lot less ability, again, to do it then, because the tools just didn't exist. So if you were doing broadcast advertising for example, you relied on ratings information and tariffs and that sort of thing to say well we reached who we intended to reach. I would say that we did that type of evaluation poorly because of the sorts of tools that we had available, and the limited ability to test and learn.

Testing and learning was a lot more expensive then than it is now, if you were talking about big campaigns. Now, I mean you literally can test and learn in real time. You can put stuff out there, if it doesn't work, and you can tell if it's working by the engagements that you're getting with your content or whatever you can take it down. Put something else up. You can dissect

your audience a lot more granularly, so that you can target different messages- well you know this. I don't have to tell you this.

David Pembroke: Sure.

Pat Duffy: So I would say that we did it as well as you could back then, and were constantly looking at ways to improve. And you relied on research a lot. Qualitative and quantitative. And it's a blunt kind of way of evaluating things, but you did what you could.

David Pembroke: Well I remember when I started my career, which was with 3M, the Minnesota buying manufacturer. I worked in the video cassettes and audio cassettes industry. There you go. I'm dating myself there. That was at the time, this is quite interesting, it was the battle between Betamax and VHS. And I was, VHS won the home market. The Panasonic format of VHS, and so all of the B-tape manufacturers were here in Australia, competing for, because it was going- everyone knew it was going to become a commodity product. But 3M and a few of the others couldn't hold their breath long enough and dialled out of the market. But interestingly, back in those days, working with the advertising agencies, they wouldn't do anything unless they had research. And then the research was so wickedly expensive, it was like, really? You're going to cost us that much money? And they wouldn't stand behind any sort of choice or decision unless they had the research.

Pat Duffy: You know, that is an interesting one. I mean we do, marketers do rely on research, I've often thought that you over rely on it, because it's a way of not having to make a call. But I'll give you just one example. I'll tell you a story. So here's a bit of content for you from back in the Optus days. Bob Mansfield was the chief executive-

David Pembroke: I remember Bob.

Pat Duffy: You would do. I mean a fabulously energetic, amazing kind of guy. But we wanted to position ourselves in a brand sense as the kind of not Telstra. And kind of IBM in blue jeans. Quite literally. So we filmed a series of commercials that used our own staff, but in very casual clothes and doing kind of- you know, making human pyramids and whatever. I would've sworn that that would be a successful campaign. I would've absolutely sworn it.

David Pembroke: But was there insight? Was there research into-

Pat Duffy: No, no. This was hunches. And who we thought we were. And Bob saw it and he said, absolutely not. He said, "If you want to run that you have got to

take it to research." We're like, ahh. And the ad agency was really confident as well, no this is great. So we took it to research, and it failed miserably because it was not the way people wanted to think of their service provider. They were happy for us to be young, and carefree, but they wanted us to be serious about delivering service. So you can get it wrong, and research can be useful, but I, one of the phrases that kind of sends my blood pressure up is, "well the research says". I'm like well yeah, I know what research says, but tell me some of the other things that we know as well. And of course again, our ability to analyse behaviour and understand what goes on in a customer journey and so on is so much better now, that you can- and you can test hunches in real time. And very, very inexpensively, without destroying relationships or anything like that.

David Pembroke: It's funny, though, isn't it, the advertising agencies, I'll never forget, it was early in my career and we'd go down to the advertising agency, I won't mention who they were. But they were so nice to us. There was always chocolate biscuits, and then they'd take us out to lunch, all of this sort of stuff. And I remember saying to my boss at the time, saying, "these advertising agency people, they're so nice, aren't they? Look at this, they're so generous" and all the rest of it. And he said, "Ah, you're paying for all of this." I was like, "where?" And he goes, "Don't worry. It's there. It's on your bill somewhere."

Pat Duffy: I used to think about that David, in the Telstra days when we used to see our lawyers, which was almost all the time because we were always in court with Optus over one thing or another. Sometimes we won, sometimes we didn't. But you'd go into the big end of town offices where they've got butlers and silver service and whatever and people'd be, oh my god. Look at the- you know, harbour views in Sydney. And yes, but we're paying for this. You know, I can actually afford to take myself out for coffee. I don't really- anyway. Yeah, I know what you mean.

David Pembroke: Indeed. But listen. What are some of the things that you learned in that early part of your career that you know to be true today? You know, let's put all of the tools and technologies to one side, what are the things that people need to know and understand that will sit at the heart of effective content communication?

Pat Duffy: Relationships matter. So the relationship that you build with the people that you are ultimately going to sell to or engage with or whatever it happens to be, is really, really important. And you can't break trust. And that is not a new concept. I mean you could go back to the beginning of time.

And that's really quite... content distribution in my view is about it's telling your constituents, whether it be citizens in a government context or potential customers or potential candidates in a defence force recruiting context, telling them things about yourself, about your offering, about stories, whatever it happens to be so that they start to get insight, so that they start to trust you, so that they want to get closer to you. I mean that's somewhat abstractly of course, throwing at Telco and customers. And I will say this. In the days that I was at Telstra, I left mid-'99, we actually saw the brand go from being, you know, kind of a tolerated brand in, you know David, in research terms you talk about the fat uncle in the corner that everyone's a little bit fond of but nobody much wants to take anywhere sort of thing, food on his tie. We became a brand that people both liked and respected. And we were a brand that was ranked up in those days with QANTAS and people like that. And that was as a result of really thinking about what sort of relationships you want to have. And then being true to that.

Back in those days as well, we did a lot of work to simplify pricing plans and stuff like that. Again, they've been recidivists, they've backslid into a much more opaque kind of pricing and stuff like that. But we really worked hard to make things easier for people. So that they felt comfortable about having an enduring relationship with us, particularly as competition opened up on more and more fronts.

David Pembroke:

And how important was in that mix, that face to face engagement with people and being able to create that human connection? Because I worry these days with the ubiquitous nature of connectivity and devices that we default to, well hang on, let's just knock something up and get it out there. And we get away from that ability, that face to face ability, to be able to create those human connections. 'Cause I know the content marketing institute, their research comes out every year, and the number one content marketing tactic is face to face communication. Be it at an event or education or somewhere where you can create a human connection. So how important is that to make sure that you're considering creating human interaction as well as having a solid digital publishing program to support your particular ambition?

Pat Duffy:

Look, I think it's important, but you've also got to be realistic. So again, if you think about a Telstra where your customer based included six and a half million households, for example, you cannot have a face to face connection with every single person. But what you can do is provide physical points of presence where people can engage with you. And that's why Telstra's got

retail shops, and back in those days had phone boxes. Places where you could actually sort of see. Even exchanges. Telephone exchanges, as silly as it sounds, we used to open them up and take journalists through and show them stuff that was coming down the pike so that they could then tell the story on our behalf to people. In a business context, obviously it's much more important for people to be able to engage directly with people, so that they know that you're trying to understand their business problems and then coming up with solutions to solve them.

But again, today, we have the ability to kind of simulate people to people contact a lot better than we could then. Back then that was one of the reasons that you relied on broadcast television advertising for example. It was a way of portraying your core values and so on, to a mass audience. So today as I say, with social media, with the ability to do things like we're doing now, with the ability to create video content that you can distribute to large numbers of people, you can simulate that person to person content.

David Pembroke: And just another sort of broader contextual issue really is this move to personalization. This narrowness. That we're going well and truly from the broadcast era to the narrow cast era. They talk about the audience of one. What's your view about that? And the challenge of being able to create a content program offline and online that deals with that very challenge of being useful and relevant and valuable to a specific niche?

Pat Duffy: This is going to sort of sound like a cop out, but in a way it depends on who you are. So if you are a very broadly based marketer, like a Telstra, or a Singtel or whoever, a bank, whatever it happens to be, you're going to have to do a bunch of things. You're going to have to have some broad reach and then you're going to have to have some very narrow reach. And maybe this is just because of the background that I've got. It's hard for me to see how you can build a brand in a mass audience through audiences of one. So you build your brand to a mass audience, but you engage with your customers through an audience of one, and what you hope to do then is to have really ... I sound so jargony, but really relevant sort of connections so that you're giving people access to things that they're going to value.

You know what I find, take Google as an example, I mean I don't know about you David but I would use Google 5,000 times a day. And what I love about, you know, if you think about the kind of history, the evolution of Google, it's amazing how today the searches that you do, you do a subsequent search and it remembers what you searched for before. So it's giving you more and more and more relevant search results. And you don't actually have to tell it

very much to get quite relevant search results, because it's looking at kind of a history of search. So audience of one is, or audience of some, as opposed to everyone, is really, really important. But it, contextually, there are going to be organisations that need to reach lots of people. And they will continue to use broadcast mechanisms or whatever it happens to be to do that, as well as to then take people, depending on where they are in their buying cycle or whatever it happens to be, down more individual paths.

David Pembroke: Hmm. So one more question actually, around, before we jump into a bit of a narrower conversation around content in recruitment, given your experience with defence force recruitment. But what about the march of the machines? What about artificial intelligence, smart machines, all manner of reality, virtual- you know. That sort of trend. What's your view, sitting at it and looking at it and thinking, mmm, I wonder what this means.

Pat Duffy: Look, I'm now thinking purely from a defence recruiting context. Those technologies are really important, because they allow defence to give experiences to people that they couldn't otherwise get. So you think about it, if you're thinking about joining the army, let's say. Unless you grew up in an army family, in an army town, or you've got close mates in the army or maybe you're a cadet or whatever, which isn't really a proxy for the army, you don't really know what to expect. And to try and round people up and take them to bases and establishments, it's a very difficult way to do anything at scale. Things like augmented reality and virtual reality and so on give you the ability to give people those experiences at scale.

David Pembroke: And have they been successful?

Pat Duffy: It's new, but there's been applications rolled out to each of the 16 recruiting centres around the country and yeah, they are really successful. Now they are talking to people that are already in the recruiting centres, so they're at least interested, but they've also taken them out to exhibitions and schools, that sort of thing. So the various things that the various military members, particularly go around, you know, several hundred of them, around the country in the interest of recruiting, yeah they're successful. And they will continue to be. And is it more cost effective for the Australian Defence Force to have something like that than to try and take a helicopter out to a school or take kids on a ship visit, yeah, it's a lot more cost effective. There's still a role for those very, very personal experiences, but that's a great way of delivering experiences at scale.

David Pembroke: How, just getting onto defence recruiting now, we might just have a conversation around that. How big a challenge is it? Or opportunity, and indeed through the communication, through the content, what is the problem that you're looking to solve there?

Pat Duffy: I think, and you might get a different view if you spoke to somebody who's more on the operational side, actually doing the actual recruiting, but everybody, the awareness of the navy, army, and air force is incredibly high. But the understanding is actually quite low, exactly as I said to you, unless you grew up in a garrison town or in a family, you don't really know what to expect. And then defence makes it harder for people because their job titles are kind of arcane and you can't really relate, what does that mean to a civilian job or whatever else. And then there is the problem of stereotypes and misperceptions. So, and I could take you in some detail if we had time and if you wanted to.

David Pembroke: Yeah, let's go.

Pat Duffy: With each of the services. Well if you think about the navy, a large problem, if you like, for the navy, if I could characterise it like that, is that people don't really know what you would do if you were in the navy. And most-

David Pembroke: What you'd do if you went on a ship.

Pat Duffy: And most of what happens is over the horizon. You don't see people doing things in the navy. And so there aren't- and people who don't know, they don't know how long you would go to sea for, they think that every job in the navy involves going to sea for unspecified but undoubtedly very long periods of time away from your family and friends. So the likelihood is that you would be lonely. And, and, and. So from a communications perspective, the work that we did at defence towards recruiting was to break down those misperceptions, because they are misperceptions. Yes, people do spend time at sea. They spend a lot more time on land, it depends on what their job is but I think the core of it is that in the navy, you might be away from your family and friends, but you're with your navy family and friends. And they really do work as a team. And so we anchored all of our communication around the notion of teamwork.

David Pembroke: So if you look at the traditional funnel, so you're taking someone walking in, they've done their basic research about what it is, how would you use content to be able to drive people from interest all the way through to signed up?

Pat Duffy: Well, I think that when we formed the social media team at defence force recruiting, and did it in a very defence-like way, very cautiously to begin with, started with a Facebook page, you know, whatever. If you look at defence force recruiting's use of social media today, it's quite sophisticated. And it very much is about not overburdening people at the beginning of consideration with too much. Trying to attract them. And sometimes senior servers, as we call them, will say, oh you're making it look too good. Well yes, but we're trying to ... We're not going to press gang them, we're just trying to attract them to go to the next stage of research. And then it's about delivering relevant content as people move through. Things like what happens when you go through the recruiting process? People want to know that. And they don't want to find out by going through the recruiting process. They kind of want to have an idea. What's involved in doing that particular job? Well the best way to demonstrate what's involved in doing that particular job other than letting them accompany somebody, which is hardly practical, for a host of reasons, is by showing them. So content delivery to show people that's what that job entails, that's what the recruiting process looks like, that's what this hardware looks like. It's massively important.

And this is where, you know, technology's been an absolute blessing. The ability to create amazing content, because let's face it defence is amazing, and then to distribute it in, at mass, at scale, but again down to very small audiences is really good. And then when you kind of couple that with the insights that technology has been able to deliver, I'm going to interrupt myself, I'm going to tell you another little story. One of the measures that we use in defence was recruiting as propensity. What's the likelihood of the target audience, so 16 to 24-year-olds, to consider joining the ADF? And propensity is measured in a very traditional fashion: research. So it's a monthly instrument that goes out to a randomly selected group of people, and asks a bunch of questions. But the kind of wash up of it is propensity. And it's a KPI.

David Pembroke: What impacts propensity?

Pat Duffy: Hosts of things, both good and bad. So communications has a massive impact on propensity, as we demonstrated over a long period of time. Advertising, comms, content distribution, and so on. Bad news has a negative impact on propensity. Own goals. Stories of atrocities and scandals and so on. But the great thing about the navy, army, and air force, is they are really resilient brands. I mean we're talking about brands that people largely want to be proud of. Whether it's arms length to you or not, you kind

of want to feel good about your navy, army, and air force. But so, if I go back to when I joined defence force recruiting, which is now it is exactly 10 years ago, in fact it's 10 years ago today, would you believe?

David Pembroke: Very good!

Pat Duffy: Yeah. So I've been gone for six months David, my goodness me. Overall propensity amongst that 16 to 24-year-old cohort was about 22, 23%. And defence had a goal of 40%. And I said to them, we will never get to 40%, how can you possibly expect that 4 out of 10 16 to 24-year-olds would be serious about- they might say, oh yeah, I might consider it. But would be serious about joining defence. We lowered the KPI, but we then got smarter. And what we realised was you can't really look at that audience en masse, because you've got people that are really, really keen, there's a big difference in age group, a big difference in gender, a big difference in geographic distribution. So regional kids who've been to boarding school and things like that are more likely to seriously consider-

David Pembroke: So that cohort of 16 to 24 doesn't exist.

Pat Duffy: You break it down in a variety of ways.

David Pembroke: Which again goes back to this notion of narrowness, doesn't it.

Pat Duffy: Absolutely, so we did a segmentation of the 16 to 24-year-old base, and then went further with that to try and actually match segmentation with media buying sort of science, you know. So that you could actually target.

David Pembroke: And how many personas, categories, whatever it is did you-

Pat Duffy: Seven.

David Pembroke: Seven. Inside of 16 to 24. Yep. Okay.

Pat Duffy: And I couldn't what they- ah, I could tell you one of them, which was adventure and excitement seekers who have the highest propensity of all, and if you look at defence force recruiting advertising, up until probably the last three or four years, it clearly played to that audience. It made everything look very fast paced and very- you know. Hardware focused. But there are other cohorts who are, would be great acquisitions, so people, I can't remember what we called- leadership challenge or something like that. People who want to be leaders, but don't quite know what that means. And so making them aware of the fact that there are great management and

leadership opportunities in the defence force that you get trained to do. You don't expect to arrive sort of fully formed, but they will train you to do those jobs.

David Pembroke: The bean counter inside of my head goes oh, this is expensive. When you start to segment, when you start to go into these high yielding particular segments. Is it expensive?

Pat Duffy: Well segmenting is actually less expensive than the kind of broad cast message to a whole bunch of people, many for whom it's not relevant. So segmenting is actually cost effective.

David Pembroke: Yeah. Well, depends though. Depends how much you're putting behind each of those segments though.

Pat Duffy: Well yes it does. So one of the things that we did was we identified the seven segments and then we said okay well there's four of them that we're not going to worry about at the moment. So we're going to look at adventure and excitement seekers, do we really need to keep investing in them? We don't really, they're attracted anyway.

David Pembroke: They're there.

Pat Duffy: So you're going to keep a level of engagement, but it's not going to be ... Again I mean it won't be as obvious to you perhaps as it is to me, having lived and breathed it for nine and a half years, but we did change the way that we advertised. It became somewhat quieter and more thoughtful. More cerebral in some ways, so that you're sort of appealing to different things, and then broadening your mass appeal out into these other segments and then of course your content distribution can be much more singular and specific and so on. And that's not an expensive strategy.

David Pembroke: No. Well it's much less expensive than buying national television-

Pat Duffy: And also doesn't take as long to do. I mean when you're doing TV campaigns, I think there's still a role for them, I mean I've got a fondness, I miss the good old days. I miss the days when you could road block, as we used to call it, a Sunday night. You take the three commercial networks, and the movies, and you did your advertising for the week. Cause you reached everybody in Australia. Those days are kind of gone. But I think there's still a role for broadcast advertising.

But again, if you look at a defence force recruiting kind of model, because the audience is not exclusively, but largely a young audience- now one of our insights moving two or three years, yeah 16 to 24's kind of the sweet spot, but there are heaps of people in the 25 to 39-year-old age group who are interested in joining the ADF. And they are interesting people because they've got life experience, they've got skills, they've got transferrable skills. A lot of people in that age group are thinking, especially in the sort of 30's, if I'm ever going to make a change, now's the time to do it. So we started doing a different type of communication to those people that was obviously going to make them understand why they could come into the ADF and have a fabulous, rewarding, second, third, fourth career.

David Pembroke: And did that work?

Pat Duffy: Yeah. Absolutely. And in fact, from the perspective of recruiting officers, there was a lot of, I guess toing and froing over the years with the services, you'd get some groups who'd say oh no we want to get them really young and train them up. But you'd get the really young ones and they never made it through officer selection boards. Because they didn't really have the kind of life experience and so on. So targeting slightly older people has been much more successful.

David Pembroke: So what are some of the translatable lessons that you have from that experience at defence force recruiting that people might be able to incorporate in their daily work as content communication?

Pat Duffy: Well defence force recruiting is quite specific, but I would say one thing. I hope I'm not answering this too obliquely. [inaudible 00:34:25] observations since being involved in recruiting, and I mean I never had been other than with defence force recruiting, but it's a big chunk of my career, is that I've had the opportunity to go to a lot of HR conferences, talent management conferences, recruiting type conferences. And been somewhat surprised that the HR people don't see themselves as being, in my view, the very close first cousins, at the very least, that they are with marketing. They kind of see themselves as apart from marketing. But hang on a second, if you're building a brand, or creating a brand position, that's massively important both to your existing employees, and to future prospective employees. So everything that you do, everything that you do in a branding and brand type context has got to be cognizant of all stakeholders, not just prospective customers.

You know I think sometimes about- you take an advertising campaign like Coles, down down prices are down. And I kind of think, well is that a good kind of employee branding proposition? But stop, I'm going to give it the benefit of doubt, I'm going to say well at least what it shows, I'm thinking about the TV ads, I'm sure there's other stuff. At least it shows people who appear to be enjoying their work, who appear to be customer service oriented, who appear to want to do the right thing. That's not so bad. You know, so it's not the down, down bit. It's the personas that they're using to convey those messages.

David Pembroke: That's interesting, 'cause I know that the IT people don't like marketing and communications people, finance people definitely don't like marketing, and now you're telling me HR doesn't like us either.

Pat Duffy: Nobody likes us. Well no, that's not true David. Everybody's envious of us because they think we have all the fun. Quite seriously. And this is a fault of marketers. We- they think it's all care and no responsibility. Ah well it's all right for you guys, you're off swanning around shooting things and doing this and doing that, you've got no actual skin in the game, and that's why ... That conversation that we used to have at Telstra every Friday afternoon. What did you do to drive shareholder value this week? That thinking is so incredibly important for marketers. As I said, the convergence of IT and marketing is incredible. I mean marketers cannot do their jobs without close relationships with their IT departments. Some chief marketing officers, if we can call them that, are spending as much on IT as their IT counterparts.

So these things are all coming together. It's not a competition. I think that's the other thing is that everybody needs to keep in mind we're not competing- I mean you do compete for corporate resources I suppose. But everybody actually should want the same thing, and you do have to integrate the functions in an organisation to be successful. You have to.

David Pembroke: You do, but in traditional organisations we're still very much early days in everyone's playing nice with each other.

Pat Duffy: But I think that, I think each function brings that on itself. So a certain extent. So you look at IT, the absolute deliberate use of jargon designed to keep everybody out. Now I'm lucky, I spent 20 years in IT, so I'm like you can't fool me. But you can in fact. But marketers bring a lot of it on themselves by saying marketing when what they're thinking is advertising, for example. Marketing isn't advertising. Advertising is another way of getting a message out to people that you want to engage with, whether it be

citizens in a government context, candidates in a recruiting context, customers in a commercial context.

David Pembroke: Yeah. It's exciting times, isn't it? I do enjoy the discussions. And I think now, I think there is much more capability for communications people to have that conversation around value. Where you can take, and demonstrate value by various calculations that you can make. So the conversations that you can have where previously we've struggled to get into those conversations because really the numbers have been rubbery, they haven't really held weight with finance or IT people, whereas I think it's much easier now to have those conversations where we can relate our activity directly to the accomplishment or not of business objectives. But as long as we can tie our activity and measure the signals that we can get from our activity, driving towards particular business objectives, I think we're on safe ground. And I think we're in better shape than we've been ever.

Pat Duffy: Look I agree with you. You know, it's interesting, if you kind of be just for a moment be a bit of a student of advertising, let's say. So go back 50 or 60 years, way before my time I hasten to point out, but you think back, when George Patterson started in Australia, which must be the better part of 85 years ago now. Of course it's now almost gone as a brand, in fact it's now just Y and R. But George Patterson himself, he was best friends with managing directors of big- you know, Proctors and Gamble and whatever, these companies. And these companies took advertising very seriously. Now it was a much simpler world back then, so to be able to get people aware of your product you had to advertise to them. Then you went through the more rational period where people- oh this marketing stuff, it's such a waste of time. But that's because they were thinking advertising instead of marketing. Marketing's about positioning, it's about messaging, it's about pricing, it's about research, it's about misperception busting. It's about so many things.

I actually think that we're in a stage now where- and it's kind of a generational thing as well, where you've got kind of a new generation of chief executives. Many of whom have done marketing things in their MBAs or their executive training. Or done marketing degrees for that matter. And they much more understand marketing as a driver of business results. I won't say revenue, because it's not always about revenue. It can be about recruitment, it can be about citizen behaviour, whatever. But they kind of get it. So I think marketing actually has a good seat at the table now in terms of business outcomes and making business decisions.

But it's incumbent upon marketers to not do the IT thing and use jargon that they love using but that nobody else really understands, or that makes it sound trivial. It's not trivial. Communicating with people that are going to be influenced by you or whatever else, it's the most important thing that you do. Because you're always driving towards some sort of an outcome. And I guess maybe to come full circle to what you said at the beginning David about this business, when you think about the role of government communication, where you are trying to drive quite often behaviour change in citizens, not always an easy thing to do, it's massively important. We can't treat it as a trivial sort of thing. And it all comes down to the steps that you take to communicate with people, i.e. the distribution of content to achieve those outcomes.

David Pembroke: Indeed. Well Pat, we have gone a little over time, sorry audience, I do try to keep it to around about the 30 minute mark, but anyway. We can, it was a good chat. So we can keep going. It's my podcast. I'm going to do what I like.

Pat Duffy: They can tune out any time they like.

David Pembroke: Actually it's great, I got some feedback the other day, someone sort of stopped me in the street and said, "Oh, I listen to your podcast, really enjoy it." So it was really nice, so thank you. But yeah, thanks Pat. Thanks for coming in.

Pat Duffy: Thank you. Pleasure.

David Pembroke: I look forward to drawing on your wisdom to continue to assist government to communicate more effectively, 'cause I think it's never been more important as we see sort of the rise of populous movements across Western democracies. That might make it sound a little bit sort of high faulting, but still it's so important I think. So much of what government does is valuable. And important. And relevant. And they don't do a great job in explaining themselves. And this is the problem that we're seeking to solve is actually to help them get that story out there so they can build these trusted relationships with citizens and stakeholders over time so as people understand. Now they mightn't like it, but the best way to deal with not liking something is at the ballot box. But in those interim periods, whoever is elected, we need to do a good job to tell their stories.

Pat Duffy: I'd go a step further, the debasement of government through these populous movements and so on, it's a serious threat. And it is incumbent upon us as communicators, people who work in government, to help

government tell its stories better. It's interesting if you look at the State governments where they're much more focused on service delivery, it seems to be more pragmatic and practical, whereas for Federal government it is more about bigger picture, longer term, and harder to do, probably.

David Pembroke: Well you look at the problems, urbanisation, ageing populations, digitization, the future of work. These are big, complex issues and problems, and it takes time to explain to people, well this is the size and scale of the problem. And here are some of the things we're doing to try to prepare the community to be able to deal with some of the disruption that is headed our way. So. Anyway. It's exciting. I love it. I can't get enough of it. And thanks very much for joining us.

Pat Duffy: Thank you.

David Pembroke: And thanks very much for joining us on the podcast, Pat Duffy, that was a great conversation. And thanks to you, the audience, for coming back once again for another slightly longer version of InTransition. But I'm sure it was very well worth while for you as it was for me. So thanks very much. And we will be back at the same time next week. But for the moment, it is bye for now.

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