

# Success Stories

*Why Hospitals Need Content Marketing  
Strategy Now More Than Ever*



# Content marketing has changed.

*Have you?*



For the past four years, the Content Marketing Institute (CMI) defined content marketing as “the creation and distribution of educational and/or compelling content in multiple media formats to attract and/or retain customers.”

But, says the Institute, content marketing has matured into a formal business discipline. This year, they changed the definition to “a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience—and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.”

If you’re stuck in a “creation and distribution” mode and ignoring strategy, then you’re stuck in the old content marketing.

Here’s the good news: Chances are, your competition is, too. CMI’s research revealed that healthcare content marketing lags two years behind other industries in terms of sophistication.

This spells opportunity for you in a field that is especially well-suited for content marketing.

### Healthcare And Content Marketing: The Perfect Pair

Sure, you’re in a complex, highly regulated industry. But that’s no reason healthcare and content marketing can’t go together like peanut butter and jelly.

Why? Because you already have the one asset that all content marketers desire most: consumer trust.

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People trust healthcare providers. In a Gallup poll, Americans named nurses, doctors and pharmacists as the three most trustworthy of all professionals. These professions ranked even higher than clergy.

This trust gives you a powerful tool for content marketing. And the potential benefits of content marketing for healthcare providers are huge.

In a Google study of how people select a hospital, almost all respondents (94 percent) said reputation is an important factor. That’s compared to 51 percent who rated a recommendation from family or friends as important.

Content marketing’s strength lies in building brand recognition and reputation. Take the case of Marcus Sheridan, a fiberglass swimming pool installer in Northern Virginia. This may sound unrelated, but keep reading; his story contains a valuable lesson.

Sheridan’s once-thriving business was struggling during the financial crisis. In 2009, he drastically cut his marketing budget and shifted focus from paid advertising to informational blog posts and videos. He concentrated on answering common customer questions honestly, including those about cost and the cons of fiberglass pools. He even posted a list of his top competitors.

As a result, people searching for information on pools in his area were driven to his company’s website, and he became known as a trusted authority on the subject. Within a few years, his company’s revenue exceeded its peak pre-2007 level.

Inova, a not-for-profit healthcare system serving the Washington, DC area, is demonstrating that transparency is a smart marketing tactic in healthcare, too. In 2015, the system began publishing patient ratings and unedited reviews of their physicians on [inova.org](http://inova.org). This move helps the

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– Lee Aase, Director, Mayo Clinic Center for Social Media



public make informed decisions when choosing doctors, and it captures some of the web traffic going to sites like HealthGrades, Yelp and Vitals.com.

“Transparency is the future of healthcare, and we look forward to continuing this dialogue with our community for years to come,” said Loring Flint, MD, Chief Medical Officer, when he announced the initiative.

Think of content marketing as a handshake deal. You’ll provide content that consumers can use to improve their health and their lives. If you fulfill your end of the bargain with integrity, when they or their families need healthcare services, they’ll want to turn to you.

### **Welcome To The New Content Marketing**

Let’s break down three key components of the new content marketing definition to see how they work in the healthcare landscape.

#### **1. Delivering valuable, relevant and consistent content**

You’ve got a head start on most marketers, who must build consumer trust in their content. But are you taking advantage of the trusted talent in your organization?

Content backed by credible sources from your medical community provides value to consumers and wins their loyalty. Once you’ve established your organization as the go-to resource for health information in your area, people will not only turn to you for their own health care, but they will promote you to others.

For example, the Mayo Clinic is renowned for their medical services, and they have built extensive content marketing efforts on that sterling reputation, enhancing it and gaining a loyal audience over time.

Their efforts began with podcasting in 2005,

and grew to include the most popular medical provider YouTube channel; a website with in-depth information on conditions, treatments and healthy living; and multiple blogs, including one that enables patients and employees to tell their stories. A study found that 95 percent of Mayo Clinic patients actively promote the brand to others, and the clinic makes it easy to do so through social media.

“The biggest lesson is that there is really no substitute for valuable content,” said Lee Aase, Director of the Mayo Clinic Center for Social Media (yes, they have a dedicated Center), speaking to Social Media Today. “Patients want in-depth, great content. Interaction is important, but really, you need great content.”

#### **2. Attracting a clearly defined audience**

In today’s saturated media environment, to capture people’s attention, you must meet them where they are with the content they want.

People expect an organization to “get” them. That means delivering a message tailored to your audience. CMI has found that, at any given time, B2C companies, regardless of size, are running an average of four simultaneous content marketing campaigns targeting different audiences.

Even a single campaign often involves multiple channels, as audiences consume media in

ever-expanding ways. Finding the right channels to use begins with learning where your audience is.

It's not surprising that most people are on the Internet; 87 percent of U.S. adults use it, according to the Pew Research Center. Another 58 percent own a smartphone. While young adults are most likely to have them, 32 percent of those ages 50 to 64 have one, too.

For Inova, located in one of the most mobile-connected communities in the country, finding their audience meant appealing to smartphone users. The health system developed seven mobile apps for iPhone and Android users of different types—from patients who want to look up lab results, to parents who want to check dosage charts, to sports coaches who need to evaluate players for concussion.

“This is not about marketing or about providing a retread of what users can do on other platforms in an application. It's about providing solutions,” says Rob Birgfeld, AVP, Chief Digital Marketing Officer at Inova. “If we provide enough value, the application is downloaded and remains on their device—and the benefits/positioning associated there are the byproduct.”

While digital is the fastest growing content delivery method, print is far from dead. A 2015 Mequoda study found print magazine readers outnumber digital readers 2 to 1. Even surveys of Millennials find these digital natives prefer print when reading for pleasure and learning.

## *Surveys of Millennials find these digital natives prefer print when reading for pleasure and learning.*

The University of Michigan Health System's Comprehensive Cancer Center knows its award-winning magazine *Thrive* effectively reaches its audience because a reader survey revealed that 93 percent of respondents find the articles relevant, and the majority have attempted to access programs or services they read about. In this case, the power of print is actually driving people to [mccancer.org](http://mccancer.org) through web exclusive content that they tease in the magazine.



### **3. Driving profitable customer action**

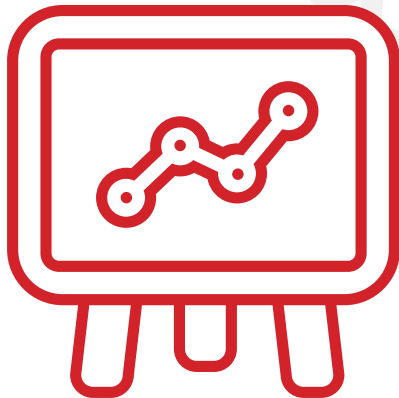
Notice this comes last in the definition. Your first concern is fulfilling your end of the bargain: providing useful content that helps people improve their lives. If you do that well, your audience will be willing to take action.

Don't forget to offer consumers an action to take. Here's your chance to put on your traditional marketing hat. Be specific, use action verbs and make your CTAs stand out.

But think beyond traditional marketing when designing actions. You could use your CTA to ask people to visit your website, make an appointment, or connect via social media. It doesn't have to be an immediately profitable action, but it should be something that gets consumers interested and in a dialogue with your organization.

For example, in November, popularly called Movember or No-Shave November, Anne Arundel Medical Center asked people to post selfies featuring real or fake moustaches (dubbed “stachies”) on their Facebook page. “The goal was to engage people in men's health issues in a fun way,” says Amy Welsh, Marketing Strategist at Anne Arundel Medical Center. This clever use of social media got staff members and the public snapping, laughing and liking. It also offered the perfect opportunity to promote their docsTALK podcast on men's health.

Investing in involvement builds your audience and your community. Think of it as a long-term approach to driving profitable action



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*– Lisa Murton Beets, Research Director, Content Marketing Institute*

### **Taking A Strategic Approach**

So you know you need to deliver valuable content that drives action to your target audiences across multiple channels. Sound complicated? It is if you're making up your content marketing plan as you go.

You've probably run into these common problems:

- Scrambling to produce enough content
- Struggling to produce high quality content
- Inconsistent social media posting
- Content that is not optimized for search engines (SEO)
- No way to measure return on investment (ROI)

If you're winging it, you're not alone. In a survey of B2C marketers, CMI found that 73 percent do not have a documented content marketing strategy.

They also found that the 27 percent who do are more effective in all aspects of content marketing.

“Our data consistently shows year over year that marketers (of all types) who document their content marketing strategy are more effective with content marketing than those who do not,” says Lisa Murton Beets, Research Director at CMI. “A documented strategy keeps the team focused and serves as a road map of where they are and where they want to go.”

Your content marketing strategy can address many of the common pain points by codifying your brand story, determining your target audiences,

and establishing a process for getting content, managing conversations and tracking metrics.

When it comes to measuring success, don't expect profitable results overnight. “For content marketing, it's a long season,” quips a CMI-produced SlideShare. Effective strategies take some trial and error and frequent adjustment as circumstances change. “There are and should be many chances to fail—as long as we fail quickly, learn and adapt to the new surroundings,” CMI advises.

While content moves quickly, content marketing requires you to slow down. Step out of the day-to-day create and distribute grind, and take the strategic view to achieve content marketing success.

## **GLC KNOWS STRATEGY**

[glcdelivers.com](http://glcdelivers.com)

For more information on developing a content marketing strategy, contact Shannon Cummins, VP, Business Development at **847-205-3034** or [scummins@glcdelivers.com](mailto:scummins@glcdelivers.com)

# Calling All Healthcare Marketers

## 3 Signs Your Content Marketing Strategy Needs A Reboot

**1 You said, “Strategy? What strategy?”**  
In a survey of B2C marketers, the Content Marketing Institute found that 73 percent do not have a documented content marketing strategy. The numbers are bleaker for the healthcare industry, where 78 percent lack a documented strategy, and 59 percent consider themselves in the early stages of content marketing maturity.

The good news? This spells opportunity for you in an industry where the benefits of content marketing are huge.

**2 You struggle to produce content and measure its effectiveness.**  
You’re not alone. These are the top two challenges for organizations across industries, according to the Content Marketing Institute.

But their research also found that organizations with a documented content marketing strategy are more effective in all aspects of content marketing. In fact, more than half of those with a documented strategy are able to publish new content daily or multiple times per week. And 43 percent successfully track ROI, compared to 3 percent of those without a strategy.

**3 You’re playing to an empty stadium.**  
People crave health information, and they’re looking for it everywhere, from family members to Facebook friends.

According to a Pew Research Center survey, eight in ten online health inquiries began with typing keywords into a search engine. That means most people don’t know where to find the information they seek. They’re desperately casting out a line, hoping for a reputable source to bite.

In order to be the resource they turn to, you must meet your audience where they are with the content they want. Give consumers valuable content that helps them improve their lives, and they’ll not only turn to you for their healthcare, but they’ll promote you to others.

**To learn more about how to reboot your strategy, contact Shannon Cummins, VP, Business Development, at 847-205-3034 or [scummins@glcdelivers.com](mailto:scummins@glcdelivers.com).**

# Why GLC?

Forty years ago, we started creating content. Today, we deliver award-winning marketing programs for hospitals and health systems across the country. How do we differ from the competition?

## **Longevity.**

Four decades of growing and evolving, but always delivering award-winning results for our clients.

## **Authenticity.**

We take the words *relationship building* seriously and our clients have access to anyone, anytime.

## **Stability.**

We're seasoned, professional and have one of the lowest turnover rates of any agency out there. That's good for our business but even better for yours.

## **Accountability.**

We deliver brand awareness, engagement, loyalty, impact and revenue. Anything less is unacceptable.

***“Before GLC, our program consisted of canned content and original content distributed through disparate means. Anne Arundel Medical Center had a vision to create an online hub to take advantage of content marketing’s promise. So we turned to GLC for synergy and focused execution to revamp our magazines and blog platforms and to develop our master content engagement strategy. This multi-pronged process included stakeholder interviews, a complete content audit, distribution audit, solutions recommendations and a 12-month content plan. The results have been outstanding.”***

– Kelly Swan, Communications Strategy Manager, Anne Arundel Medical Center



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