

The C-Suite Asks,



We Answer:

The Top 6 Questions
about Healthcare PR

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1. Why is PR Important for Business?

 PR isn't just about looking good; it's good for business.

In today's digital marketplace where consumers can share content 24/7 across multiple platforms, you must proactively tell your own story. When considering a business transaction, there are two main factors people consider – who you are and what you sell. According to Forbes, it's who you are that is by far the more important of the two.¹

Your reputation is a crucial intangible asset. It's your key to developing and fostering customer loyalty. It differentiates you from your competitors and builds consumer confidence that translates into financial rewards.

The Value of Reputation

Reputation influences purchase decision-makers and drives demand which in turn translates into better financial performance, higher revenues, greater market share, higher valuation, and positive consumer behavior. According to authors Chun and Roper, reputation has been found to contribute to between 3 and 7.5 percent of revenues yearly.²

The impact of reputation to your bottom line clearly shows public relations should be considered a business investment rather than a cost.



¹ Kasper Nielsen, "How to Leverage Reputation as Your #1 Driver of Value," Forbes, last modified October 1, 2012, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesinsights/2012/10/01/how-to-leverage-reputation-as-your-1-driver-of-value/#6574cf2c6279>

² Gary Davies, Rosa Chun, Rui Vinhas Da Silva, and Stuart Roper, Corporate Reputation and Competitiveness (London: Routledge, 2003)

Your reputation is a crucial, intangible asset. It's your key to ...customer loyalty.

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

WHO WE ARE?

WHAT WE DO?



Managing reputation is among public relations' core areas of expertise. Savvy PR strategy integrates traditional media, social media, brand-owned content marketing and brand journalism to build a brand's reputation across multiple platforms. According to research by Nielsen, 83 percent of consumers³ trust recommendations from family and friends more than any other form of marketing.

PR will help you leverage the power of credible intermediaries such as industry experts, thought leaders, analysts, and influencer endorsements to help you build your reputation, credibility and your bottom line.

³ “Recommendations From Friends Remain Most Credible Form of Advertising Among Consumers; Branded Websites Are The Second-Highest-Rated Form,” Nielsen.com, last modified September, 28 2015, <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/press-room/2015/recommendations-from-friends-remain-most-credible-form-of-advertising.html>

2. What is This Thing Called Brand Journalism?



Simply put, brand journalism tells your story.

Brand journalism tells your company's story in the form of journalism, or media content. Using journalistic skills, brand journalism leverages the power of storytelling used in media outlets, blogs, social media, video, and paid media to tell the story of your brand, company, or product. *Your story is told in your voice and you control it.*

Brand journalism is the antithesis of the sales pitch. Formerly, the news media covered company news while corporations focused on marketing and sales tactics. Corporate content was in large part sales pitchy, promotional information. But the tide has shifted from corporate-centric content to audience-centric content. Brand journalism entails providing fresh, relevant content that speaks to your target audience's interests and needs. As a result, brand journalism elevates your reputation.



 **Brand journalism is the antithesis of the sales pitch.**

ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE

Why is Brand Journalism Important?

Today's audience is sophisticated and attention spans are at an all-time low. News is available online, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week across multiple platforms. Bombarding your audience with a simple-minded message, meaningless facts and figures isn't going to cut through noise. That strategy is yesterday's news.

In 2004, McDonald's presented its "[brand journalism](#)" plan at an Advertising Age conference. This plan rejected traditional marketing and advertising approaches that focused on a single, repetitive message in favor of a "content stream approach."

Why?

Our digital, multi-platform, attention-deficit world demands it. Content must speak across multiple platforms, to diverse audiences. Your message must be authentic, valuable, insightful and relevant to your audience. [Ad Age](#) makes a critical distinction between "message pushing" and "message engaging." It is paramount that your content and message engage and attract your audience. In many ways it's like the art of courting -- you want to flirt, tease, and captivate their interest.



How to Break into Brand Journalism

At the heart of brand journalism is storytelling. It's the story of your brand and more importantly, how your audience fits into your story. Be authentic and even vulnerable because the goal is to develop a trusting relationship with your audience.

Trusting Relationships + Brand Loyalty = Thought Leadership

Many companies hire freelance journalists or build their own company news sites to create editorial-style content to engage their audience. One great example is [GE](#)'s online magazine that features unique stories about innovation, science and technology.

You may not have the budget to hire a journalist and create your own news site, but you can begin crafting your content using these following tips:



1. Think like a journalist. What's the story? Why would this matter to your audience? Has this story been told before? If so, what kind of unique perspective can you provide? How can you contribute or educate your audience? The goal is to package your message in compelling stories that captures your audience's interest. Once you've captured their attention, your audience will be your ambassador, taking to social media to spread your message.

2. Multi-platform content. As the media philosopher Marshall McLuhan said, "the medium is the message." You must package your content in multiple formats from 140 character tweets to live-streaming video. The emphasis has shifted from content consumption to content sharing.

3. Focus on engagement. Content should be conversational and never one-sided. Entice action by providing entertaining, inspiring and relevant content to earn audience interest and confidence. Focus on adding value and not making a sale.

Brand Journalism in Healthcare

In the healthcare industry, brand journalism can help organizations, hospitals, brands, and physicians connect and relate more to their audience and patient base. The healthcare industry has a wealth of patient stories that are both relatable and emotionally appealing.

In crafting your message, it is essential to hone in on your target audience. Is your audience comprised of patients, hospital administrators, physicians, or all of the above?

The goal for one SPR healthcare client was to foster greater integration and camaraderie among their physicians. By identifying the target audience, SPR crafted connective content around stories of doctors' experiences with our healthcare client. A wide range of specialists, like cardiologists, internists and gastroenterologists, shared their experiences so that doctors like them could hear relatable, relevant stories. The content, however, was strategically focused on our client's core message and goals. The stories all highlighted how the physicians' practices benefited from our client's solution as well as how it changed the lives of the patients.

Once the content was developed, SPR helped to develop an online destination for healthcare practitioners. The content was repackaged in multiple formats such as video, case studies, blogs, tweets, and other social media posts, to truly maximize the sharing of content.



Brand journalism is storytelling, not a sales pitch. If executed strategically, brand journalism will help your organization build thought leadership and expertise in your niche market.

3. What is Content Marketing and Why Should I Care?

According to the [Content Marketing Institute](#), “Content marketing is 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.”



What's the Difference between Content Marketing and Brand Journalism?



What's Your Goal?

Brand Awareness
vs
Lead Generation

To be sure, content marketing and brand journalism both deliver relevant, engaging information, but the difference between them lies in their end goals.

The goal of brand journalism is to build brand awareness and affinity through the art of storytelling. By creating and sharing compelling stories around your brand, brand journalism helps to foster community engagement and ultimately customer loyalty. Kaiser Permanente's [Care Stories](#) website does a wonderful job of sharing compelling stories about its patient communities to convey KP's greater message that its brand is about more than just doctor visits – KP cares about your wellbeing and quality of life.

The goal of content marketing is lead generation. By creating valuable, educational information and giving it away, content marketing utilizes “pull” tactics to attract prospects and customers. Types of content marketing include:



These types of content are long-lasting and naturally increase social shares, traffic and SEO. Content marketing sends the message to your prospects and customers that you are attuned to their needs and problems and are ready to help them. Ultimately, it builds your brand authority.

A study by Kapost and Eloqua found that content marketing delivers three times the return on investment (ROI) of paid search.⁴ Business-to-business (B2B) companies that blog only 1-2 times per month generate 70 percent more leads than those who don't blog.⁵

Content marketing is an essential component to your communications strategy. It may be time-consuming, but the investment will pay dividends. An effective content marketing strategy must have clearly defined objectives. Second, you must understand the needs, pain points and interests of your audience. For instance, SPR's healthcare clients respond very well to case studies, whitepapers, and data-centric content such as surveys. Third, you must be consistent. Not only must you consistently generate relevant and value content, but the look, tone and writing style must be consistent across formats and platforms.

⁴Kapost and Eloqua, "Content Marketing ROI," accessed August 4, 2016, <http://www.oracle.com/webfolder/mediate/loqua/documents/Content+Marketing+Kapo+st+Eloqua+ebook.pdf>
⁵ Hubspot, "Marketing Benchmarks from 7,000 Businesses," accessed July 20, 2016, <http://cdn1.hubspot.com/hub/53/Marketing-Benchmarks-from-7000-businesses.pdf>

4. How Do I Become a Thought Leader Today?

Reaching people with your marketing message used to be simple. Brands could push information out to their audiences while they watched TV, listened to the radio, and read newspapers or magazines. Today, we consume our information in snippets from dozens of different sources throughout the day. We're tweeting in between watching videos and sharing life's moments on Instagram.

Industry experts who share their expertise, whether in person, online, in print or in broadcast, for the purpose of educating others, become thought leaders who add value to an industry as a whole, and in turn, to the organization or brand they are associated with.



Thought leadership is not about being known. It is about being known for making a difference.

– Denise Brosseau

How Effective is Thought Leadership?

As customers are more connected, engaged and empowered, they expect insights from and relationships with brands. *Thought leadership as a PR strategy can help you gain visibility, differentiate your company from competitors and build trust.*

In fact, it's a strategy with numbers you can't afford to ignore:

- 88 percent of consumers think thought leadership is important or critical when creating their short lists for purchases.⁶
- Marketers rank thought leadership development and dissemination as the #2 priority behind lead generation.⁷
- More than 90 percent of B2B buyers are more likely to engage with sales professionals who are viewed as thought leaders in the industry.⁸



How do I become a thought leader?

Thought leadership takes time, years even. It requires niche expertise and knowledge, but more importantly, a unique way of thinking. Simply reiterating the status quo on healthcare legislation will not make you a thought leader. You must be willing to take risks, challenge convention, think out-of-the-box, drive innovation, and expect pushback. According to Denise Brosseau, "thought leadership is not about being known. It is about being known for making a difference."⁹

Creating the right content can help you become a trusted industry thought leader and resource for valuable information. If you include compliance in the process, you can make sure you're on side with the regulations and eliminate the fear factor.

⁶ Julie Schwartz and Anna Whiting, "Persuading Buyers to Choose You," (PowerPoint Presentation, ITSMA, December 2014), http://www.itsma.com/pdfs/research/ITSMA_HBCI2014AbbSummary.pdf

⁷ Julie Schwartz, "2015 Services Marketing Budget Allocations and Trends," (PowerPoint Presentation, ITSMA, January 2015), http://www.itsma.com/pdfs/research/ITSMA_BudgetStudy2015AbbSumB026AS.pdf

⁸ Kathleen Schaub, "Social Buying Meets Social Selling: How Trusted Networks Improve the Purchase Experience," (Whitepaper, IDC, April 2014), https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/business/sales-solutions/global/en_US/c/pdfs/idc-wp-247829.pdf

⁹ Denise Brosseau, "What is a Thought Leader? FAQ," accessed August 4, 2016, <http://www.thoughtleadershiplab.com/Resources/WhatIsaThoughtLeader>

Develop insights and actionable planning strategies to respond to the industry environment. Think about the channels available to disseminate your content and best reach your audience. Your website, blogs, social media channels and self-published white papers are all ways for you to share your ideas within your industry and beyond. **Share, share, share!**

As your brand or reputation starts to gain momentum, start networking and connecting with other thought leaders in your niche. By surrounding yourself with mentors, movers and shakers, not only will you learn from them, but you will gain authority and credibility.

For one of our clients, SPR created a targeted thought leadership campaign to increase awareness of our client's position as the leader in their space. A series of informational bulletins and white papers that were sent to customers, referral sources and media formed a key part of the campaign. The bulletins consistently showed high readership, pass-along rates and circulation, as well as increased visits to the website, opening doors with senior management of client companies and stimulating demand with employers.

Below are a few thought leadership tips to consider:



- **Focus on LinkedIn when initiating a thought leadership campaign.** As LinkedIn is a network for professionals, it's more likely you'll get noticed by people in your industry than other social media sites.
- **Publish white papers and case studies** illustrating and showing your audience that you have the expertise instead of simply telling the outside world your organization or expert is a thought leader. "Show me, don't tell me," is the phrase that comes to mind here. SPR has had very successful thought leadership campaigns with clients in the past who, as a result of publishing white papers examining common issues and trends, have received increased media attention and therefore greater exposure and visibility in their industries. Also be sure your thought leader comments in multiple channels such as print, social media, blogs, and video.
- **Review your marketing strategy.** Make sure your organization is producing content that speaks to your audience's needs and/or pain points. If your content isn't relevant to your audience, you'll lose them.

5. What's the Value of Social Media For Healthcare Brands?

The healthcare industry is in the midst of massive change. With the introduction of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), declining reimbursements, rising consumerism, and hospital consolidation, it is imperative for healthcare organizations to develop innovative strategies to increase their bottom line. In this increasingly competitive marketplace, branding is ever more critical to the success of your healthcare organization.

Enter social media.

We currently live in a digital world where 80 percent of all internet users (approximately 93 million Americans), have searched for a health-related topic online.¹⁰ According to one study, 57 percent of consumers said a hospital's social media presence would strongly influence their choice regarding where to go for services.¹¹ It also indicated that a strong social media presence was interpreted by 81 percent of consumers as indicating the hospital offered cutting-edge technologies.



¹⁰ Jane Weaver, "More people search for health online," NBC News.com, last accessed August 4, 2016, <http://www.nbcnews.com/id/3077086/t/more-people-search-health-online/#.V5FHffmAOKo>

¹¹ Peck JL, "Social media in nursing education: responsible integration for meaningful use," Journal of Nursing Education, March 53(3):164-9, doi: 10.3928/01484834-20140219-03.



It is empirically clear there are tremendous opportunities to enhance your brand visibility through social media. As a regulated industry, however, healthcare organizations have been slow to incorporate social media for fear of liability, privacy and security breaches. But ignoring social media is not an option today. Healthcare brands must arm themselves with knowledge and procedures to effectively track, capture, and secure real-time social media content for record retention and audit purposes.

How do I use social media?

Social media allows communities to share real-time content across different platforms such as blogs, social networks, professional networks, video and photo sharing sites, online discussion forums, etc.

In order to leverage social media effectively you must:

1. Create relevant content that engages your target audience.

Patients and healthcare professionals actively use social media to share information, discuss healthcare policies, research treatments, symptoms, provider reviews and more. As a healthcare brand, it is critical you create high quality, reliable content that educates your audience. Contrary to evidenced-based medical reports, social media thrives on patient stories for collective medical knowledge.¹² Personal stories, however, are vulnerable to misinterpretation. As a healthcare brand, you must be vigilant in monitoring content for quality control and accuracy.

12 Grindrod K, Forgione A, Tsuyui RT, Gavura S., Guistini D., "Pharmacy 2.0: a scoping review of social media use in pharmacy," *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, 2014 Jan-Feb;10(1):256-70, doi: 10.1016/j.sapharm.2013.05.004.

2. Educate your employees.

The consequences for inappropriate social media use by healthcare professionals can be devastating to your brand reputation. Physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals are ambassadors of your brand and therefore must be provided specific guidelines for online professionalism. According to a [national survey](#), there was a high consensus that physicians should never post:

- Misinformation on physician practice websites
- Misleading information about clinical outcomes
- Use patient images without consent
- Misrepresent credentials
- Inappropriately contact patients using dating sites
- Violate patient confidentiality ¹³

The Mayo Clinic is a trailblazer in social media engagement in healthcare industry. In 2010, the Mayo Clinic established the [Mayo Clinic Social Media Network](#) (MCSMN) with the conviction that “individuals have the right and responsibility to advocate for their own health, and it's our responsibility to help them use social networking tools to get the best information, and connect with providers as well as one another.” The Mayo Clinic’s Social Media Network website offers a library of resources such as webinars, podcasts, discussion boards, events and dedicated tutorials on how to use social media for healthcare professionals. It also has a strong presence on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Google+ and Pinterest. As a result, the Mayo Clinic has elevated its brand and reputation for excellence and innovation.

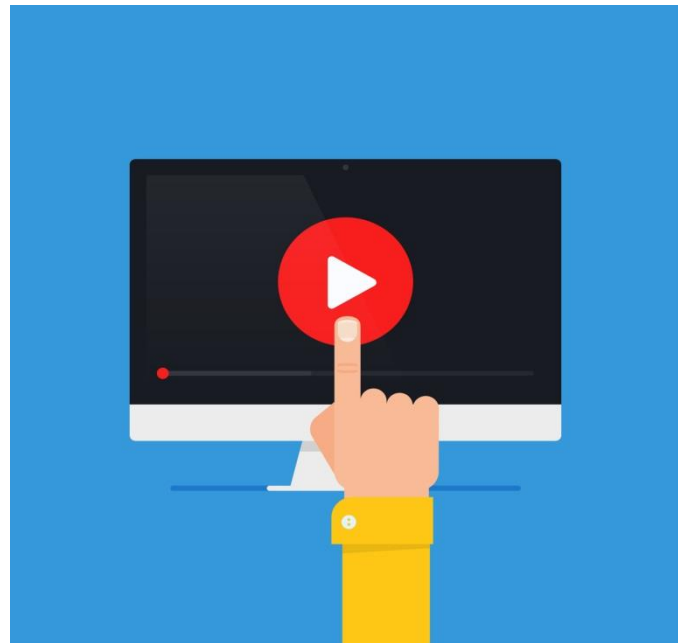


¹³S. Ryan Greysen, MD, MHS, MA; David Johnson, MA; Terry Kind, MD, MPH; Katherine C. Chretien, MD; Cary P. Gross, MD, MPH; Aaron Young, PhD; and Humayun J. Chaudhry, DO, MS, SM, “Online Professionalism Investigations by State Medical Boards: First, Do No Harm,” *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 2013;158(2):124-130. doi:10.7326/0003-4819-158-2-201301150-00008

6. What's the Value of Video for Healthcare Brands?

Video has clearly captivated online audiences to become king of digital content. The appetite for video is voracious. On Facebook alone, daily video views doubled from 4 billion to [8 billion daily views](#) per day from April to November 2015. Cisco predicts [80% of all Internet traffic](#) will be streaming video content by 2019. YouTube is the second largest search engine on the Web and reports mobile video consumption rises 100% every year. It's not surprising that 2016 has been dubbed the [Year of Video Marketing](#).

Quality videos will drive website traffic, put a "face" on your brand's messaging, and boost your bottom line, adding power and credibility to your organization.



Why is video so compelling?

From the beginning of time, humans have used images in the form of cave drawings, hieroglyphics, and paintings to tell their story. We are visual creatures. Approximately [90% of information](#) sent to the brain is visual and the brain processes images [60,000 times faster](#) than words.

If picture is worth a thousand words, how much would video be worth? Approximately [1.8 million words](#) for one minute of video according to Dr. James L. McQuivey. With dramatic, moving images layered with music and dialogue, video is a multi-dimensional storytelling experience. It is, arguably, the most powerful communication tool to engage your audience and tell your brand's story.

Some healthcare executives may dismiss video as relevant to only consumers, but this notion is simply not supported by existing data. According to [HubSpot](#):

- 75% of executives watch work-related videos on business websites at least once a week
- 96% of B2B organizations use video in some capacity in their marketing campaigns to which 73% report positive results to their ROI
- 50% of executives look for more information after seeing a product/service in a video
- 65% of executives visit the marketer's website and 39% call a vendor after viewing a video
- Video in an email leads to 200-300% increase in click-through rate

It is evident that video's influence is far-reaching. Businesses have taken notice and are investing accordingly. By 2016, it is estimated [video ad spending](#) will reach \$5.4 billion.



Thank you for reading our ebook, “The C-Suite Asks, We Answer: The Top 6 Questions about Healthcare PR.”

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About Scott Public Relations

Founded in 1988, Scott Public Relations is a boutique PR agency located in Los Angeles, California. Scott Public Relations partners with [healthcare](#), [insurance](#) and [technology](#) organizations across the U.S. and abroad, providing a full range of public relations and marketing services. SPR's specialties include content marketing, brand development, thought leadership, website development, sales leadership and lead generation as well as reputation management and social media marketing. Scott Public Relations is also a member of [Public Relations Boutiques International](#)™ (PRBI), an international network of boutique public relations firms. For more information, visit www.scottpublicrelations.com. Follow SPR on Twitter:

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Contact:

Joy Scott

President and CEO, Scott Public Relations

joy@scottpublicrelations.com

818-610-0270