

Interview with Jay Swansson, Co-Founder of ClearVoice, Content Marketing Software



Jay Swansson
Co-founder

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CEOCFO: Mr. Swansson, according to your site, ClearVoice is content marketing made easy. How so?

Mr. Swansson: We’ve created software that’s a complete, end-to-end solution for companies looking to create more and better content. We have intelligence tools that show you what topics are trending online and who’s creating the most popular content; there’s a freelancer marketplace, where companies can connect with freelance writers who have expertise in their niche; and then there’s a complete project management system that manages the creation, editing and publishing processes.

ClearVoice is a great place for writers to come in, show off their work and command the rate they set. The software enables them to work directly with brands in a transparent atmosphere.

Then underneath all that are the tools to search trending content, influencers and things that are going on in their industry and the project management tools. Brands can see the whole process, from planning to managing through to publishing. Your internal team and your freelancers are all in one place.

CEOCFO: Are companies recognizing the need for quality content as opposed to content?

Mr. Swansson: Definitely, and that is exactly why we created ClearVoice. We used to have an office of more than 120 people with 25 people on our editorial staff. We had such clients as American Express, Coach and Orkin. We were trying to tell our editorial team they had to be experts in finance, handbags and pest control, all at the same time. You cannot go hire experts all the time at a full-time capacity. We went to many of those flat-box marketplaces to try to find those kinds of freelancers, but we weren’t getting the quality that we needed. I think brands are more focused on quality over quantity — but how can you do both in a scalable manner?

CEOCFO: How are people working with ClearVoice from both sides of the equation?

Mr. Swansson: We’ve created a place where brands of all sizes can come in and work on our platform. They can either do that in an affordable, DIY atmosphere, where they just use the software and manage it themselves, or we can do it all for them.

We work with many brands where we set up the platform for them, we bring in all their expert freelancers, we bring in influencers, we get them set up with keyword portfolios and a content strategy, and then we execute it with freelance editors and writers. Content marketing is still pretty new, and many big and small companies have relatively small teams.

We are seeing a lot of these teams grow over time and people investing more into the content — but you still might not have access to all the writers you need. Or, maybe you have editors, but there are some gaps missing on your creative side. We come in and fill any gaps.

CEOCFO: *How do you decide who is a good content creator?*

Mr. Swansson: We have editors who review the work of every writer that comes into our platform. We are currently accepting about 10 percent of all writers who come to us. We are picky but fair. Once accepted, all writers are on a probation period before they are fully invested into the system.

We also actively crawl the internet for industry-specific experts. We have crawled the top 300,000 publishers on the internet to find who writes for each of these publishers. Then we categorize the writers. We can see what they are talking about, when they are talking about it and how well it performs on social. We have tools in our software where people can search for this information, too. There are over 400,000 writers with these portfolios in ClearVoice, and we believe it might be the most complete index on the internet — it is definitely one of them.

CEOCFO: *Where does style and trend or tone of an article come into play? Does it vary in different industries?*

Mr. Swansson: That depends on the brand. It starts with the brand guidelines and how the brand wants to position themselves in the industry. They need to decide how they want to talk to different personas and how different personas want to be talked to. One brand may be more fun and casual with their audience, another may be more authoritative. An example of this is Microsoft and Apple. Same industry, two very different tones. Each brand sets their brand guidelines in the software, and our writers follow those guidelines to match the desired tone.

CEOCFO: *Are there competitors with such a wide-reaching offerings, or is that very limited other than ClearVoice?*

Mr. Swansson: We are the only company that I know of that offers a freelancer marketplace, content studio for trend and influencer search, and a full content management system with editorial calendar and collaborative editing. There are many competitors out there, doing a great job, but we allow for the content process — from concepts to publishing — to be streamlined in one place. You can find other services with a higher price tag or limited capabilities. We are both affordable and complete.

CEOCFO: *Might you at some point work with agencies who normally provide content to their clients but could get it better from you?*

Mr. Swansson: We work with agencies right now, and they are some of our biggest clients. The marketplace is really effective for agencies, because it enables them to hire different experts in different categories for their new and existing clients. We integrate with HubSpot to facilitate marketing automation. And plus, ClearVoice allows for full transparency. They can see everything from the creation to the financial management. All the writers are paid through our system.

CEOCFO: *What is your geographic reach today?*

Mr. Swansson: Right now we are focused on English-speaking countries. We have clients in Australia and the UK, but mostly they're from the U.S. and Canada. We are getting requests for other languages, and that's something we'll build in as we go.

CEOCFO: *What have you learned along the way? How is ClearVoice better today?*

Mr. Swansson: Content marketing is still in its infancy. I see it growing exponentially. When I started working in internet marketing, you would drive people to a website and try to close them as a client. Now, I see people and brands really trying to create more of an experience for their audience. They are using content and their social media channels as a way to entertain, educate, inform, attract and close clients. That's why we are so excited about ClearVoice — we have created a place where people can create an experience for their audience in an efficient and transparent way.

CEOCFO: *Why choose ClearVoice and what might people miss when they look at ClearVoice?*

Mr. Swansson: We are in this content game with you. We understand how difficult it is to find expert writers, to track, manage, produce, scale. That's why we created ClearVoice, and we use our own system. What you might miss is just how much we offer: a marketplace, a content management system, a trending and influencer search and a team of people ready to help you if you need it.

