



MARKETING / OFFICE / STAFF

## How to Humanize Your Content to Create Stronger Relationships

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Content marketing is about building relationships, whether that is through updates on social media, offers on your website, blog posts, email campaigns, or even printed material. Now days a business needs to make a human connection. Many health practitioners are reluctant to fully dive into content marketing for fear of being too personal, they believe their patients won't respond to it, or they are mostly concerned about overstepping that client-patient barrier. However, if you stop to consider it, most of your patients are in your treatment room because they trust that you understand their needs and know how to help make them feel better. They aren't choosing to get treatment based on a license or sign outside your office; they have chosen you because you made that connection with them. So how do you humanize your marketing and create these relationships without crossing boundaries?

Here are five steps to present your content that allows you to humanize your message so you aren't spewing cold facts and data or being too promotional. You need to create a dialogue that requires two forms of communication. To get people talking, they first have to feel like they are interacting with a real person.

Step 1



Consider yourself a teacher in the sense you want to educate your patients, but not lecture them. You can teach your ideal audience using how-to's, answer frequently asked patient questions, provide enough product information so they can make an informed decision and make sure the information is shareable. The worst thing I hear happening is from people who say, "I've sent her emails without responses, or all I ever get is a voicemail or answering machine." And I know we've all seen this on social media, those pages that haven't had updates in days, weeks or even the once a year post! When I come across those pages, I feel like there should be a tumbleweed rolling across the page. If there is a question or comment that has gone unanswered for days or weeks, patients, potential patients and all 300 of their friends see this response, or dare I say lack of one and it is direct reflection on your practice. Now, I know you are about to pelt me with a slew of excuses about how busy you are with patients and back-to-back appointments, but you are both a business owner and practitioner! You have a responsibility to respond. So, guide your readers to the conclusions you want them to make about your practice by utilizing content that answers those questions.

## Step 2

Be human. The internet consists of human conversations, especially when it comes to emails and social media, so when you create content, the human element needs to be integrated into every aspect of your offering. Skip the technical, corporate, doctor talk and speak to them like you would your grandmother or best friend. If you hire a company or join a service that offers postings, be sure they have a human touch. Do they have real people creating content for real people? If you are going to have someone else managing your email, blog or social media content and responses, make sure they speak human or provide examples of how you want your responses. One way to show your humanity is to use photographs and videos of your employees or you.

## Step 3

Expand your content creation efforts across your organization or professional community. The most common complaint I hear all the time from practitioners is the lack of content or more likely, the lack of resources for content, the time to find it, or lack of funds to pay to have it created. One way to expand your budgetary funds is to use others within your professional community to support your content efforts. You don't have to create every piece of content, nor do you have to pay someone to create it for you. The continuing education providers, manufacturers, distributors, and professional organizations know what your patients and potential patients are asking and wanting to achieve from your services. So, it only makes sense to utilize the content they have provided you. Most continuing education providers have some kind of marketing content for their customers to use. I know the majority of the professional organizations provide consumer magazines, research, articles and blog posts for the consumer mindset. Utilize these resources you have freely available to you.

#### Step 4

Consider how your clients like to communicate and think beyond text on a page. There is an old saying about how to be successful in marketing and it makes reference to the fact that to be successful, a business has to be "reaching the right people at the right time with the right message." However, with today's world, I like to modify it by saying in order to be successful a business needs to reach the right people, at the right time, with the right message, on the right device. Some patients are going to enjoy visuals, some will like to listen to podcasts, others will want to interact with webinars, others will relate more to videos. You have to consider your clientele, not necessarily how you like to learn and interact. Is it text messaging, is it a pre-recorded tele-seminar, or is it a video?

If your clients are always on the go, we have to relate to them how they want to be reached. That may mean creating a weekly podcast or perhaps your blog posts are actually vlogs (no, that's not a typo - that is a blog post that is a video instead of a written format.) We have to adapt our delivery to go where the people are, when they are there and yes, that may mean traveling into new online and digital territory. The worst mistake is to think that because you may not have any interest in it, doesn't mean your customers don't either. We have to expand our minds, broaden our horizons and dare I say it, break out of our comfort zones.

#### Step 5

Have a virtual business content buddy with whom you can discuss ideas. If you are a solopreneur or perhaps the only one in the practice in charge of marketing, this is especially important for you. You need to get plugged in to a group either online or in person that can support and inspire you to produce great content. With today's technology, this is easily accomplished via the Internet without having to leave your office or home. Having a content buddy to share ideas, ask questions and get feedback is helpful. You can find likeminded people, even those who aren't in the industry but are marketers or business owners who can help inspire ideas that you can modify to things that can be used for your practice. Join a state organization, attend the monthly meeting or find a good group on LinkedIn or Facebook and connect with someone there.

I know this is a lot to consider, but the bottom line is this: the more you incorporate the human element into your content marketing, the better it will connect and resonate with your ideal target audience. The better the connection, the more growth you should experience.

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