



FAREPORTAL CASE STUDY

Fareportal is an international online travel agency that maintains partnerships with airlines, hotels, and car rental companies to resell their products. Headquartered in New York, Fareportal's brand of online travel agencies (CheapOair and OneTravel) offer great deals for air travel, and hotel and car rentals with a dedicated 24/7 phone support. CheapOair is also ranked number two among OTAs for air travel.

Fareportal's Content department oversees all marketing, operational, and advertorial copy, making sure unified messaging exists across all channels. After finally getting buy-in to manage what felt like a chaotic process, they began using Mintent in 2018 to streamline production and better manage individual workloads. The platform is used to manage the production of website, landing page copy, and blog posts for both travel brands. Recently, they've made the transition into adding operational copy, such as writing sales messaging for sales reps' phone calls, writing content for their apps' alerts, and internal copy for their company portal.

We sat down with Morlette Cowan, Head of Content & Creative Director, and her lead Content Strategist, Dave Odegard, to ask them about how they use Mintent to manage their content marketing.

HOW DOES YOUR TEAM USE MINTENT?

Morlette: "We use Mintent to centralize and bring order to the production of content and to better manage workloads for each team member; to mitigate writer fatigue. Mintent's monthly calendar feature allowed us to plan ahead for content, whether this was a request from stakeholders or recurring content initiatives like blog posts.

For the first time, as a manager, I had a broad overview of all that my team was working on and this allowed me to identify and address any inefficiencies that existed in our process. My writers were able to dictate realistic deadlines to stakeholders based on their workloads. This was a huge win for the team, as this eliminated the anxiety that resulted from the varied "urgent" requests sent via Slack channels, emails or in person.

Dave, our strategist on the team, could now plan ahead for our blogs and collaborate with freelancers and in-house writers. Additionally, we were able to create real-time metrics on all that was going on within the department - this made it easier to make the case for a new tool or new staff."

Dave: "I would also add that we are now able to plan and schedule social media posts, along with blog posts. Before Mintent, we had little to no insight into what the social team worked on, but now we work in tandem. We collaborate by creating calendars based on the same editorial themes. Now the social team is notified in real time when a new blog post is published so they can distribute on our social channels.

I'm focused on making sure there is enough content to keep the blog running at all times. Most of the other writers on the team use it to handle all of the other requests. By using Mintent to plan and create content that aligns with the buyer's persona and customer journey stages, our team can make sure all of our goals and deadlines are being met."

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOUR TEAM FACED BEFORE MINTENT?

Morlette: "I touched on this earlier, but our process was chaotic at best. As an international company with teams located in several countries, we constantly tried to address an insane influx of requests from each department. My team did their best to keep up and manage expectations and the end result was always the same; some happy and unhappy stakeholders, as well as overwhelmed writers who were unable to meet deadlines for blog posts and other requests."

Morlette: "Additionally, we could not effectively manage the work of our freelancers as these tasks were submitted to Dave through email. Dave would have to download the Word doc, review and make edits and then send back to the freelancers for the final version. I created a content request process, using Basecamp and Google forms, these were never adopted company-wide."

Dave: "With in-house and out-of-house contractors all working on different projects, it became difficult to manage using spreadsheets. Items were getting lost and deadlines were being missed. Version control also got pretty messy. Once we were able to create and upload content to a single source, everyone gained visibility into what was coming down the pipe and who was working on what. Our process was very complicated and near-sighted before. It wasn't as visually simple as it could have been."

WHAT ARE YOUR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY OBJECTIVES WITH REGARD TO YOUR CONTENT?

Morlette: "The primary goal? Cut through the chaos that existed for an in-house team of ten writers, eight freelancers, content vendors and influencers. I want my team to manage their time and tasks in a more efficient way and honestly, feel happy about coming to work. One of the issues for my team was getting a handle on the lack of process and protocol for requesting and producing content in an organization with thousands of employees. We could not prioritize requests and oftentimes many got lost in emails. I needed to find a way to centralize requests and cushion writers from daily email interruptions.

The secondary goal? Free up time to produce and measure more engaging content that provides business value and enhances employee satisfaction. Being able to manage time, tasks, and production, my team could take on additional projects such as SEO initiatives which helped the company's authority rank and provided personal ownership to individual writers."

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND IN MINTENT?

Dave: "Well, if it's an 8-hour workday, then I'd say I spend 8 hours in the app! I keep the tab open on my screen whenever I'm working."

Morlette: "I spend about an hour each day, which makes my life so much easier. Dave and I meet weekly to discuss his reports for future planning."

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE FEATURES IN MINTENT AND WHY?

Morlette: "I love, love the calendar, tasks, and workflow features. Being able to see everything in a calendar view makes it so accessible to the entire team. Everyone can see what they have to get done each day. The ability to add fields and views and see how many posts we have from each writer and which theme it corresponds to is essential for us. We now have so much insight into all of our different content types and which audience they are for. For me, that is the greatest appeal of the app, the calendar view with customization so you can focus and balance out workload."

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU THINK IT'S SAVED YOU?

Dave: "I'd say it's saved us a ton of time. Before Mintent, we were using spreadsheets and publishing about 40 posts per month across our two blogs. Since we've adopted Mintent, we now publish about 70 posts per month. We're able to produce a higher quantity of content, in the same amount of time, in a much more efficient way. We're also scheduling posts so much further in advance. Before, we'd be (at the most) about a month ahead of planning, now, we're at least 2 months ahead at all times. It also makes recycling high-value content, reporting, and content audits super easy."

ANY OTHER ADVANTAGES YOU'D LIKE TO COMMENT ON?

Dave: "Use of the Creative Brief, themes and personas. Dave populates these fields and then an internal team member will grab the post and optimize it for SEO before uploading it to the site. This gives the team more insight into the audience for the post and we can make sure our keyword strategy is aligned with the audience."

Another benefit for us is the automated workflows. These really help the team understand the entire content production process. After the writer finishes the draft, it is automatically assigned to the reviewer, and from there, on to the SEO expert, and the manager for approval and publishing.

Most of our blog engagement metrics come from Google Analytics, and we can create fields in the Creative Brief for keywords, and then categorize posts by keyword in Mintent. That way, we can easily see if certain types of posts are working, which writer is getting better results, and other metrics such as unique page views, average time on page, returning visitor rate, etc. We have seen our organic search results increase as a result of using Mintent."

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO CHOOSE MINTENT?

Morlette: "During my research I found that other vendors (Teams, Ghannt, DivvyHQ etc.) addressed part of the problem but could not deliver a comprehensive solution. For instance, DivvyHQ did not have the ability to track content requests plus its calendar feature could not facilitate separate departments working within the same platform. Being able to add our Social and PR teams to Mintent meant we could truly collaborate and measure efforts across marketing disciplines.

Additionally, I found other pricing models were not worth our investment based on how limited the platforms seemed. We also found the other platforms we were evaluating were a great deal more complicated to use than Mintent, which feels intuitive right from the start."

WHAT HAVE PEOPLE BEEN SAYING SINCE USING THE TOOL?

Dave: "Our core team of users are all in agreement that the tool was super easy and intuitive to pick up. Once we were able to get all of our content into it and started using it as a single source of truth, there was really no turning back. We would never want to go back to the way things were before using a tool like this! Now social, media and PR teams have created their own departments in the platform and use Mintent to better manage output."

HOW ARE YOU USING MINTENT TO MEET YOUR MARKETING GOALS?

Dave: "Using the OKRs (objectives and key results) system, we've been able to implement key metrics into our content planning. A good example of this would be us aligning our content with our SEO goals, integrating long tail and bottom of the funnel keywords, which enabled us to create a more effective content strategy.

For the first time I could provide management with a side-by-side view of what we were now able to achieve with Mintent versus what existed before. We were able to set better deadlines and expectations for our stakeholders, which resulted in happier stakeholders and better quality content.

Also, we were also able to measure how each piece of content performed and tie this back to the writer, whether in-house or freelance. As a manager, this made it easier for me to create realistic KPIs by trickling-down my department objectives to team members. The team, in turn, were incentivised to achieve and produce their best work."

WHAT HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN LIKE WORKING WITH MINTENT?

Morlette: "We have a great relationship with our account manager. This too was a reason why I decided to go with Mintent. We're always able to get a hold of someone (a real person on the phone!) if we need anything. Any issues we've ever had have always been resolved swiftly."

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO TEAMS TACKLING SIMILAR PROBLEMS TO THE ONES YOU HAD?

Dave: "Provide the business value. Demonstrate how the tool can save the company time and money."

Identify and write down what the bottlenecks are in your current process and be prepared to articulate how the solution will increase production efficiencies for all your stakeholders. Break down content into smaller tasks and assign a time metric to each task to highlight your current process and compare this to a solution like using Mintent. The C-Suite must first be convinced that, by using a tool, they are paying to ramp up production, which translates getting content live quicker, leading to more sales opportunities."



"[With Mintent] We cut through the chaos that existed for an in-house team of ten writers, eight freelancers, content vendors, and influencers."

- Morlette Cowan, Head of Content