

How to Develop a Content Calendar



Bill Schroeder

For many years practices have heard lectures about how important content is to the success of their digital marketing plan. But, over the years I've noticed that actual plans and strategy go unmentioned. This session will allow you to understand which content works and how to develop such for your practice.

The first step in accomplishing this goal is to have a deep understanding of who you are, who the community needs you to be, and what is possible based upon the practice's interests and resources. Very frequently this process is performed behind closed doors with only senior-level practice management. I suggest your practice do just the opposite by talking to your employees and current clients so that you can receive real-world information about your current position. Take your time while doing this, I suggest that a brand review and content development plan spans 30 or 60 days. By doing so you will allow employees and valued clients to contribute in a more creative and thoughtful manner. During our session, we will explore techniques that will allow you to properly manage the process of gathering ideas and how to gamify the experience so that contributors are excited about the process. Plus, we all know that engagement increases dramatically if others are involved in the decision-making process.

If you take a deep enough dive into a content development plan, you will most likely realize that branding goes far beyond selecting a color palette and logo to represent your practice. Your brand is actually the feeling that a person remembers long after experiencing your practice. It is the words that are used online and in your everyday communications, the feeling a person experiences while they are in direct contact with your employees, and the processes that support your "why." I've worked with many practices and helped them develop a clear understanding of what their "why" is and how that message can be conveyed to their target audience. During the session, will walk through some techniques that will help you discover your practice's "why."

Many times during a brand review I come across a practice's mission statement. The truth is that mission statements bug me. While I'm sure that all are created with great intentions, and some are used to guide the practice's operation, most are catchy phrases that are mentioned a few times in a meeting and then blend into the cluttered day to day that is practice life. A well-developed content plan certainly can include a mission statement, but would take that message and use it as a thread that is woven through all messaging. Each employee would know their role in supporting the message and it would be referenced regularly when processes are being developed, decisions are being made, or content is developed. I'm sure you won't be surprised to hear that we will talk about this more during the session.

Have you ever wanted to reach a certain segment of your market and track the impact of a campaign? Many practices accomplish this by using funnels. Marketing funnels are systems and steps created by advanced marketers who wish to deliver very focused information to a select group of people within their market. Veterinary practices might find this useful for communicating with dog owners versus cat owners and tracking the effectiveness of their communication. For instance, delivering a message about canine influenza to a group that includes cat only clients would skew your results and may even annoy the recipient. A more effective way would be for a practice to segment their target audience, develop a series of steps that walk a pet owner through the process of learning about a service or product and monitoring the effectiveness of the message through conversion. If your head is spinning at this point, I apologize, but promise that we will expand upon this process during the session and provide an outline for you to follow.

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With a good understanding of your practice's messaging in hand, you can begin to develop a content calendar. While there are many ways this can be accomplished, a few tips for success are:

- Assign a manager for the process
- Task practice employees
- Create a timeline for content submission that allows for creativity and appropriate review
- Use multiple mediums and “cross pollinate” your audiences
- Create content that the audience appreciates
- Use funnels to deliver focused content and to track message conversion

I'm really excited about this session to look forward to having an interactive conversation with you about how your practice can create extremely effective content. See you soon!

How to Develop a Content Calendar Worksheet



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OBJECTIVES

Many practices understand that content is king but are lost when it comes to developing content that actually supports the practice's goals. This session will provide you the framework to develop a content generating process that will accurately represent your brand and promote the most desired actions.

TOOL KIT

KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND WHO YOUR AUDIENCE NEEDS YOU TO BE

- Get to know your why
- Teach staff to understand their role
- Talk to your clients
- Monitor the competition
- Review all brand assets
- Install a brand champion

ORGANIZE AND PLAN CONTENT

- Involve your staff
- Use 30 days to develop a plan
- Gamify the process
- 12 huge "post-it" notes
- Use multiple mediums
- Task each bit of content

CREATE FUNNELS

- Segment your audience
- Build and maintain email lists
- Create a path towards conversion
- Engage a funnel service provider
- Develop custom landing pages
- Evaluate effectiveness regularly

KEY POINTS

- Be authentic, don't try to be a practice you are not.
- Don't rush the process, creativity often takes time.
- Leverage multiple mediums (written, video, audio).
- Speak to a targeted (segmented) audience.

MY FIRST THREE STEPS WHEN I GET BACK

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.