



HEALTHCARE CMOS: **YOUR TOP 10** CONTENT MARKETING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

As a healthcare Chief Marketing Officer or VP of Marketing, you may have heard quite a lot about content marketing. Perhaps your teams are already fully involved in content marketing activities. Maybe you're even seeing results you like. You also might be seeing that expectations are falling short of the mark.

Let's review the tenets of content marketing, so you understand where your organization is and how you can set achievable goals.



#1

WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?

Content marketing is a marketing strategy designed for marketers to publish content that positions their brand as a leader in their marketplace.

Content marketing isn't direct selling. Rather, it's a way to establish your brand as a healthcare leader in your geographical area (or nationally, if you so choose). Once you build a relationship with your customers, they think of you first when it comes time to make a healthcare choice.

Some popular examples in the healthcare space currently are Seattle Children's Mama Doc™ blog and the Cleveland Clinic's healthessentials (formerly known as the Health Hub). Both are stellar examples of how organizations can position their doctors as trusted sources of information. These blogs also work by educating and informing consumers so they can take better care of their family's health.

#2

HOW IS CONTENT MARKETING DIFFERENT FROM ADVERTISING OR OTHER TRADITIONAL FORMS OF MARKETING WE'RE ALREADY DOING?

Content marketing is a long-term strategy that isn't really about your brand. It's more about your brand's ideas within the healthcare space.

Content marketing is about creating value and winning loyalty by consistently giving information for free. For many years, hospitals have published educational web pages about what they can offer. But now, they are diversifying their content offerings.

Consider this ebook that Johns Hopkins produced on lung cancer—Lung Cancer, A Guide for Patients and Caregivers. For those patients considering treatment, this ebook serves as a guide. It doesn't push Johns Hopkins as the place to go for treatment. Rather, it demonstrates their doctors' expertise in treating the cancer, making Johns Hopkins even more valuable to the patient. Content marketing is like high-level networking—investing in relationships so that you build opportunities for "real transactions" down the line.

#3

WHAT TYPES OF CONTENT SHOULD WE PUBLISH?

You are building trust, therefore authenticity is your friend.

Your goal is to create trust with your audience, so that they see you as a reputable source of information about your services. Consider content like web content, social media, ebooks, newsletters, blogs, podcasts and videos.

Think of the healthcare organizations that have strong brands—on some level, you trust their advice because they have proven that they can deliver extraordinary healthcare. So too, your content marketing should revolve around your strength in telling stories that illustrate your unique point of view and what you can offer.

#4

WHAT WILL CONTENT MARKETING DO FOR OUR SEO?

Findability and search are huge issues in healthcare settings.

Often your stakeholders will complain about your search rankings. Content marketing can help your search results. By publishing topics that your audiences care about, you are ensuring that they will find you when they go on the hunt. According to Google, one in 20 searches is for healthcare information. Being visible to people looking for your point of view and leadership is invaluable for the healthcare marketer.

Companies with blogs typically receive 97% more leads than companies without blogs. Content-rich sites tend to get more backlinks and social traffic, which helps them generate more traffic overall (Neil Patel). Blogs are one tactic used by content marketers to attract and direct traffic to their digital properties and continue enticing audiences with valuable content.

It's important to keep in mind that there are dozens of variables that affect search. Creating quality content in your marketplace will help your brand become more visible. Remember, a complex search strategy requires more than just a content marketing strategy.

#5

HOW DO WE SET CONTENT MARKETING GOALS?

Prepare for long-term ROI (return on investment).

It takes a long time to see value out of a content marketing mindset. Some say up to 18 months, but we think you can see wins as early as four to five months. Remember, you are working to influence how audiences see your brand. Their viewpoints won't change overnight.

Once you start publishing content that demonstrates that you are a leader or have a particular point of view in your healthcare marketplace, people will see your brand differently. But it will take time, so prepare for a marathon, not a sprint.

THE #1 QUESTION PEOPLE ASK ABOUT CONTENT MARKETING

Is content marketing another flash-in-the-pan marketing strategy?

Some see content marketing as a controversial tactic, or one that is still unproven.

In early 2016, Joe Pulizzi, whom many consider the godfather of content marketing, penned a post on the Content Marketing Institute's blog, Content Marketing – It's Going to Get Weird. His point is that all disruptive technologies go through a 5-step cycle where there's a peak of inflated expectations, followed by a trough of disillusionment followed by a slope of enlightenment. Pulizzi's point of view in the article is that most brands aren't "doing content marketing right," which may be a valid point. However, his point begs the question about how to do it right. Follow best practices, and you will get closer to your goals of building relationships with your audiences and creating conversations that last.

#6

HOW DO WE MEASURE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CONTENT MARKETING?

You will be able to measure your results through a number of different marketing metrics.

A major problem for healthcare marketers is measuring all the data they receive. 41% of health executives say that their organization's data volume has grown more than 50% in one year (Accenture Consulting).

To make strategic decisions based on your data, you need to have people who can translate that data into insights—namely, data crunchers who understand the signals that the data is sending. Data crunchers work together with the content creators to finetune content production and tactics.

Good KPIs (key performance indicators) might include:

- Overall traffic
- Likes and shares
- Engagement (like signing up for an email newsletter)
- Downloads
- Requests for consultations or appointments

#7

DOES THIS MEAN WE SHOULD PRODUCE A LOT OF CONTENT ABOUT EVERYTHING WE DO?

Think quality, not quantity.

There's a lot of content out there. Sometimes it's hard to know how to focus in such a crowded marketplace. Mark Schaefer coined the term content shock in January 2014 to describe how audiences are overwhelmed by information density. As more publishers create high-quality content, it is difficult to separate offerings

For healthcare organizations, quality content means increasing focus on your evergreen content around conditions, treatments and services. While blog and social media posts are valuable for pulling people into your content, the content that describes the bread and butter of your business must be fresh, relevant and comprehensive. Patients use that content to make decisions about which doctors to see and which treatments to research and pursue. Don't forget that your evergreen content can be the greatest focus of your content marketing.

CONTENT MARKETING FEEDS YOUR CRM

Part of why content marketing has become so essential to businesses is that it feeds your Customer Relationship Management tool, or CRM. Your CRM is a hungry content beast, and developing relationship building content to feed it is critical.

Being able to capture your traffic's personal details and nurture your relationship with your audience are why CRMs were born. Yet, so many hospitals are having trouble making use of these powerful tools. Here are three ways to maximize your success:

1. Make a personalized offer.
2. Match your landing page to the offer.
3. Create thoughtful calls to action.

Read more about 3 Ways to Feed your Hospital's CRM on our blog.

#8

WHAT TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS SHOULD I LOOK AT?

The technology choices seem confusing.

You've probably heard buzzwords like marketing automation, the internet of things, localization, responsive design, adaptive content, and programmatic marketing. There are more than 200 content marketing technology tools, and as I write, five more were probably born. No wonder it's overwhelming to choose vendors and technology suites who can help you.

Again, back to strategy. Where are you trying to go? What is the best way—not the fastest—to get there? When you understand your strategy, you will pick better tools that can help you achieve your vision.

We also suggest trying one tool at a time and not introducing too many at once. You don't want to overwhelm your teams, and you also want to make sure your spend on tools makes sense for your strategy.

#9

HOW SHOULD WE START?

Start with a content marketing strategy.

Understand that your strategy should stay the same, but your tactics may change. Think of a strategy as a destination on a map—you know where you want to go, but you now need to plot how to get there.

Ask yourself, "How do we want the marketplace to view us in 12 to 18 months? What are our strengths, and how can we illustrate them better?" Deciding on how you're going to tell those stories, which content types you are

going to use and which channels serve your populations best is content strategy. When we implemented a content strategy for one hospital's blog, we saw a 330% increase in traffic.

Another important thing to remember is to iterate. Your tactics may change as you learn what your audience best responds to. Don't forget to keep your eye on the ball. Where you chose to go at the beginning shouldn't change because one tactic doesn't seem to be working.

#10

WHAT'S THE NUMBER ONE GOAL I SHOULD SET FOR MY TEAMS?

Storytelling will always triumph.

Gestalt communications is the theory that when people speak from their own experiences, the listening party makes meaningful connections. This is particularly true in content marketing for healthcare.

Two important things of note here:

1. When you tell stories of patients who are like the patients researching your offerings, you have a better chance of influencing them that you are the brand to trust.
2. Empathy is critical. Showing you understand your patients and the hope they have for improving their lives or curing their disease will set you apart.

IN CONCLUSION

It's a well-known adage today: If you're a brand, you need to be a publisher. But publishing just to publish will leave you with vanilla, boring content that doesn't make any impression on anyone. Start with a strategy, build a content-focused organization with the right talent and focus on what makes you better, different and special.



WE HELP YOUR AUDIENCES MAKE THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISIONS OF THEIR LIVES.

Aha Media Group creates strategic content designed specifically for your target audiences. We provide expert writing and consulting services, superior project management and a thorough knowledge of today's healthcare marketing challenges. Our goal is to help you create content and content strategies based on research, best practices and proven results.

Need more information? ahamediagroup.com