

John Ford: Who Is Your Chief Content Officer?

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Earlier this week, I read a thought-provoking article titled "[Do Organizations Need a Chief Content Officer?](#)"

To be honest, I'm not sure where it was published first. My helpful colleague [Cari Brunelle](#) passed it along via LinkedIn, so when I clicked through there was a LinkedIn frame at the top of the page. Below that was the Forbes masthead. Did this article originally appear in the print version? The online version? I didn't know and didn't really care. The article had a title at the top: "CMO Network." Was this a regular column special to *Forbes*? A syndicated column published in a number of different venues? Again, didn't know, didn't care.

What was important to me, to the article's author (Chris Perry of Weber Shandwick), and to the original publisher (whoever that may be), is that I was reading the content, however it got to me. Which gets to the subject of the column itself: today, all kinds of content is getting pushed out over the Internet, and that content finds its readers in any number of ways. I reached it through LinkedIn; others found it via Twitter, Digg, or possibly even the ink-stained pages of a real live Forbes magazine.

There's a hefty amount of jargon in the piece, including terms like "broadcast agenda," "content functions," and "marketing disciplines." But the bottom line is clear enough: producing content is a major—and necessary—marketing activity, and given all of the different ways you can send that content out into the world, it helps to have someone planning how to do that.

Would I call that person a Chief Content Officer? No. But then I wouldn't call a children's museum an "imaginarium," either, and that has [caught on](#) pretty well. What I would do, as the piece suggests, is to give someone the following responsibilities:

- orchestrating the distribution of content;
- tracking the viewership of that content across various distribution channels (Twitter, company newsletter, company website, Facebook, etc. etc.); and
- identifying the distribution channels that perform best, and maximizing the benefit gained from them.

The best person to fill this role probably already has a title, like "Communications Specialist." But whatever they go by, there should be one of them in your organization. And for more on content, check out some recent articles HBC published on the topic, including "[The Content Marketing Revolution](#)" and "[Social Media: Give 'Em Something to Talk About](#)," both on *Law360*.