

WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE PATIENT IS GOOD FOR THE BRAND

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With the right mindset we can help patients—and our brands—by producing materials that deliver value to both.



I recently ordered some photos online, and after they were delivered received this email:

HOW DID WE DO?



Thank you for your feedback!

I've been thinking a lot about this email because:

1. I paid attention to it, and
2. I took action. I almost never respond to survey requests, but I did to this one.
They made it so easy

THE TAKEAWAY: SIMPLE IS BETTER.

Another story: Recently, there was a health crisis in my family. I needed information. And—even though I'm trained as a research physiologist and have worked in healthcare communications for the past 20 years—it was incredibly difficult to find what I needed. Something relevant. Unbiased. Accessible. Easy to understand. That shouldn't be too much to ask.

THE TAKEAWAY: WHAT PATIENTS NEED GENERALLY ISN'T OUT THERE (OR ISN'T FINDABLE).

There's a lot of terrible writing these days for patients. And by terrible I mean:

- Overly long
- Overly technical
- Blatantly biased
- Inaccessible/hard to find

As a writer working in this arena, I can't fix everything. But I can make things better, one project at a time. To that end, my goals are two-fold:

1. First and foremost, to help the company I'm working with achieve their objectives, and
2. To produce something of value to the patient

"Hold on," some might say. "Those things are mutually exclusive."

Well, I disagree. If the company you work with is providing, for example, a drug, device, or diagnostic test of value (and let's assume that it is), you can—and absolutely should—attain both goals. Some strategies to achieve that are listed below.

PRODUCE MATERIALS THAT HELP YOUR PATIENTS AND YOUR BRAND

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Short. Concise. To the point. In easy-to-understand language. Especially if it's going online. Not only is the average person unfamiliar with medical/scientific terminology and is reading at a grade school level, they're also likely to be accessing the information in a time of great stress and probably not thinking very clearly.

MAKE IT RELEVANT

Gone are the days when it makes sense to write something purporting to be educational but is really a thinly veiled ad for a product. We're assuming the product is of value. Give it to the patient straight, and let them come to that conclusion organically.

MAKE IT COMPREHENSIVE

Patients need information about their disease. Big picture information. Early on. The company that gets that to them generates incalculable trust and goodwill.

GET IT IN THE HANDS OF THE PATIENT

This has to be part of the plan. What good are amazing patient materials if no one ever sees them? Research shows that most patients want information to come from their doctors. And the more valuable (simple, relevant, comprehensive) you make these materials, the more likely doctors are to disseminate them.

THE TAKEAWAY: THE RIGHT APPROACH AND MINDSET ARE NEEDED, BUT WE CAN HELP PATIENTS—AND OUR BRANDS—BY PRODUCING MATERIALS THAT DELIVER VALUE TO BOTH.