



DISSED CONTENT?

Content marketing continues to strike fear into the hearts of pharma marketers. Doing it properly requires courage, commitment, creativity—and perhaps a little wiggle room to fail and learn. **James Chase** looks at three flagship OTC content programs that might lend a bit of inspiration to the Rx world

At this year's Lions Health festival of creativity in Cannes, Marc Landsberg, founder/CEO of Social Deviant, declared that health is the singularly most human thing in existence. And yet, he added immediately thereafter, "As marketers we often don't talk about it in a very human way."

This is not entirely the industry's fault. Landsberg held up an FDA-issued example of what a "good" branded tweet looks like: "NoFocus (rememberine HCI) for mild to moderate memory loss may cause seizures in patients with a seizure disorder www.nofocus.com/risk."

"That is not a very human tweet," he noted. "But it's representative of the kind of content that gets produced over and over and over again as we step up to the boundary of regulation, and as we step back again—because we don't think human enough."

Content marketing represents an opportunity to change that. It's all about helping people—your people. It's about sidestepping the big sell and engaging an audience with something relevant and useful, and doing it often. It's about finding that sweet spot between your values and their needs.

Luckily, healthcare offers by far the best environment for adopting a content approach. Doing it well requires commitment, bravery

and a fresh perspective. But, as the three flagship programs below demonstrate, pretty much anything is possible for those with a bit of ingenuity and persistence.

Excedrin (GSK Consumer Health): Following a brief manufacturing-related hiatus, Excedrin returned to shelves in 2012, looking to reestablish and differentiate itself as the specialist headache treatment in a crowded pain-relief category. The brand team chose to take the plunge into producing original, owned, branded content to drive awareness across a variety of digital channels and formats.

Central to the program, which launched in April 2014, is the Excedrin Newsroom, an area of the main site dedicated to consumer education on all aspects of head pain. "The content is distributed broadly via social media and distribution networks that increase Excedrin's visibility as the head pain expert," says Jason Milligan, senior brand manager, Excedrin, GSK Consumer Health (a joint venture with Novartis). Distribution partners have included Facebook, Outbrain, BuzzFeed and WebMD.

An early challenge, according to Milligan, was getting buy-in from MLR. "It wasn't so much a philosophical challenge as a practical one," he recalls. "Adopting unfamiliar marketing tactics and com-

munications styles is time-consuming—more so than the average banner ad."

However, Milligan's team developed a production process that would allow editorial content, and all its subsequent uses, to be reviewed and approved as a single entity. "This allowed greater flexibility in sharing content through more formats and vendors."

Milligan notes that the use of engagement analytics has given his team a better understanding of the audience. "For example, articles that provide specific tips to users about how to treat headaches, or avoid their triggers, tend to be the most successful in terms of brand favorability and purchase intent, so we've focused efforts there," he explains.

The program has been successful across multiple KPIs. "Search visibility is up, purchase intent scores are beating industry benchmarks and we've even seen positive ROI in social through some unique sales studies on Facebook." As a result, Milligan plans to adapt some of the most successful content into other formats in the future, such as original illustrations and video clips. The brand will also unveil a new website in 2016 that will "better integrate the content throughout the site, where it is contextually relevant."

Cleveland Clinic: Way back in 2012 the Cleveland Clinic began a relentless content marketing effort to drive consumer awareness and build online community—and the results have been spectacular. Core to the effort is a burgeoning consumer health blog (originally called Health Hub but renamed Health Essentials in August) that offers a wide range of original thoughtful health content from an army of bloggers with up to five fresh stories every day.

Since then launch traffic has ballooned from 16,000 visits a month to more than three million. And along the way the brand has built a huge social-media community: Its Twitter account (@ClevelandClinic) currently has 551,000 followers, while its most-watched YouTube video, "Empathy: The Human Connection to Patient Care," is approaching a staggering 2.3 million views.

"Healthcare is bought, not sold," Paul Matsen, chief marketing and communications officer, told Health Leaders last year. "Consumers need us only when they need us. But social media gives us an opportunity to be a meaningful helpful part of people's everyday lives when they aren't sick. If we are part of your life when you are well, perhaps you will consider coming here when you need care."

Matsen said the team has evolved to be "more agile" and is now part of the Google News Network. Content is syndicated by several partners, including Yahoo! Health and NewsCred.

"We don't just come in and do an article, then at 9:00 blast it out on every channel," Amanda Todorovich, content marketing director, told Triblio earlier this year. "We really take into account the different channels, who's using them, what they are using them for and when."

At the end of the day, great content marketing might mean stepping outside the comfort zone as marketer and as a brand. "We're trying to be more like a publisher, less like a brand," Matsen said. "And certainly not like a hospital."



Procter & Gamble hired linguists to coin Zapotec-language phrases for "uterus" and "vagina"

Always "Intimate Words" (Procter & Gamble): P&G's content marketing for its Always feminine products is a little different, kind of a collective of vastly different, highly creative programs, each offering maximum value to the audience while speaking faithfully to the brand. To wit, the "Like a Girl" initiative achieved impressive scale and global acclaim. However, it was a smaller grass-roots effort that was deemed so impressive that it landed its agency, Leo Burnett Mexico, a coveted Grand Prix in the Health & Wellness category at this year's Health Lions.

"Intimate Words" sought to empower an indigenous population of women in Mexico by figuring out a way to educate them about cervical cancer, the leading cause of death in their community. The degree of difficulty was imposingly high: Cultural taboo meant their language, Zapotec, contained no words for the female reproductive system. As a result, they had no way to explain their symptoms and receive necessary treatment. So the agency enlisted a team of sociologists, doctors and linguists to work with the women to create the missing terms—such as "baby house" for the uterus and "where the couple is united" for vagina. The new expressions were bound in printed books.

Andrew Spurgeon, executive creative director at UK-based agency Langland, led the jury that awarded the Grand Prix. "To invent an entirely new vocabulary for a community, and to do it so delicately and elegantly, was impressive," he says. "And there was also an enduring quality. It has the potential to be retained into the future."

Spurgeon feels that although this was a highly unorthodox content marketing effort, it embodied the essence of what every brand should be striving for. "It's driven by an attitude to being a service to people," he explains. "It's not about what we can sell somebody. It's about how we can help."

Too, Spurgeon believes that it represents the sort of outside-the-box thinking for which US companies should strive. "These types of programs really ought to be falling out of marketing briefs," he says. "Pharma needs to build better relationships with people by supporting them in their general health." ■