

HOW TO COORDINATE YOUR CONTENT MARKETING

Brandi Musgrave and Keri Layne-Tarman

Words have power: the power to make you laugh, cry, think, and take action. With elective surgery marketing, you want the words you use to elicit an emotional reaction from people who could benefit from your procedures. Using the right words can sway the minds of the undecided and even encourage people to start the thought process of improving their quality of life.

This is content marketing. The goal behind content marketing is to use words to disseminate valuable, relevant information to attract a clearly defined audience and cause them to take action. Done correctly, it works...and it can be cost-effective.

Content marketing costs 62% less than outbound marketing but generates more than three times as many leads.¹

CAPTURING AN AUDIENCE

The trouble is that people today are rarely a captive audience. Constant access to multiple media and exposure to thousands of messages each day makes it virtually impossible for one single marketing message to break through the clutter. In fact, elective surgery patients will have an average of 15 points of contact with your practice before ever stepping foot into your office:

- Websites
- Online review sites
- Ads on traditional or internet radio

- Emails
- Blogs
- Facebook ads
- YouTube videos
- Other social media sites
- Event sponsorships
- Print ads

That's why it is so important to coordinate your content marketing strategy. Your message for specific target audiences should be consistent across all media. Message consistency, regardless of where prospective patients come into contact with information about you, will help to establish your practice as the experts in your field and the obvious choice to call when they are ready to move forward.

STEPS TO COORDINATE CONTENT MARKETING

There is no singular method to establishing a coordinated content marketing strategy. Every practice will have its own goals, target audience, unique selling propositions, and budget. However, there are general steps that can move your practice in the right direction:

- Identification of target audience
- Message creation
- Identification of touch points
- Marketing automation

IDENTIFICATION OF TARGET AUDIENCE

Content marketing is not a one-message-fits-all type of process. The words that work for cataract-age patients

(Baby Boomers, Generation Xers) should be different from those used for LASIK-age patients (Millennials). The words you use to attract oil field workers will be different from corporate executives. Identify the characteristics in your community that you want to attract with your messages:

- Age
- Financial status
- Recreation/hobbies
- Technology access
- Geographic location
- Job/career/industry segments

MESSAGE CREATION: THE MESSAGE COUNTS

The key word in coordinated content marketing is valuable. The words you use must speak to the benefits of your services and create an emotional connection:

- Quality of life enhancement
- Vision outcomes and safety
- Freedom from the constraints of lenses
- Appearance improvement
- Financial savings and affordability

Consider the obstacles that might be preventing the groups you are targeting from having a procedure. By addressing these obstacles up-front in your messaging, you may be able to lower the barrier enough to spark action.

IDENTIFICATION OF TOUCH POINTS

As mentioned earlier, there are many different ways a person can learn about

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your practice. Think about the ways your specific target audience might be exposed to information about your office and begin devising campaigns with those outlets in mind.

Cataract patients, for example, are likely still attracted by traditional marketing such as newspaper, radio ads and direct mail, but don't underestimate their use of the internet: 60% of people 50–64 years of age use Facebook. Baby Boomers spend 27 hours online each week.²

Alternatively, younger-aged LASIK patients might be more apt to respond to ads on Twitter, Instagram, and online radio. Assess your current patient base to uncover how these patients think about and react to your messages.

Remember that referring providers can also be highly effective in helping promote your services. By forming a strong relationship with other doctors, you can provide information to pre-position the benefits of specialty surgical options with them so they can pass that information to their patients. Patients trust that their doctors will only refer them to high-quality specialists, so the more referring doctors know about your practice, the better. It is also important to make the referral process as quick and easy as possible by incorporating online tools into your website.

While you have less control over word-of-mouth advertising, you can still position your practice in a positive light by encouraging happy patients

to post their experiences on online review sites. It is important to monitor everything that is being said about your practice online—positive and negative—so a handful of unhappy patients don't ruin your hard work at content marketing with negative reviews. By promptly responding to negative reviews and working diligently to resolve problems, you might be able to turn a negative into a positive.

MARKETING AUTOMATION

Once you have your strategies outlined, you will want to make your communication processes as easy and streamlined as possible. In the past, marketing automation software was cumbersome, difficult to implement, and intimidating. Today these systems are greatly improved, allowing your practice to attract prospects, convert leads to patients, close the sales process, and report on your successes or failures.

Choose marketing automation software that includes these features:

- Lead scoring and tracking
- Automated contact points
- Real-time reporting
- Integration between all digital formats

The bottom line: the more you understand your patients, the more effective you will be at putting the right messaging in the right places at the right times. Just remember that coordinated content marketing is always a moving target; continually track your

efforts and tweak your strategies for continued success. *AE*

NOTES

¹McCoy, J. (2016, Aug. 29). Why is content marketing today's marketing? 10 stats that prove it. Retrieved from <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2016/08/content-marketing-stats/>

²Analoui, S. (2016, June. 15). Baby boomers and social media usage. Retrieved from <http://www.postcontrolmarketing.com/453/2016/06/15/baby-boomers-and-social-media-usage/>.



Brandi Musgrave (brandi@fast-trackmarketing.com;

303-731-2634) is the Director of Business Development at Fast Track Marketing in Broomfield, Colo. Keri Layne-Tarman (keri@fast-trackmarketing.com; 303-447-9192) is a copywriter at Fast Track Marketing.

IN A BLINK

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- Content marketing is not a one-message-fits-all type of process.
- Your words must speak to the benefits of your services and create an emotional connection.