

EXCERPT: PART 3: Inspire

Content and the bigger game

Mark Masters is carving out a global niche as a passionate advocate for building brands and businesses through the use of owned media.

Mark, who is an author, speaker and content marketing agency owner, runs The ID Group based in Poole, a seaside town on the south coast of England. He is living proof of how an owned-media approach, when integrated with social and earned media, can grow someone's professional reputation and with it, commercial opportunities that otherwise would not have materialized.

By implementing the content marketing strategies he champions in his weekly email, blog, book (*The Content Revolution*), podcast and live events, Mark has steadfastly strengthened the VITAL pillars of his brand:

- He has **visibility** in the regional marketplace where he operates, while also building his profile internationally.
- He has grown and deepened his level of **influence**, especially in the Dorset region where he continues to inspire an engaged community of professionals and business owners.
- He is **trusted** by a growing army of **advocates** of his business and personal brand, what he does and what stands for.
- He continues to cement a **leadership** position in his space.

When I interviewed Mark, he explained how he had transformed himself professionally from traditional marketer to content leader: "... I am from that world where I want to interrupt you and put myself in front of you with offers and promise you stuff," he told me.

On becoming an evangelist for others, Mark says he believes in people and companies building a loyal audience via content marketing through owned media.

This works, Mark says, by "informing people and to be more transparent and educational, and to challenge and inspire."

This is classic content marketing for PR: building credibility and establishing a reputation as a thought leader and trusted source of information around a particular topic.

Mark practices what he preaches and is big on bringing people along for the journey. This has been a cornerstone of his success. He doesn't beat his chest and tell the world he's an expert, like so many so-called "experts" seem to do. Instead, he takes an open, transparent approach toward creating content. You could loosely classify this as learning on the job and documenting it.

Find your space, build your audience, take your stand

For years now, Mark has floated ideas and put forth — and continually refined — a philosophy that focuses on businesses standing for something and delivering a consistent message to a targeted audience through a preferred channel in order to inform, enlighten and entertain.

“If there is one word that binds this together, it is *ownership*,” he says. “This, in turn, leads to loyalty, which I believe is the objective for all of us.”

“Everything I stand for is to help companies take ownership of the spaces that are theirs. Once a company has complete control, they can build an audience and then monetize.” Mark says.

You are the media

Mark talks a lot about the importance of owning spaces and creating content for the media channels you own and control, such as your blog, website, podcast and email subscriber list. As Mark says, “You are the media.”

However, rather than use those channels to talk about generic topics that become boring noise, he says we should, instead, have a point of view that allows us to comment on bigger issues and trends.

“If we can talk from experience that is backed up by data, knowledge and a bit of opinion, that’s what sets us aside. . . . Our voices are all unique . . . so let’s find a way [to] present that to the rest of the world.

“And that’s what [our] You Are The Media project is all about . . . how people can take on board a point of view and deliver it on a consistent basis. That’s how we build an audience without necessarily relying on forcing everything onto Google or Facebook, just to get somebody clicking and liking our subscribe page.”