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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

DEAR COLLEAGUES,

Welcome to the second annual *State of Healthcare Content Marketing* report. Each year, we ask healthcare marketers and strategists from hospitals of all sizes all over the country how they create, distribute, and measure their marketing programs. Whether designed to drive consumer engagement, patient acquisition, or population health, the crux of these programs is content.

Here is a snapshot of where our industry is focusing, the challenges they are facing, and how they plan to overcome those challenges.

WHY FOCUS ON CONTENT?

According to the 2016 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—North America, an annual marketing survey conducted by the Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs, **76% of marketers use content marketing**¹. This number paints a clear picture of marketers' past, present, and future focus: **content**. In fact, the average marketer is planning to invest more money into content marketing strategies in 2016.

Consumers crave content. According to Pew Research Center, **72% of Internet users looked online for health content within the last year**², and a recent study from Moz and Fractl found that **"offering free content about a topic I'm interested in" is one of the most effective ways for a company to attract consumers**³.

Perhaps the anecdote that best reflects the increasing demand for content came from a marketing executive from a health system in the southeast. The system had invested significant time and treasure in a new website and content management system this past year. The stage was set to reveal the new digital properties that reflect the system's state-of-the-art approach to caring for the community.

The only thing missing? Content.

"We're going to wake up one day and realize that we need content. It's like we've built an amazing house without any furniture. They might show up once to visit, but they're probably not going to stay long—and they're definitely not coming back."

— Health System Marketing Executive in the Southeast



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On behalf of the Healthcare Insight Editorial Advisory Board and everyone at True North Custom, we hope you find this report useful and supportive in refining your 2016 strategy.



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INTRODUCTION

The Content Marketing Institute defines content marketing as “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.”⁹⁴

Although it is not a new concept, it is clear that the healthcare industry has recently started to adopt and is ramping up distribution of relevant content via integrated print and scalable digital channels. Measuring the impact of content continues to be a challenge, as healthcare marketers are focusing on upstream efforts, such as brand awareness, but they are not yet able to tie these campaigns to downstream revenue.

The bottom line: All marketing—no matter the delivery channel—needs content.

WE'VE ORGANIZED THE DATA INTO SEVEN CHAPTERS:

- 1. The Growth of Content Marketing** *p. 4*
- 2. Content Marketing Goals & Effectiveness** *p. 8*
- 3. Measuring Success** *p. 13*
- 4. Preferred Content Delivery Channels** *p. 15*
- 5. Emerging Trends** *p. 19*
- 6. Measuring Your Content Marketing** *p. 20*
- 7. Best Practices for Content Marketing** *p. 21*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » If hospitals haven't already started using content marketing, they will in 2016.
- » Half of marketers are allocating at least a quarter of their budget to content marketing, and 16 percent are allocating half of their budget or more.
- » Lack of budget, integration, and ability to measure are common concerns among healthcare marketers.
- » Only one in four hospitals have a documented content marketing strategy.
- » Few healthcare marketers feel they are effectively measuring the ROI of their content.
- » Marketers find it difficult to prioritize efforts. Most content-related efforts are at various stages of development, and content will be a work in progress for the next 12 months.
- » Top content delivery channels include social media, articles on websites, videos, print magazines, and e-newsletters.
- » Healthcare marketers believe that the most effective content delivery channels are in-person events, microsites, and videos.



Chapter 1: The Growth of Content Marketing

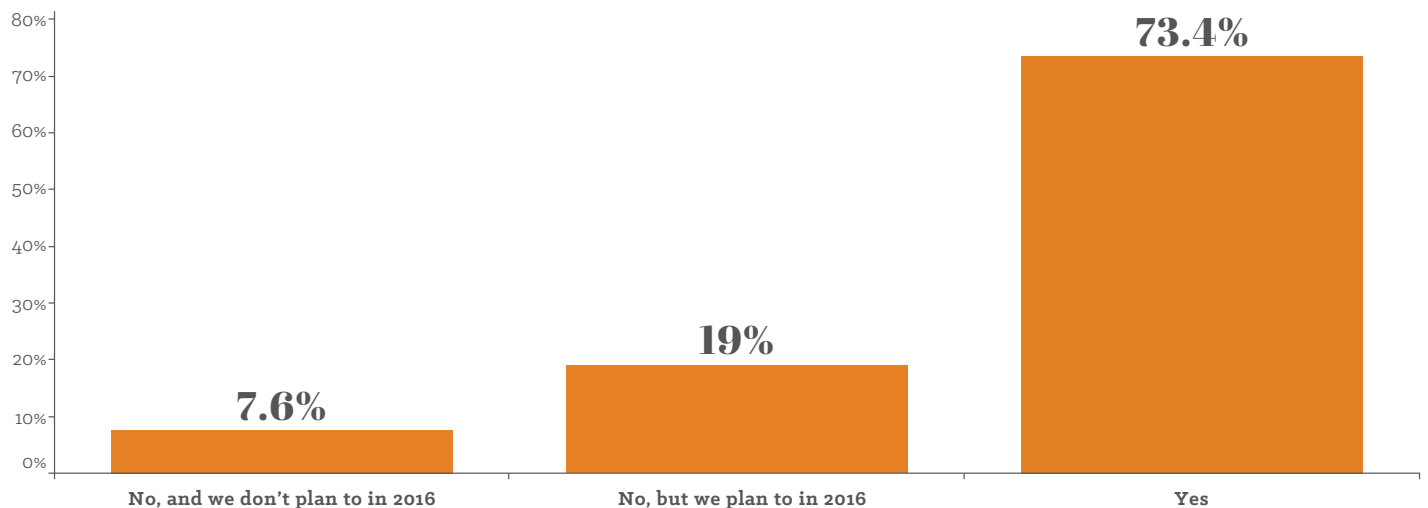
Content is the unsung hero of every campaign. Research shows that original content written for specific audiences boosts SEO rankings, builds brand awareness, generates demand for key service lines, and most importantly, drives readers to make appointments.

Whether implementing CRM systems and patient portals or launching websites, mobile applications, social media and e-mail campaigns, and even the tried-and-true custom publication, the need to “feed the beast” with quality content is the tie that binds healthcare marketing departments nationwide.

» If marketers aren’t already using content marketing, they will start this year.

» The majority of respondents (65%) say content is a high or essential priority.

DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION USE CONTENT MARKETING?

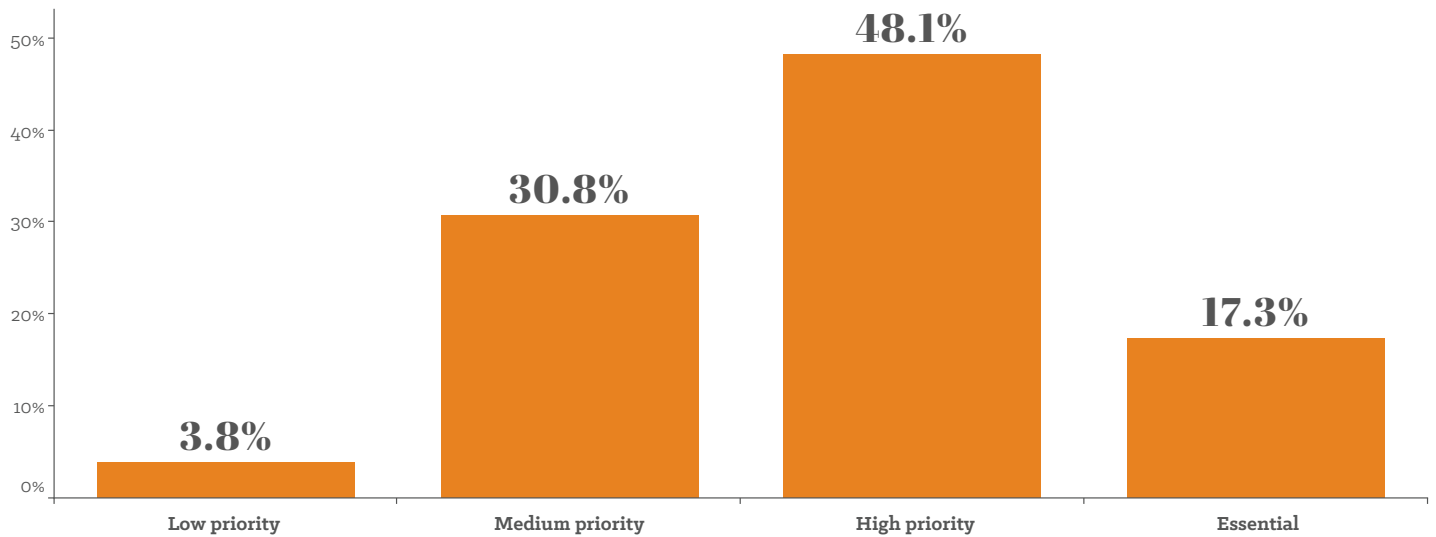


73.4% of respondents are already using content marketing, and 19% plan to start this year.

**60% OF MARKETERS CREATE AT LEAST
ONE PIECE OF CONTENT EACH DAY.**

[Source: eMarketer]

CONTENT IS A HIGH OR ESSENTIAL PRIORITY

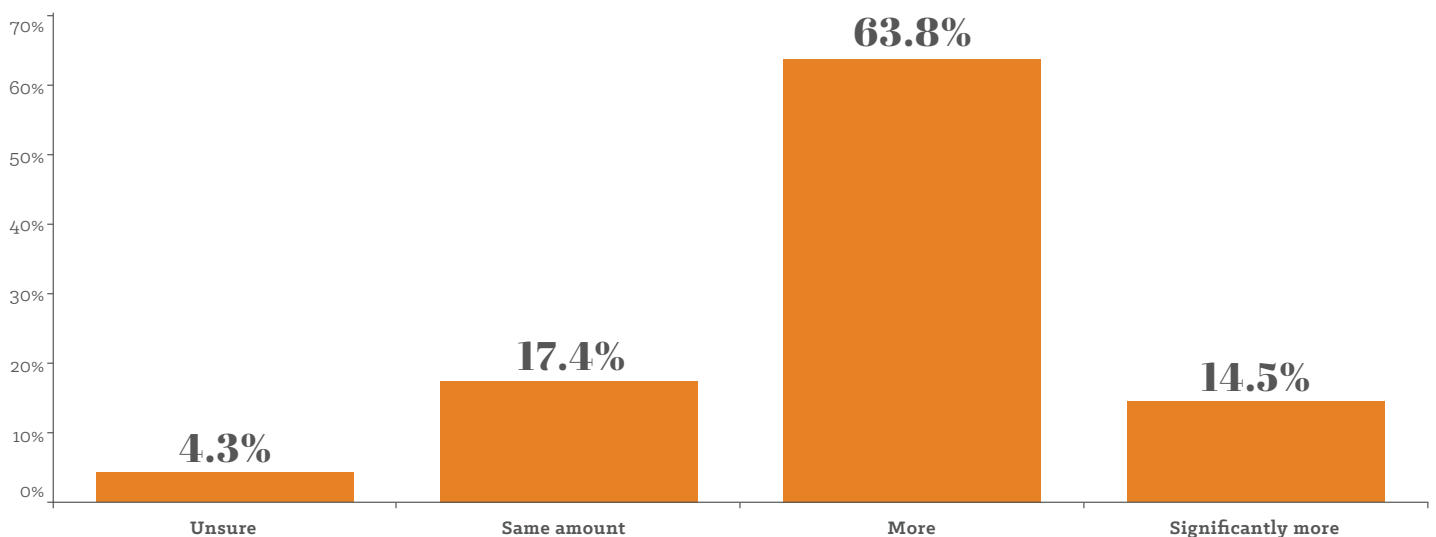


The healthcare industry sees the value of quality custom content to fill their various marketing channels.

UP TO 81% OF MARKETERS PLAN TO INCREASE THEIR USE OF ORIGINAL WRITTEN CONTENT.

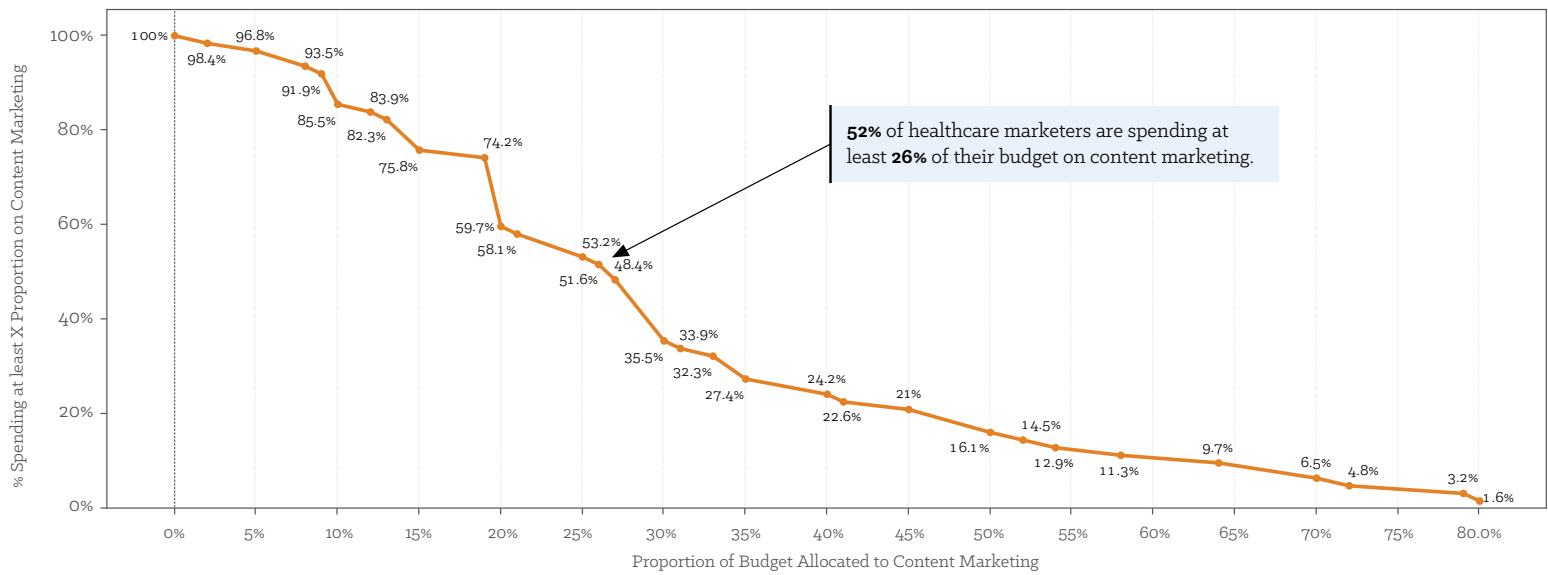
[Source: Social Media Examiner]

COMPARED TO LAST YEAR, HOW MUCH CONTENT DO YOU ANTICIPATE YOUR ORGANIZATION WILL MAKE IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?



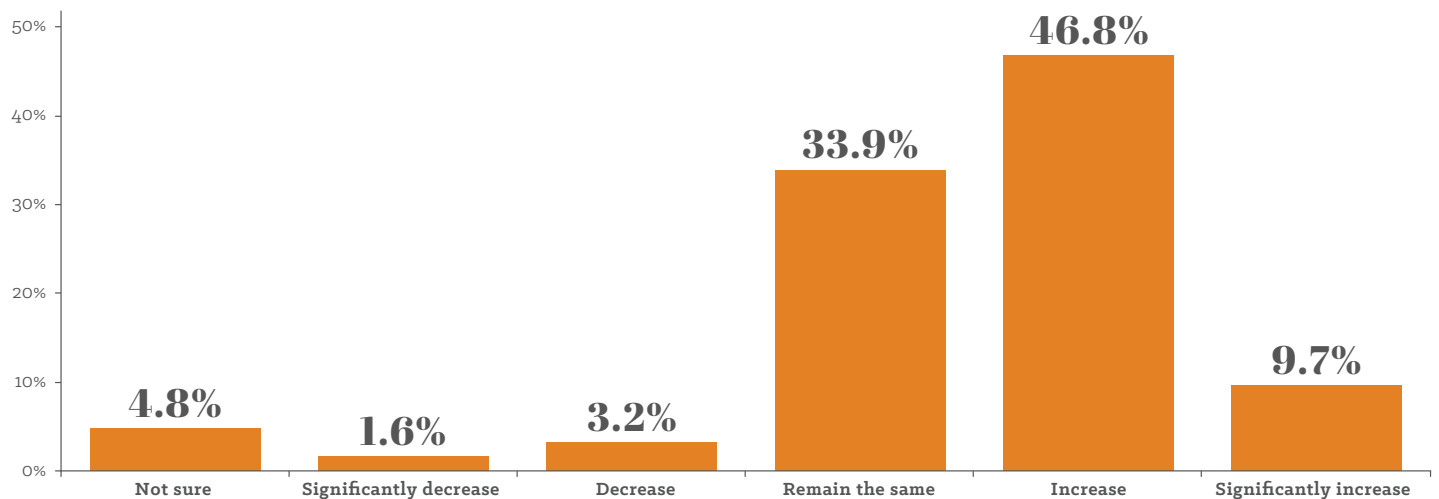
Despite the difficulties measuring and proving ROI, nearly eight in 10 organizations plan to create more or significantly more content in 2016 compared to last year.

APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR BUDGET IS ALLOCATED TO CONTENT MARKETING?



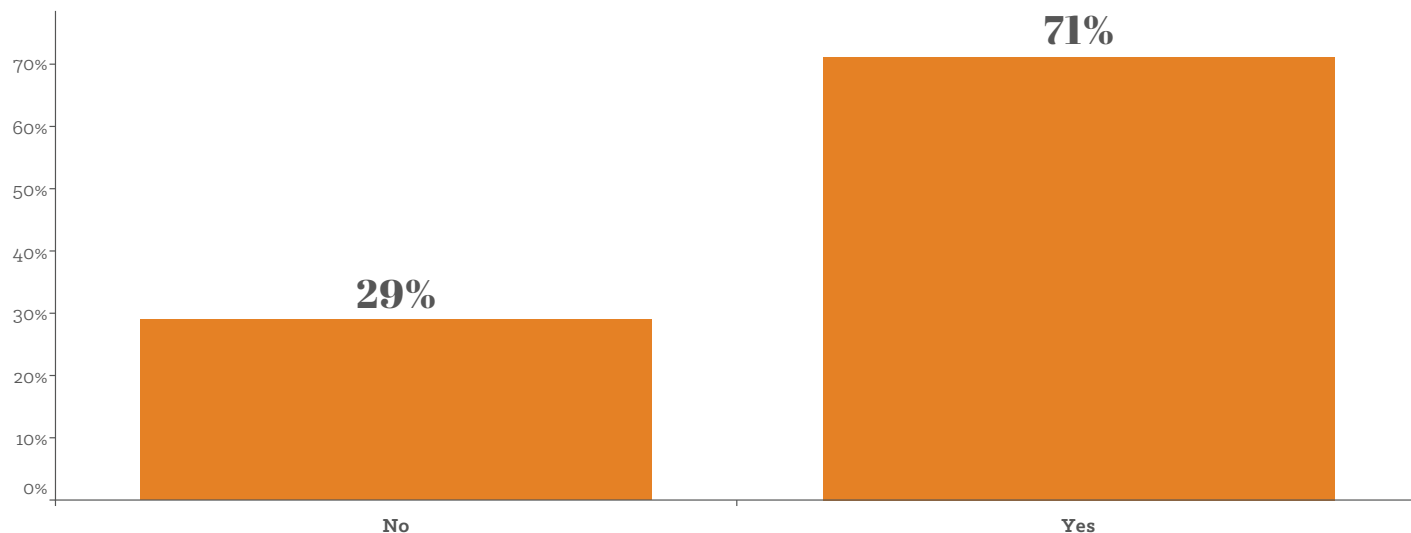
Half of marketers are allocating at least a quarter of their budget to content marketing, and 16 percent already allocate half their budget or more to content marketing.

HOW DO YOU EXPECT YOUR ORGANIZATION'S BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR CONTENT MARKETING TO CHANGE IN YOUR NEXT BUDGET CYCLE?



The amount of money allocated to content marketing will increase even further after the next budget cycle.

DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION PLAN TO UTILIZE OUTSIDE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ITS CONTENT MARKETING EFFORTS IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?



The majority of respondents plan on partnering with vendors to scale increasing content marketing efforts.



Chapter 2: Content Marketing Goals & Effectiveness

CONTENT MARKETING GOALS

This year's survey shows that a majority of marketing efforts focus on top-of-the-funnel goals, with few campaigns focusing on conversions. In all efforts, respondents indicated at least some level of difficulty tracking and measuring ROI and tying these efforts to downstream revenue.

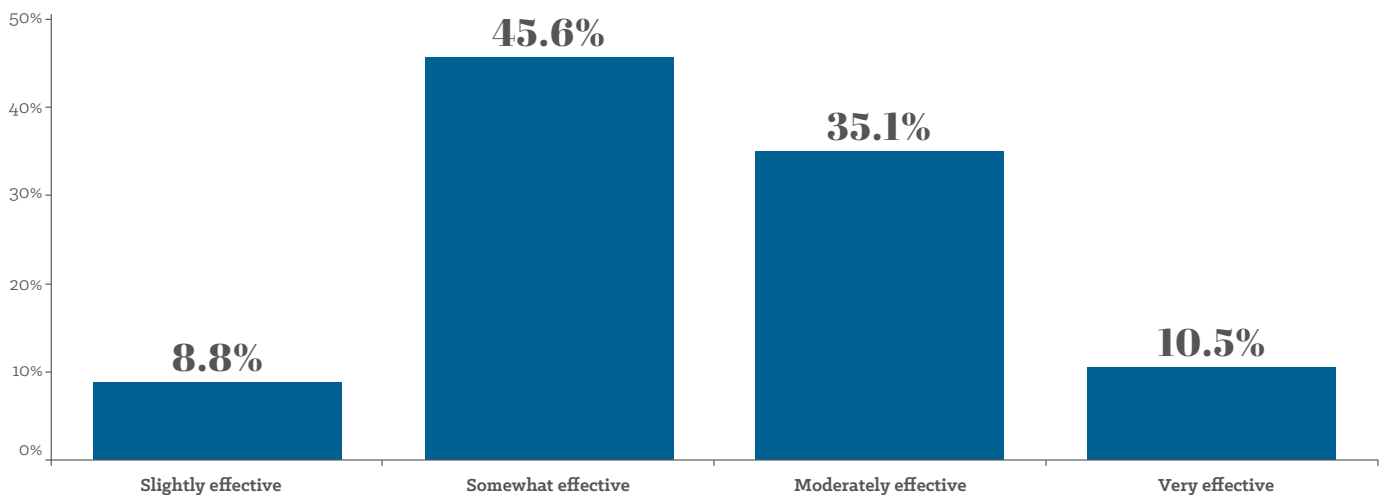
The top overall content marketing goals are:

- » brand awareness
- » patient loyalty
- » patient engagement

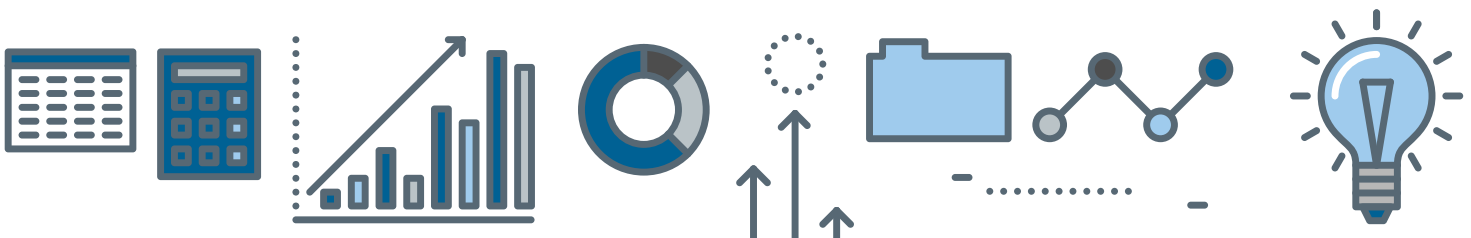
This focus on brand and reputation management likely reflects the increasingly competitive and complex

healthcare environment with more mergers, acquisitions, and partnerships taking place than ever before. Along with these market forces, health care has historically had an aversion to “selling” with marketing strategies focused on brand awareness, patient loyalty, engagement, and other upstream-oriented goals that are more difficult to quantify.

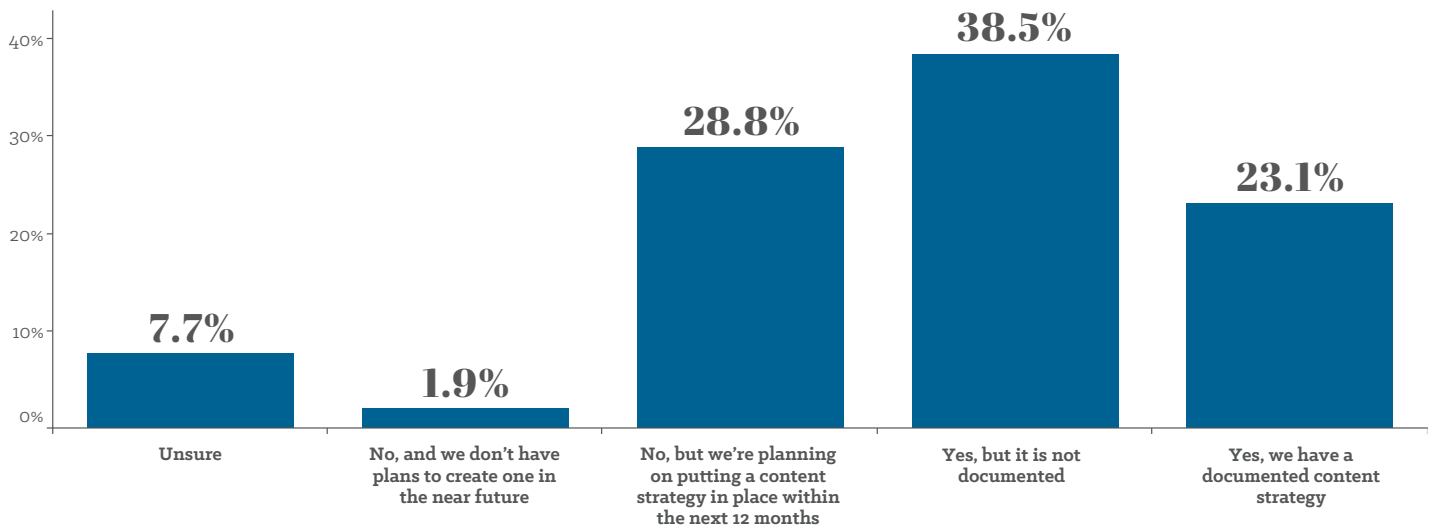
OVERALL, HOW EFFECTIVE IS YOUR ORGANIZATION AT CONTENT MARKETING?



While many organizations see the value of content marketing, most find they are only moderately or somewhat effective at execution.



DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE AN OVERARCHING CONTENT STRATEGY IN PLACE?

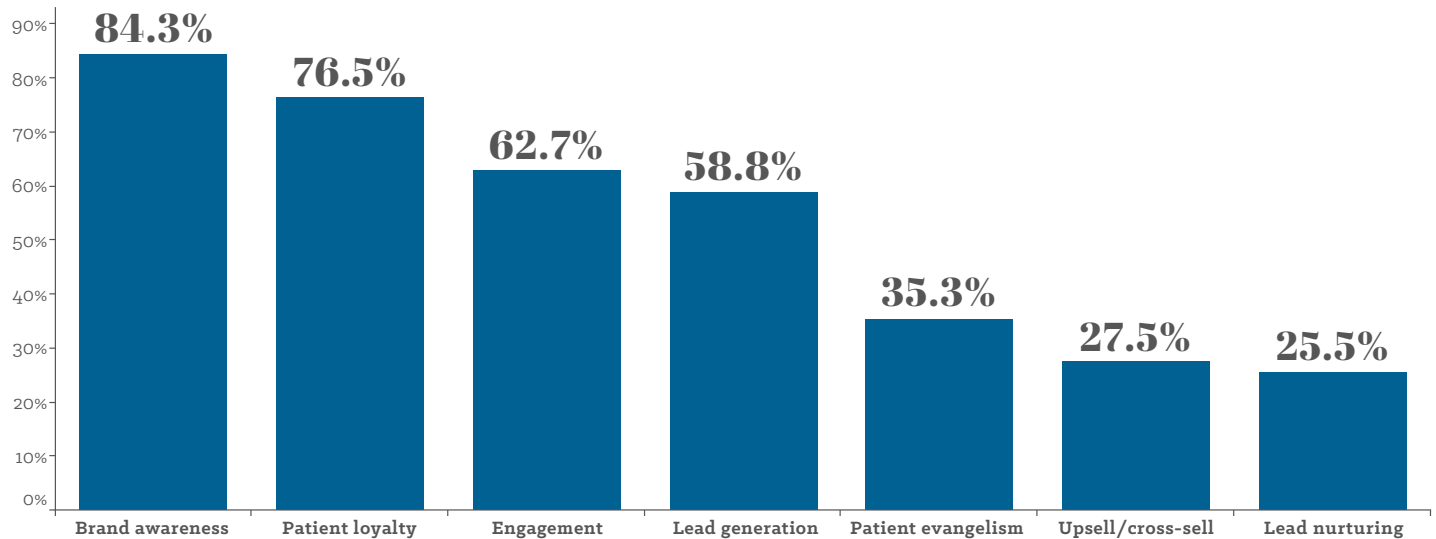


Difficulties measuring effectiveness directly correlates to the fact that most respondents do not have a documented strategy with set goals and benchmarks.

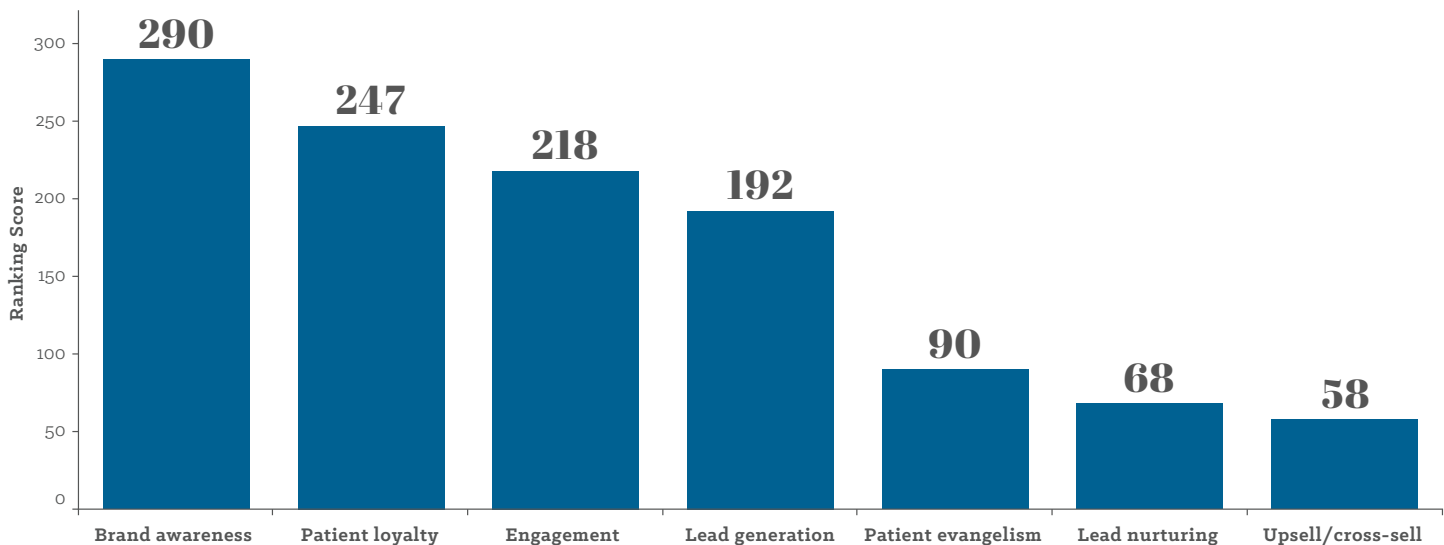


Unlike retail and other customer-centric industries, few healthcare organizations are tracking their efforts all the way to the bottom line (affecting revenue/patient encounters).

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE THE OVERALL GOALS OF CONTENT MARKETING WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION?



CONTENT MARKETING GOALS RANKED IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

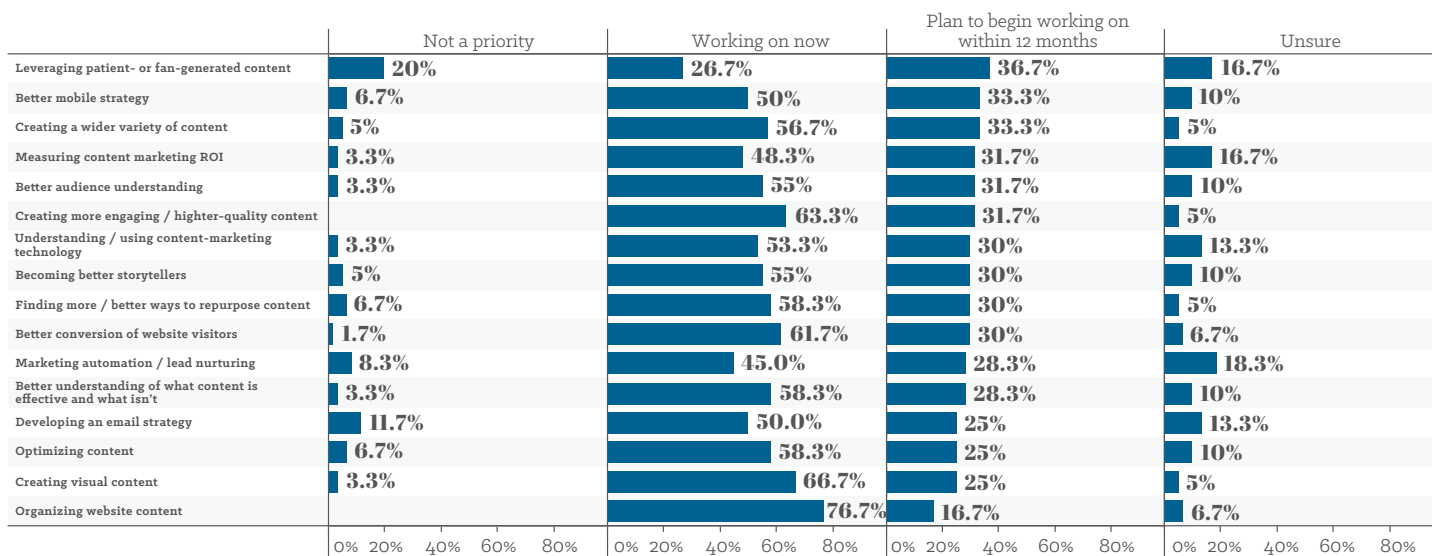


SPECIFIC MARKETING PRIORITIES FOR 2016

While most respondents plan on *leveraging patient-generated content* in the next 12 months, it also has the largest amount of marketers saying it isn't a priority. This could be because healthcare marketers are charged

with multiple projects with multiple stakeholders involved. It is challenging to set priorities when you have a lean team and stakeholders with varying agendas, as demonstrated in the graph below.

MARKETING PRIORITIES OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS



Lack of budget, team integration, and ability to demonstrate results are the biggest challenges for marketers in regards to content marketing.

Challenge	Percentage
Lack of budget	43.3%
Lack of integration across marketing	43.3%
Measuring content effectiveness	43.3%
Producing content consistently	40%
Producing engaging content	33.3%
Lack of buy-in / vision from executive leaders	31.7%
Producing a variety of content	30%
Gaps in knowledge and skill of internal team	28.3%
Technology-related challenges	28.3%
Finding trained content marketing professionals	26.7%

[Source: LookBookHQ]



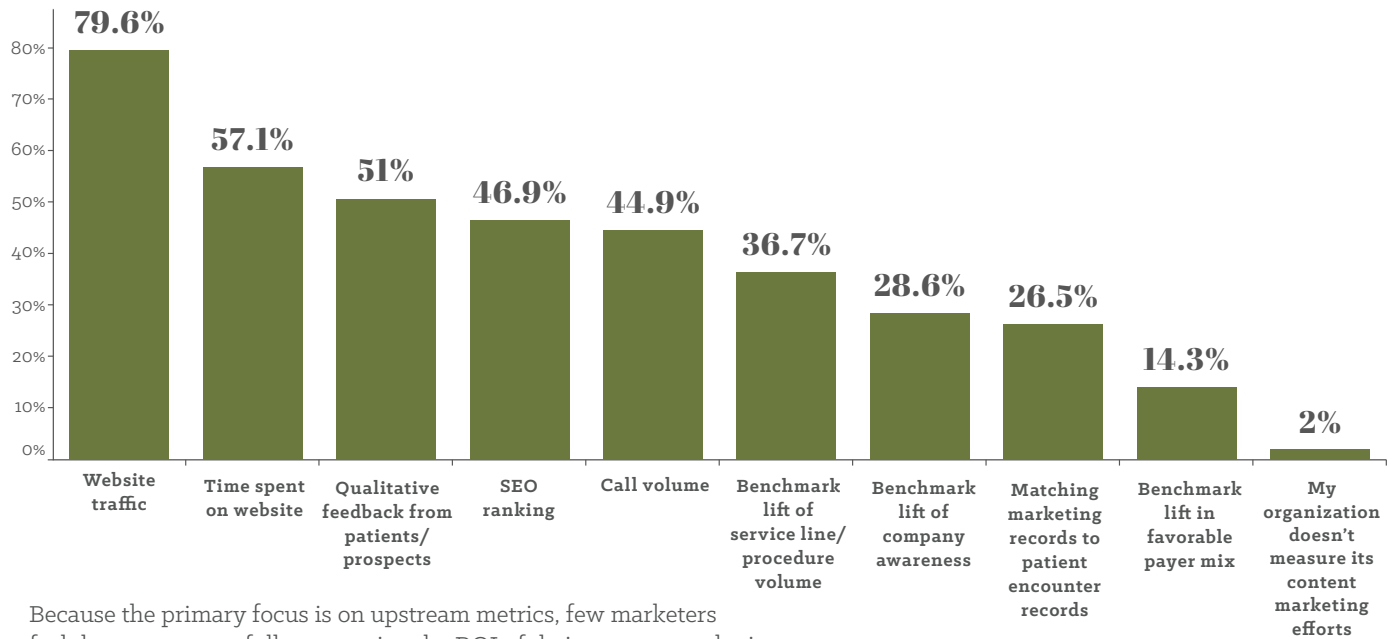
Chapter 3: Measuring Success

Measurement is a priority, but most respondents reported varying degrees of challenge in their ability to track and measure the impact of content. We predict that by continuing to focus on measurement and shifting marketing efforts toward more demand-generation programs that drive measurable ROI, the C-suite will be more open to allocating more budget dollars to marketing.

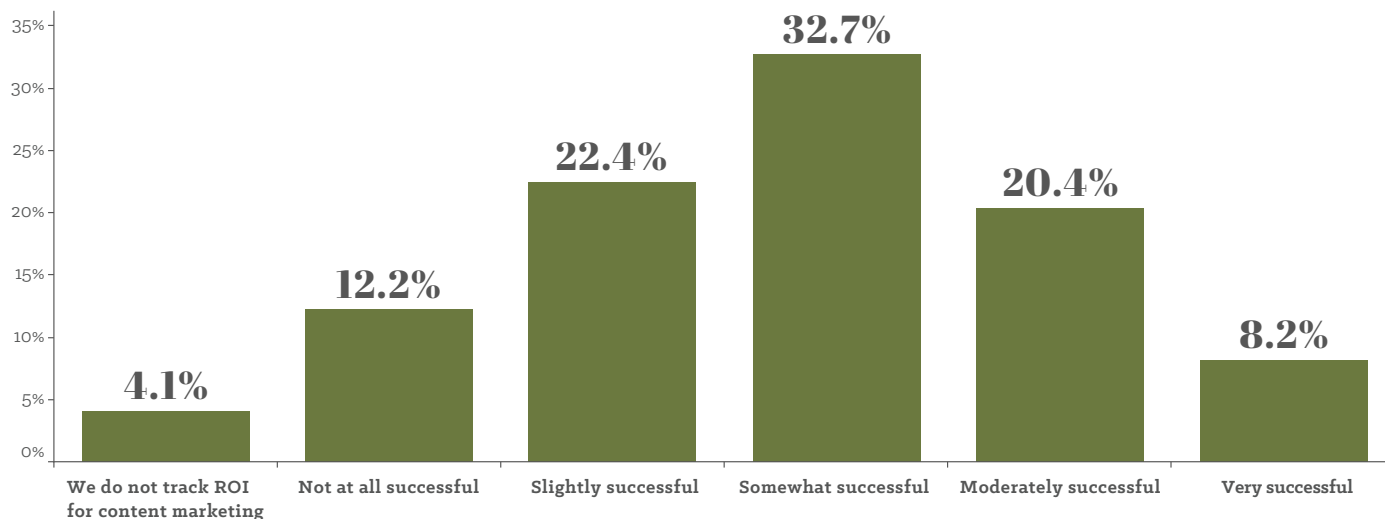
**CONTENT MARKETING COSTS
62% LESS THAN TRADITIONAL
MARKETING AND GENERATES
ABOUT THREE TIMES AS
MANY LEADS.**

[Source: DemandMetric]

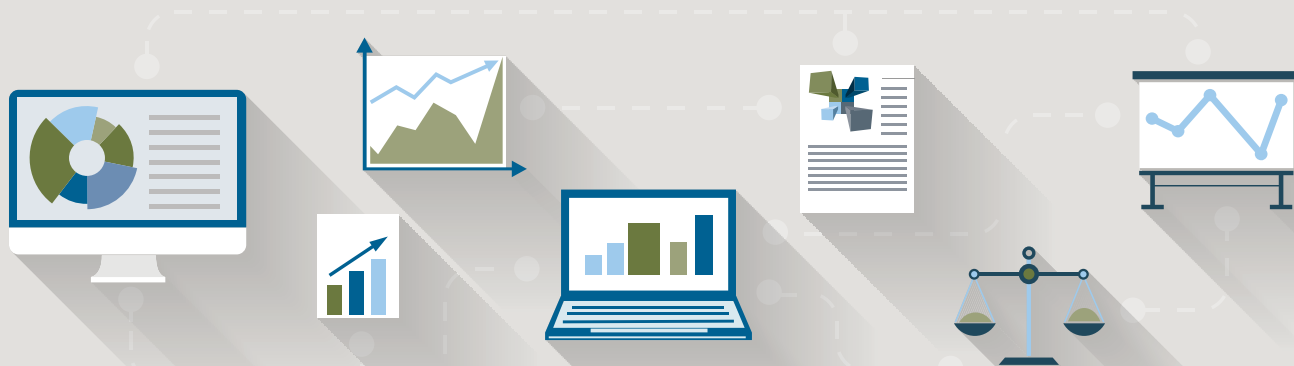
METRICS HEALTHCARE MARKETERS USE TO ASSESS CONTENT MARKETING SUCCESS



HOW SUCCESSFUL IS YOUR ORGANIZATION AT TRACKING THE ROI OF ITS CONTENT MARKETING EFFORTS?



Most respondents feel they are only somewhat successful when it comes to measuring the efficacy of their content marketing.



The bottom line: Although brand awareness is important, best practice is to focus on the full buyer's journey so you can meet consumers where they are. Feed all areas of the funnel with relevant content so you can nurture visitors down the path to conversion.

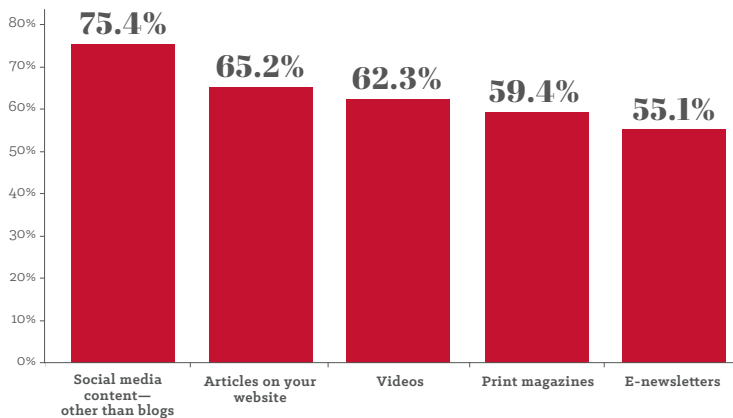
Chapter 4: Preferred Content Delivery Channels

Healthcare marketers are adopting digital platforms while still relying on traditional media to support their brand-building efforts. **The key to successful content marketing is integrating the delivery and optimizing your content for each delivery channel.**

ALMOST 60% OF MARKETERS REUSE CONTENT TWO TO FIVE TIMES. THEY GENERATE “snackable” CONTENT BASED ON ASSETS.

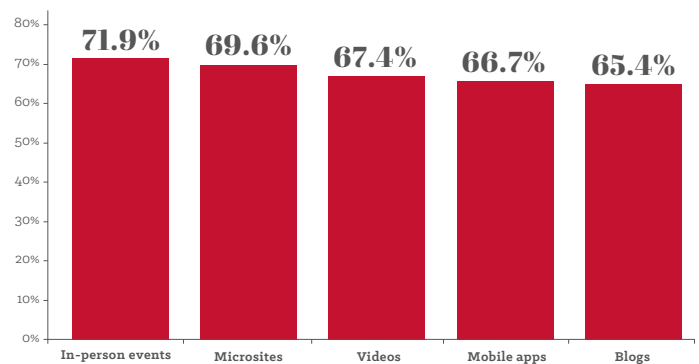
[Source: LookBookHQ]

THE 5 MOST PREFERRED CONTENT CHANNELS



What content marketing tactics does your organization use, if any?

THE 5 MOST EFFECTIVE MARKETING TACTICS

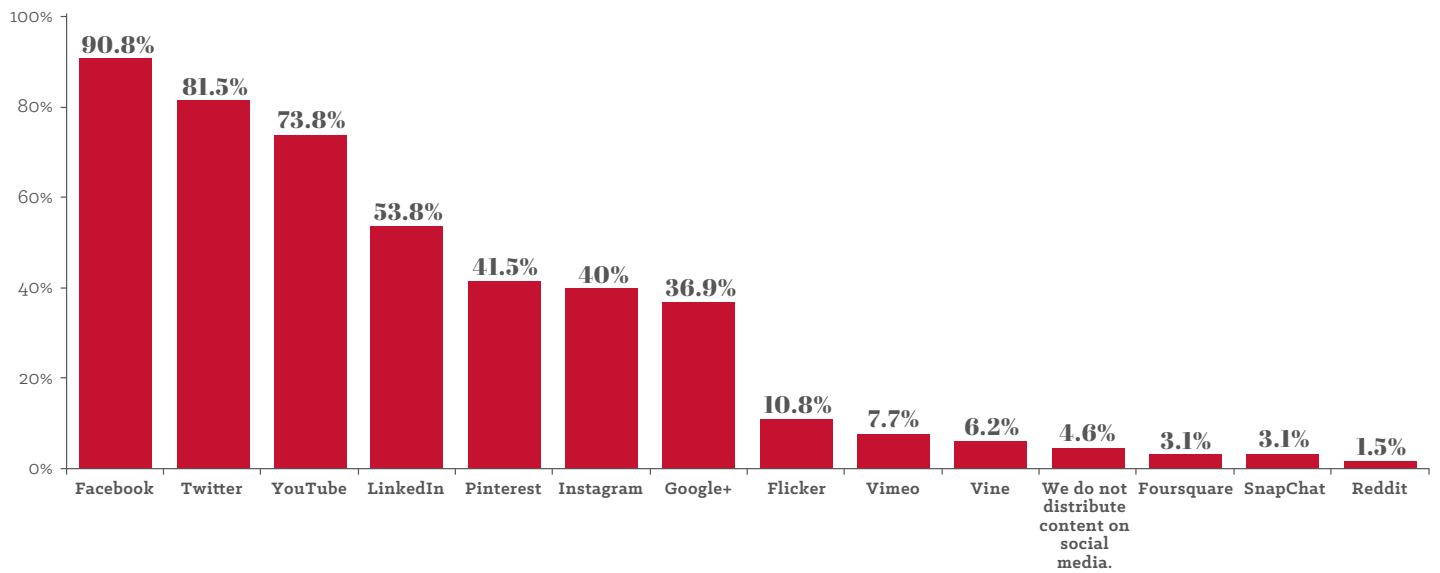


How effective are the tactics you use in meeting your content marketing goals?

Based on response, healthcare marketers find the above tactics most effective, which does not correlate with the preferred channels. For example, microsites scored as one of the most effective channels, but are not among the five most preferred channels.

This indicates that healthcare marketers may have trouble identifying their highest-performing channels and focusing their efforts accordingly.

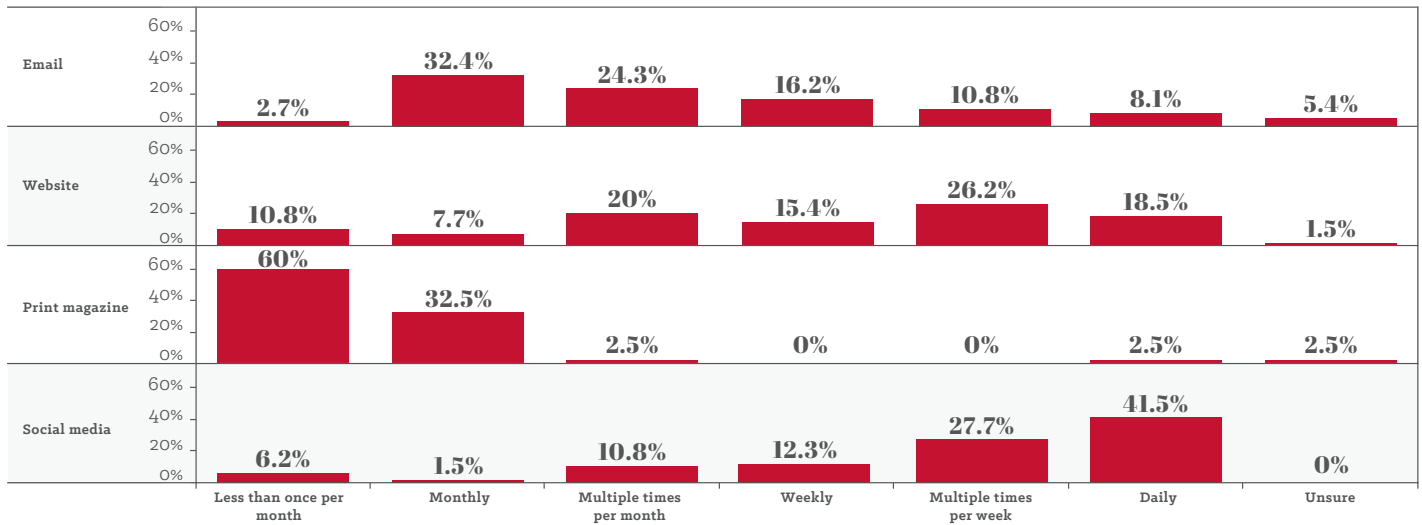
WHAT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION USE TO DISTRIBUTE CONTENT?



NEARLY EVERY MARKETER ON SOCIAL MEDIA IS USING FACEBOOK (91%).

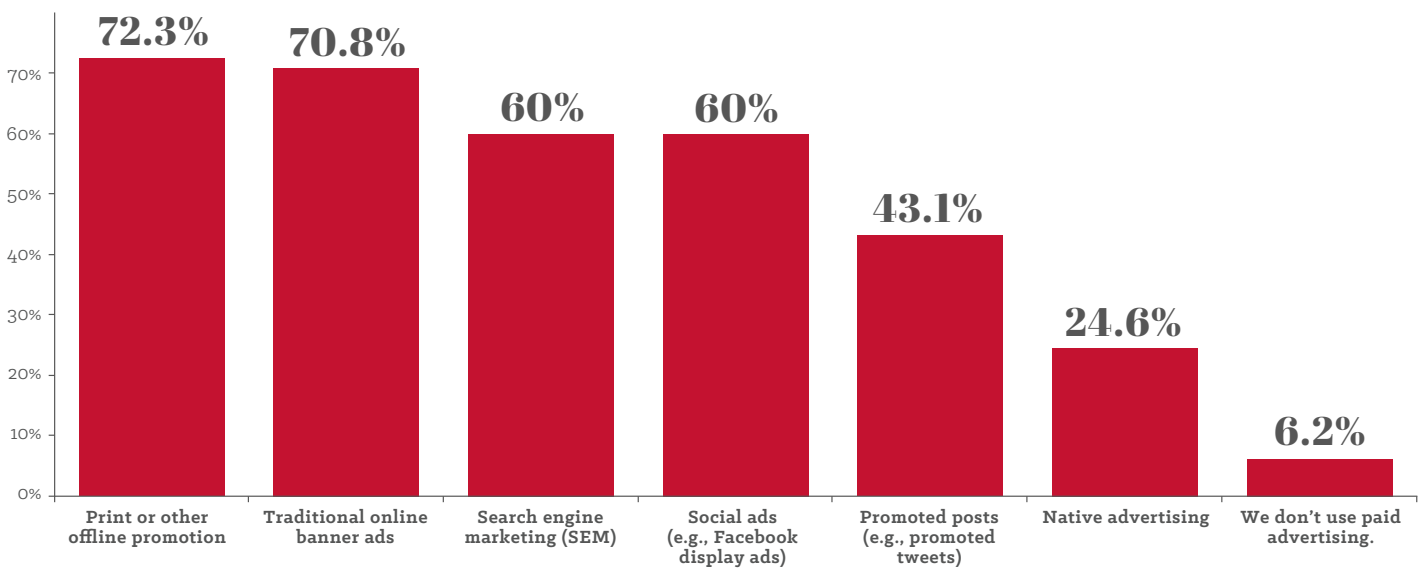


HOW OFTEN DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION PUBLISH NEW CONTENT ACROSS THE FOLLOWING CHANNELS?



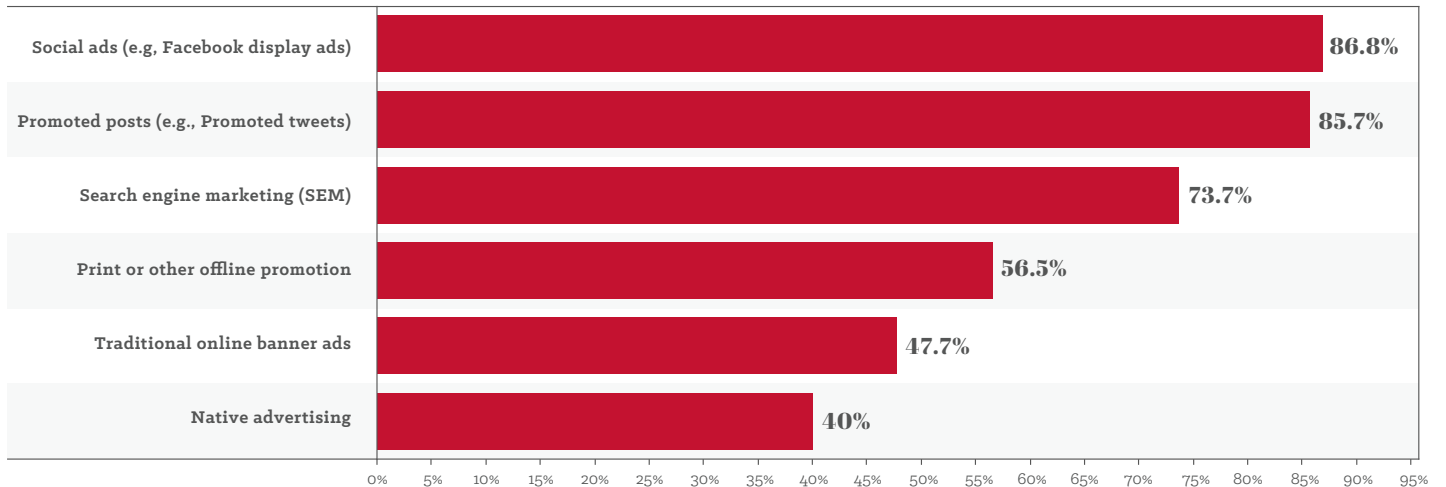
Email's and print magazines are deployed on a less frequent basis, whereas website and social content are constantly being added. This is in line with content marketing best practices.

PAID ADVERTISING METHODS TO DISTRIBUTE AND PROMOTE CONTENT



The primary method of promotion is through untargeted print and online banner ads.

EFFECTIVENESS OF PAID ADVERTISING METHODS FOR DISTRIBUTING CONTENT



However, targeted social ads, promoted posts, and search engine marketing are ranked as the most effective methods of promoting content.



Chapter 5: Emerging Trends

**78% OF CMOs BELIEVE
CUSTOM CONTENT IS THE
FUTURE OF MARKETING.**

[Source: DemandMetric]

For many marketers, 2015 was a year spent expanding digital strategies. In addition to focusing on creating engaging content, marketers took their content online, ramped up their social media efforts, and rediscovered the purpose and value of email marketing. 2016 is poised to continue this trajectory. Content will still reign supreme, but content design, social media, email marketing, mobile-friendly media, and audience segmentation are among the many trends expected to share its spotlight. Here's a brief snapshot of what's to come:

1

**DIGITAL CONTENT WILL BECOME
MORE VISUAL AND INTERACTIVE.**

Instagram's meteoric rise—as of September 2015, the site hosts a staggering 400 million active, monthly viewers—says a lot about how people consume content. While this doesn't mean you should abandon your blog in favor of completely visual storytelling, it does suggest you should look for creative ways to incorporate infographics, images, videos, and other visual elements into your content.

2

**THE WAY PEOPLE ACCESS DIGITAL CONTENT
WILL CONTINUE TO CHANGE.**

2015 marked a milestone: As of July 2015, people had begun spending significantly more time viewing online media with mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, than with laptop and desktop computers, according to Smart Insights.

Make sure the website you use to house your content is optimized for mobile viewing. If it's not, readers may not only have a difficult time perusing your content—they may not be able to find it. Google's algorithm update in April 2015 prioritizes mobile-friendly sites on mobile browsers.

3

**EMAIL MARKETING WILL CONTINUE
TO MAKE HEADLINES.**

According to Litmus' "Top 10 Marketing Stats of 2015," marketers rediscovered the benefits of connecting with consumers via email in 2015 and will likely continue to leverage email's power in 2016 for many reasons, including its popularity with consumers and how easy it is to measure email marketing ROI.⁶ A recent article from Contently hailed the email newsletter as "the most important part of content marketing."⁷

4

**TAILORING YOUR MESSAGES TO MEET
YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE'S NEEDS WILL
REMAIN A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF A
WELL-ROUNDED STRATEGY.**

Your content should always reflect the audience you're trying to reach—and it's not enough to simply lump your audience in categories, such as millennials or baby boomers. Using audience segmentation to target specific subsets of older adults⁸, for example, ensures your health and wellness content always reaches its intended mark, which improves ROI.

Chapter 6: Effectively Measuring Your Content Marketing Efforts

If you haven't already, document your content strategy and clearly define the metrics for success before launching a campaign. Below are common key performance indicators (KPI's) for specific strategies at each stage of the buyer's journey. You should not only focus on the "top of the funnel" (brand awareness and engagement), but also run campaigns that address lead generation and, ultimately, conversion.

BRAND AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

Website

- » Unique visits
- » Visits from organic search: branded and nonbranded
- » Page views
- » Session duration

Social Media

- » Followers
- » Comments
- » Shares
- » Email
- » Click-to-open rate

Email

- » Click-to-open rate
- » Click-through rate

LEAD GENERATION

- » Qualified leads
- » Calls made
- » Requests for information

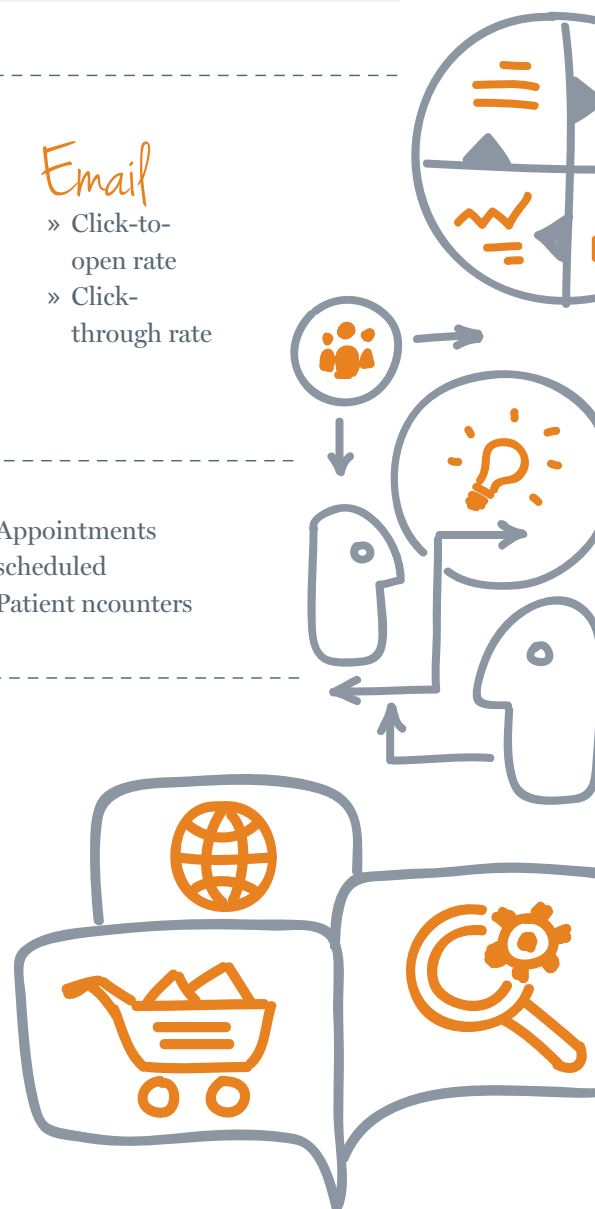
CONVERSION

- » Form completion
- » Assessment completion
- » Calls made
- » Appointments scheduled
- » Patient encounters

Once your content strategy and measurement plan are in place, here are keys to successful execution:

- » Schedule content consistently.
- » Create clear calls to action (like this one) that drive to a relevant landing page.
- » Integrate your print and digital assets.

NEED A BASELINE? WE RECOMMEND MAILCHIMP'S GUIDELINES
FOR E-NEWSLETTER PERFORMANCE BY INDUSTRY⁹



Chapter 7: Content Marketing Best Practices

1

CONTENT IS THE CRUX OF A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN.

Engaging consumers, building top-of-mind status, and generating profitable service line growth requires a commitment to delivering relevant, compelling content that your target audience wants to read. The results of this inbound approach are remarkable: According to Hubspot, companies that create 15 or more original articles per month generate 5X more traffic, and companies with 101-200 pages of content generate 2.5X more leads than companies with 50 or fewer pages.

2

INTEGRATION IS THE NEW IMPERATIVE.

Leveraging the precision of your print magazine with the digital experience is the most effective way to move consumers through the buying process. In fact, research of more than 5,000 healthcare consumers conducted on behalf of True North Custom clients discovered that after receiving a custom publication, the number one action taken was visiting the organization's website to learn more, complete an assessment, or schedule an appointment.

When integrating with social media, don't use social media as your singular content hub. All of your content should live on a channel that you own (like a blog or website). Your social media channels should integrate with these hubs so you get the maximum audience reach from sharing your content. However, on many of these channels, you do not own the content you post. In theory, Facebook could decide to charge for fans or disable business pages altogether, and you would lose all of your assets.

3

MOBILE RESPONSIVENESS IS A MUST.

The mobile experience reflects the level of quality and service your prospects can expect, and Google now rewards websites that are designed with mobile visitors in mind and punishes those that aren't with a lower search engine ranking. More than 60 percent of the digital content created by True North Custom is consumed on a mobile device—compared to 25 percent on a tablet and 15 percent on a desktop.

4

EMAIL IS STILL EFFECTIVE.

Social media is sexy, but email moves the needle, with conversion rates 40X higher than Facebook and Twitter, according to Kissmetrics.

5

NURTURING WORKS.

Not everyone who visits a website is ready to take action, which is why market leaders employ trigger-and-drip campaigns that nurture prospects through the decision cycle. In fact, visitors who return to True North Custom campaign sites after receiving a drip email are 24X more likely to take action compared to consumers who visit the sites via other methods.



LOOK FOR MORE CONTENT MARKETING BEST PRACTICES AT TRUENORTHCUSTOM.COM/BLOG—AND LOOK FOR PROFILES OF HEALTHCARE MARKETING'S TOP CONTENT PROS IN UPCOMING ISSUES OF *HEALTHCARE INSIGHT*.

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HEALTHCARE INSIGHT TO LEARN THE MOST CUTTING-EDGE
MARKETING TRENDS, TIPS, AND BEST PRACTICES.**

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SOURCES

- 1 Content Marketing Institute: http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2016_B2C_Research_Final.pdf
- 2 Pew Research: <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/health-fact-sheet/>
- 3 Moz: <https://moz.com/blog/consumer-survey-reveals-the-efficacy-of-inbound-vs-outbound>
- 4 Content Marketing Institute-What is Content Marketing? <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/what-is-content-marketing/>
- 5 Smart Insights: <http://www.smartinsights.com/mobile-marketing/mobile-marketing-analytics/mobile-marketing-statistics/>
- 6 Litmus: <https://litmus.com/blog/top-10-email-marketing-stats-of-2015>
- 7 Contently: <https://contently.com/strategist/2016/01/19/why-the-newsletter-is-the-most-important-part-of-content-marketing/>
- 8 True North Custom: Using Segmentation: <http://blog.truenorthcustom.com/using-segmentation-to-target-the-senior-population>
- 9 Mailchimp E-mail Benchmarks: <http://mailchimp.com/resources/research/email-marketing-benchmarks/>