

# The New Health Care Content: Where Earned Media and Social Media Intersect

Orlando Health is using innovative content distribution techniques to achieve strong results by integrating outreach channels.

A popular marketing adage maintains that “content is king.” Just as important in the court of digital consumption, however, is content strategy. More than ever before, health care communicators need to have a content strategy that directly contributes to bottom line business results. Orlando Health is doing just that and reaping the benefits of increased exposure by positioning itself as a trusted health care system with compassion.

“Content marketing isn’t just writing content, it’s getting exposure for that content,” said Michael Schmidt, vice president of Orlando Health Foundation. Schmidt has collaborated with Lisa Arledge Powell, president of MediaSource, on generating

media exposure for Orlando Health, a nine-hospital health system in central Florida.

## The New Content Process: Strategic Storytelling

According to Powell, effective content development and distribution relies on several key tenets. “First and foremost, your content strategy needs to align with your organization’s business goals. It’s also important to ‘tell,’ not ‘sell,’” she said. “Strategic storytelling spotlights people, not the product, so that we convey feelings balanced with facts.” Schmidt added that Orlando Health views strategic storytelling as a process, not a tactic (see Figure 1). His team relies on a tried-and-true formula that progresses through:

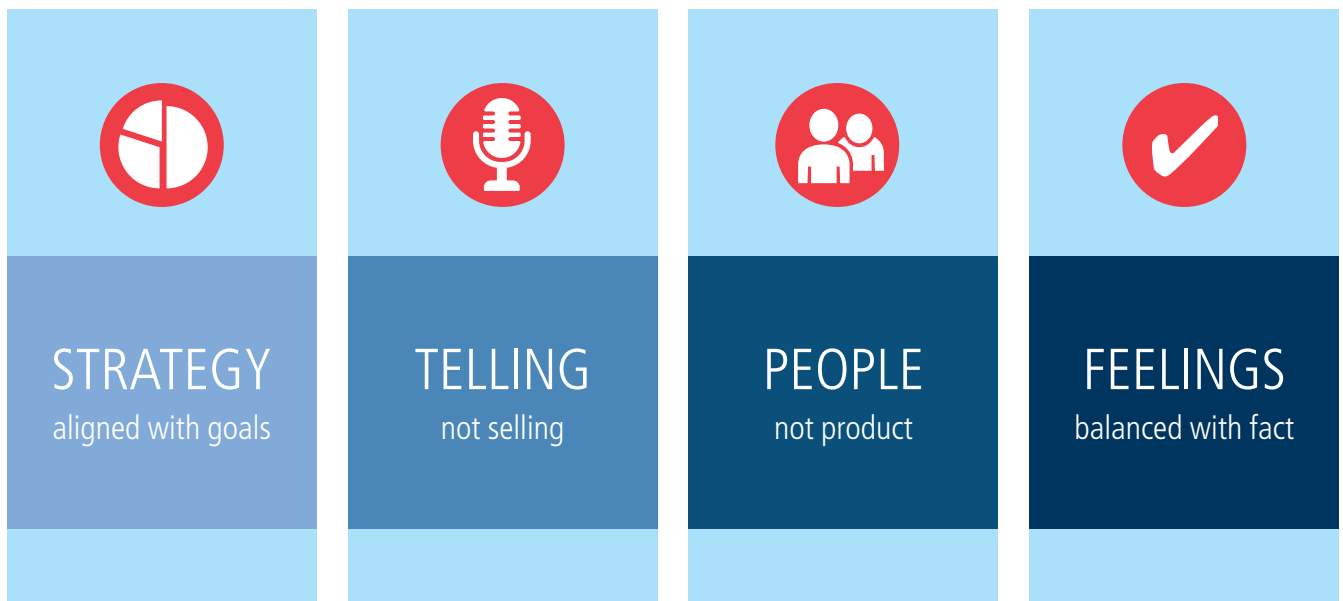
**Ideation:** “We ask, ‘What is our goal and how will we reach it?’ We look at our key product lines and industry trends. But we also consider what we want the viewer to feel after watching our videos, and what

they should feel compelled to do.”

**Creation:** Schmidt said it is also important to ensure you have the right visuals, such as photos, videos and graphics for social media, and in the right formats. Various news outlets have their own requirements for what they will publish electronically and online. “We also aim to create content that immerses viewers in the patient experience we deliver, in a dynamic and captivating way,” he added.

**Amplification:** Powell emphasized that content amplification should target the right distribution channels. “There are four different types of media: paid, earned, shared and owned,” she said. “Paid media is placement that you buy, earned is what you have placed directly through media relations and shared is what you get through social media. Owned media is what you place on your own channels, such as YouTube and Instagram.” Powell encourages marketers to consider all types of media and how best to reach their

**Figure 1**  
**Strategic Storytelling**



target audiences. “For earned media, you may be bypassing reporters and pitching directly to key influencers and third party thought leaders. Marketers should also consider guest blogs, op-ed creation and placement, and newsjacking tactics that leverage breaking news to draw attention to your own content. It’s a great way to insert your organization into the social conversation.”

**Evaluation:** An important part of the process is evaluation, and not just at the end of the campaign. “We look at our results in real time to see if we need to adjust our tactics,” Schmidt noted. “That allows us to pivot when needed so we have better chances of meeting our goals.”

### Strategic Storytelling in Action

Orlando Health used all of these concepts in its highly successful campaign, the Thank You Project (see Figure 2). “A decade ago a family was in a horrific car accident and our emergency department and intensive care unit staff saved the life of a mother and her son,” Schmidt said. “Years later she approached us and said she wanted to thank all those who saved her son’s life.”

Over the course of several months, Schmidt located close to 20 personnel involved in the son’s treatment and arranged for the mother to reunite with the caregivers one by one to express her gratitude and let them know that her son was able to resume a normal childhood thanks to their care.

A videographer documented it all, including the mother explaining her quest and meeting with the nurses at the hospital. The videographer also recorded an appreciation event the Orlando Health public relations staff planned for the mother to publicly express her gratitude. At the same time, the team from MediaSource was pitching the story to national news outlets to determine which ones might be interested.

“The video was picked up by The Today Show,” Schmidt said. “It ran the morning of Thanksgiving, prior to the Macy’s parade.” The video went viral, generating

over 5 million YouTube views and over 35,000 social media shares from YouTube and the Today Show’s website. There were also over 99,000 views on Orlando Health’s Facebook page. Overall, the audience reach totaled 109 million between earned, owned, shared and paid media channels.

Schmidt credits the success of the Thank You Project to a variety of factors, including strategic timing aimed at the holidays, customized pitches to news outlets and coordination with owned media. And just as important, the subject was emotionally engaging and compelled viewers to share their viewing experience with others.

“By immersing viewers in a patient’s experience, we communicate excellence and compassion by showing, not telling,” Schmidt said. “So often, hospitals repeat the cycle of talking about their new physicians, equipment and awards. Those things are great, but if you’re really looking to capture people’s hearts, you have to think and act differently.

Stories are a universal language that appeal to our humanity.”

Schmidt credits much of the success of the Thank You Project to strategic timing, customized pitches to news outlets and coordination with owned media.

### Key Takeaways

1. Make content a process in your organization.
2. Focus content to celebrate those you serve, not yourselves.

Figure 2

## The Thank You Project



3. Amplify content across multiple channels.

For additional tips on creating a content strategy, download our presentation entitled “The New Health Care Content: Where Earned Media and Social Media Intersect” from SHSMD’s Virtual Conference at [shsmd.org/virtualconference](http://shsmd.org/virtualconference).

### This article features interviews with:

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