



7 Deadly Sins

OF HEALTHCARE CONTENT
WRITING THAT KILL SEO & TURN
OFF PROSPECTIVE CLIENTS



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HanesHealthContent.com

7 Deadly Sins of Healthcare Content Writing that Kill SEO and Turn Off Prospective Clients by Elizabeth Hanes RN, published by Hanes Healthcare Communications.

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About the Author

Elizabeth Hanes RN is the founder and CEO of Hanes Healthcare Communications, a digital healthcare content agency that specializes in producing content that resonates with readers and inspires them to become clients.

For almost a decade, as “the nurse who knows content,” Elizabeth has helped major healthcare brands, providers, agencies and publishers – like Anthem, Healthgrades, Cardinal Health and Dignity Health – connect and engage with prospective clients to build profitable relationships. An expert on the art of healthcare content creation, Elizabeth spoke at Content Marketing World in 2016.

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Preface

Millions of words have been written about the science of content marketing. The science involves search algorithms and content strategy and keyword density and key performance indicators (KPIs) and web spiders and analytics, and ... that's merely scratching the surface.

On the other hand, very little has yet to be written about the *art* of content writing. As a result, many web page writers produce content-by-formula that reads as if it is written for robots. And that's because it is. It is written for Googlebot, to be precise.

That's a problem.

Because to win at internet marketing today, your content has to appeal equally as much to human beings as to Googlebot. After all, Googlebot is never going to buy your product or service.

Luckily for you, crafting content that human beings love as much as Googlebot is my specialty.

As a veteran writer, I know plenty about the science of content marketing and how to use words to improve a site's search engine optimization ("SEO"). As a nurse, I know a whole lot about human emotions and how to use language to forge connections between people that lead to long-lasting professional relationships. At the intersection of these two skills lies the content sweet spot: writing that woos Googlebot *and* human readers. Now I'm spilling my secrets so you can write like this too.

This ebook is all about writing: the science and craft of it. I don't aim to provide you with a dissertation on content strategy and marketing. Instead, we will focus on how to actually use words and language to help your page rank and also influence people to buy your product or service.

Let's get started.

Introduction

Let's pretend you're a plastic surgeon. A prospective client – we'll call her Judy – hears about laser skin resurfacing and wonders if it could make her wrinkles go away. Judy wants to consult a physician about this, so she does what approximately 80% of Americans do: she searches for information about the procedure online.

Great news, right?! She'll find you on Google and, voila! A new client.

Except instead of bringing Judy to your website, her search immediately takes her to your competitor's website.

Wah, wah, waaah.

Why did Google forsake you like that? You spent a lot of money on a very pretty website with colorful images of beautiful people enjoying life with their wrinkle-free faces. And your website lists all the services you offer, including laser skin resurfacing – the exact term Judy searched for. So why didn't Google put your site at the top of the search results and get yours the click instead of your competitor's?

Welcome to the world of healthcare content marketing

This scenario plays out day after day, from sea to shining sea. And not just for plastic surgery practices. Hospitals, health systems, manufacturers, retailers – virtually all types of healthcare businesses – lose prospective clients every day because they fail at writing content that appeals to both web spiders and their human audience.

Customers don't just do business willy-nilly with the brand that resides at the top of Google's search results.

*Clients today want to develop a **relationship** with a brand – doctor, hospital, service provider – before doing business with them.*

Judy may start her buyer's journey by investigating the plastic surgery practice that ranks first for "laser skin resurfacing," but she'll perform additional research into other providers before partnering with the doctor who feels to her like the "best fit."

Key word: **feel**. You need to write web content that nabs you top rankings on Google while also helping Judy feel connected to you and your brand, which will elicit her click to schedule an appointment.

Who did Judy choose – and why?

It turns out your competitor got Judy's initial click not because his website had prettier pictures than yours, or because he offered more services or better prices.

No, content marketing science explains why Google ranked that other guy's site higher than yours. Turns out he blogs regularly, and that helps him rank for important keywords (like "laser skin resurfacing") and allows him to create a strong internal linking structure – a strategy Googlebot loves. And he shares his posts on social media, where they garner additional sharing and bring people to the site to comment on the posts, increasing his site's "dwell time" – a metric Google adores.

Yes, the science of writing for search got your competitor's site to rank better than yours, but that's not why Judy ultimately booked an appointment with him.

The art of content sealed the deal.

Judy not only perused your competitor's site, but she also looked at your site and those of a couple of other local plastic surgeons. She ended up going back to the first site because she felt the content really spoke to her. The blog posts contained valuable skin care advice that would benefit Judy whether she purchased laser skin resurfacing or not – and she appreciated that. And the language of the site's service pages evoked an emotional response in Judy. She felt this doctor truly understood her concerns about her appearance. He seemed to really care about these concerns – and about her.

And that's when she clicked the button that said, "Schedule a Free Consultation."

The science – and art – of writing content

The best web content blends science and art to please both the robots and the humans who encounter it.

This ebook aims to help you understand how to do that by examining seven of the deadliest content writing sins healthcare providers and businesses commit – sins that not only can send you to Google hell but also alienate the prospective clients you want to connect with.

Over the next 50 pages, we'll talk a little about the science of content writing and a lot about the art of it. By the time you finish, you should feel much more confident about crafting web pages, blog posts, and other content that elevate your site to Google heaven while simultaneously resonating with your human audience.

And when you're finished reading, kindly [drop me a note](#) to tell me what you thought of this book. I'd love to hear your comments and questions.

P.S.: This ebook contains lots of links – but none of them are affiliate links. In case you were wondering.

1.

Part One: Three Content Writing Sins

That Will Send You to Google Hell

Three Content Writing Sins That Will Send You to Google Hell

Like I said in the preface, I'm not going to dwell too much on the science of content writing. You can read millions of words on innumerable authoritative websites to get up to speed on the fundamentals of writing for SEO. But I am going to cover the three biggest SEO writing mistakes I see small providers, hospitals, and other businesses make in their content – because while these errors can doom your site to poor rankings, they also can be easily fixed.

Keep in mind Google tinkers regularly with its algorithms, so what works today for SEO may not work tomorrow. But as I write this, these common sins continue to send people to Google purgatory. Let's put an end to that and get your site back on the sunny side of search.

#1

Deadly Content Writing Sin #1:

Keyword Stuffing

Deadly Content Writing Sin #1: Keyword Stuffing

Using keywords in your web content = good. Using too many keywords or using them in the wrong ways = very bad.

Sorry, doctors, but I can't deny plastic surgery practices may, in fact, be the worst offenders in this category. I see it time and again, where a key phrase repeats itself over and over on a single page of content. Like this:

...Liposuction has recently become one of the most popular cosmetic procedures performed by **Tampa liposuction surgeon**, Dr. [REDACTED]

Thousands of men and women have chosen **liposuction in Tampa** as a way to take control of their shape when diet and exercise fail to reduce areas of unwanted fat. Liposuction is effective in sculpting and contouring problem areas with precision.

Tampa plastic surgeon, Dr. [REDACTED] performs **liposuction in Tampa** using a variety of methods, including....

Lipectomy Tampa • Fat Injection • Fat Transfer

Liposuction improves and redefines body shape by removing diet and exercise-resistant fat deposits and fatty tissue using specialized instruments. Liposuction has recently become one of the most popular cosmetic procedures performed by Tampa liposuction surgeon, Dr. [REDACTED]

Thousands of men and women have chosen liposuction in Tampa as a way to take control of their shape when diet and exercise fail to reduce areas of unwanted fat. Liposuction is effective in sculpting and contouring problem areas with precision.

Tampa plastic surgeon, Dr. [REDACTED] performs liposuction in Tampa using a variety of methods, including the tumescent technique, in which targeted fat cells are infused with a solution of saline and anesthetic, making them larger and easier to remove.

In addition, Tampa liposuction specialist Dr. [REDACTED] offers the state-of-the-art ultrasound-assisted liposuction – UAL. Ultrasound assisted liposuction is a technique in which an ultrasound probe is inserted beneath the skin to "liquefy" the fat for easy, effective removal. The ultrasonic method for Tampa liposuction works well for larger volumes of fat or for fibrous body areas. Ultrasonic liposuction essentially melts or liquefies the fat cells, making for gentle fat removal with superior results and less bruising and pain. Ultrasonic liposuction is available in the Tampa Bay Area, offered by Tampa liposuction surgeon, Dr. [REDACTED]

Liposuction for Tampa patients has never been easier or more effective. Common locations for liposuction include abdomen, buttocks, hips, thighs, neck, upper arms, chin, cheeks, above breasts, knees, calves and ankles. Dr. [REDACTED] often uses fat harvested from liposuction to rejuvenate other areas of a patient's body, offering the latest fat grafting and fat transfer procedures to Tampa patients. Fat transfer and fat grafting have become popular techniques for sculpting areas of the face and body that lose mass and become "hollowed out" with age.

Do you get the idea this practice is trying to rank for the search phrase “liposuction Tampa”? Because, gosh, if that’s not crystal clear from this image, I don’t know how I could make it clearer. Unfortunately, the strategy has backfired on them: this website ranks 13th for that particular search (as it appeared when I searched it from New Mexico using a private browsing window).

Why does the site rank so poorly when this page mentions liposuction and Tampa so many times? [Because Google penalizes that sort of behavior.](#)

“Yes, keyword stuffing actively demotes your site in Google’s search results.”

I’ve obscured the name of the plastic surgeon here because, honestly, I don’t blame him for this egregious example of keyword stuffing. I’m sure he relied on his website developer or agency to produce this “geotargeting” content, and he trusted their expertise. Sadly, he probably doesn’t realize their SEO writing methodology is actually harming his site’s rank.

Don’t write your web pages this way. Repeating keywords over and over like this has been penalized for more than four years now. Enough, already!

So, what should you do instead of keyword stuffing? Well, the answer to that could fill an entire other ebook, but instead I’ve devoted a full chapter to it. The next chapter, to be precise.



#2

Deadly Content Writing Sin #2:

Lack of Strategic and Longtail Keywords

Deadly Content Writing Sin #2: Lack of Strategic and Longtail Keywords

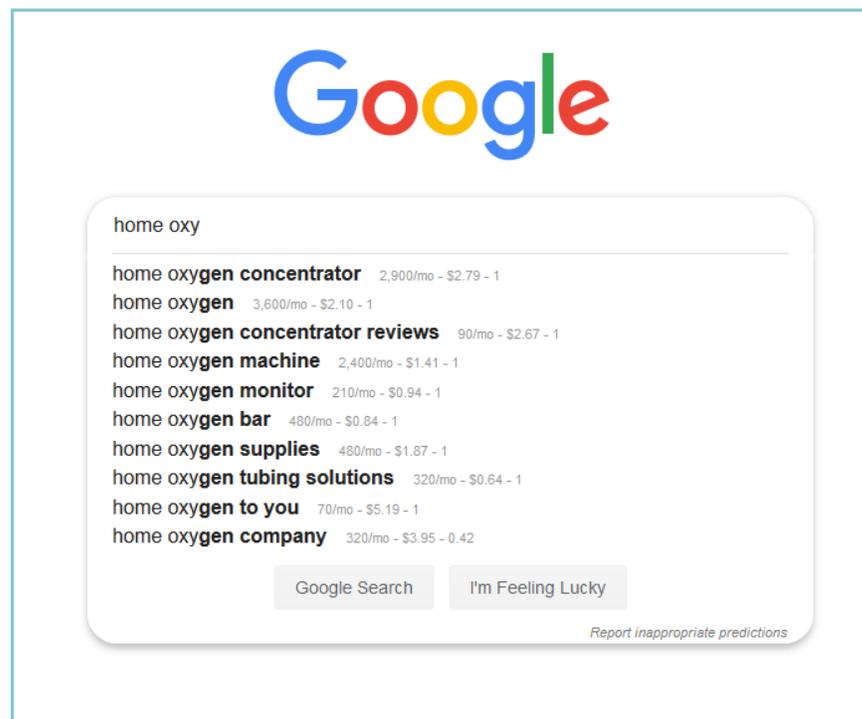
If keyword stuffing will actively demote your site's rank in Google, what should you do instead? The answer: use keywords strategically.

Too many healthcare providers and businesses fail to perform keyword research, don't incorporate relevant keywords strategically, and don't use [longtail keywords](#) (highly specific, low-volume search terms that usually consist of three words or more, such as "home oxygen delivery in Bedford Falls"). These types of mistakes won't result in a Google penalty the way keyword stuffing will, but they won't help your organic search rank either.

Many people "think" they know what search terms prospective customers will type into Google to find their website. The truth is, business owners only know what search terms **they** would type into Google. While that's useful, you should use your own ideas only as a starting point for performing keyword research, not to form the core of your entire strategy.

To be perfectly candid, most people have a limited imagination when it comes to keywords – especially the longtail variety. Let's continue riffing on the concept I tossed out above and pretend your company provides home oxygen-related services. As the business owner, you may think it's only logical that people would type "home oxygen services" into their preferred search engine. And that's probably correct, and yes, you probably want to rank for that particular phrase.

But if you visit Google.com (as I did in a private browsing window in May 2019 in New Mexico – facts I mention because your results may differ from mine if you perform the same experiment), and you type “home oxy” into the search bar you may be surprised to discover the potential queries that auto-populate based on search popularity:



Even if this represents the only quick-and-dirty keyword research you perform, you’ll still learn that it might be in your site’s best interest to optimize certain pages for keywords like “home oxygen tubing solutions” and “home oxygen supplies.”

But for best results, use a tool like the free browser plug-in [Keywords Everywhere](#) (or any of the dozens of web-based keyword research sites available, including Neil Patel’s free [Ubersuggest](#)) to identify the precise words and longtail phrases to target.

In this case, typing “home oxygen services” into Google yielded these related results from [Keywords Everywhere](#):

The screenshot shows a Google search for "home oxygen service". The search bar contains the text "home oxygen service" and has a red arrow pointing to it. Below the search bar, the text "About 261,000,000 results (0.84 seconds)" is visible. On the right side of the page, there are two sidebars. The top sidebar is titled "Related Keywords" and contains a table with columns for Keyword, Vol, CPC, and Comp. The bottom sidebar is titled "People Also Search For" and contains a similar table. Both sidebars have an "Export to CSV" button. Red arrows point to the search bar and the top of the sidebars.

Keyword	Vol	CPC	Comp
☆ apria healthcare	49,500	\$1.20	0.1
☆ oxygen concentrator	49,500	\$4.71	1
☆ oxygen suppliers near me	1,900	\$5.15	0.65
☆ home oxygen delivery companies	260	\$3.18	0.57
☆ rotech customer service	210	\$1.33	0.13
☆ oxygen equipment for home use	140	\$0.93	1
☆ rotech oxygen concentrator	20	\$18.48	0.84
☆ home oxygen services near me	0	\$0.00	0

Keyword	Vol	CPC	Comp
☆ lincare	60,500	\$1.26	0.05
☆ oxygen suppliers near me	1,900	\$5.15	0.65
☆ at home medical	1,900	\$1.73	0.1
☆ apria healthcare locations	1,600	\$1.20	0.17
☆ epay apria	1,000	\$0.74	0.02
☆ mrs humacare	880	\$3.27	0.12
☆ apria healthcare jobs	720	\$0.79	0.13
☆ apria cpap machines	320	\$2.27	1
☆ home oxygen delivery companies	260	\$3.18	0.57
☆ apria oxygen concentrator	260	\$3.98	1
☆ medicare oxygen suppliers	210	\$4.74	0.65
☆ rotech customer service	210	\$1.33	0.13
☆ rotech login	170	\$2.01	0.01
☆ lincare billings mt	170	\$2.01	0.02

- ✍ Once you've identified the keywords for which you want to rank, you need to use them *strategically* when writing your pages. In other words, don't use every keyword on every page. Instead, focus on optimizing for a single search term per page.

Write web pages that organically incorporate the chosen keyword for that page. For example, if you're optimizing for the phrase "home oxygen supplies," write a beautiful, 800-word (or longer) page focused solely on all the various types of supplies you offer, why these supplies are superior to the competition, how these supplies benefit clients – whatever. But don't emphasize your home infusion services or repeatedly inject irrelevant keywords like "durable medical equipment," even if you offer that too. (Hint: write a second optimized page that focuses solely on that.)

As you write your beautiful copy, you only need to repeat your keyword three or four times per page. Yes, really. This tells Googlebot clearly what the page is about. And Googlebot is smart. It also will look for – and prize – related keywords that would naturally be associated with the content of your page. So, if you're optimizing a page to rank for "home oxygen supplies," then Googlebot will expect to find terms like "tubing," "connectors," "cannulas" – you get the picture. Include those words, too.

And there you have it! A quick-and-dirty tutorial on best practices for keyword usage in 2019. Go forth and optimize.

#3

Deadly Content Writing Sin #3:

Poorly Crafted Title Tag and Meta Description

Metadata - Wikipedia

Metadata is "data [information] that provides information about other data". Many distinct types of metadata exist, including computer metadata, library metadata, and metadata publishing standard. Metadata repository, Oracle metadata, metadata publishing, and metadata definition. The term "metadata" is defined in the Computer Dictionary as "data that describes other data". For example, an image may include metadata that describes how large the ...

What is metadata? - Definition from WhatIs.com

<https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/metadata>

Metadata is data that describes other data. Meta is a prefix that in most information technology usage means "an underlying definition or description." Metadata summarizes basic information about data, which can make finding and working with particular instances of data easier.

What is Metadata (with examples) - Dataedo Data terminology

<https://dataedo.com/blog/what-is-metadata-examples>

Sep 16, 2018 - Metadata is simply data about data. It means it is a description and context of the data. It helps to organize, find and understand data. Here are ...

What Is Metadata? (Definition and Uses) - Lifewire

<https://www.lifewire.com> > How To > Software > Databases

Metadata is data about data. In other words, it's information that's used to describe the data that's contained in something like a web page, document, or file. Another way to think of metadata is as a short explanation or summary of what the data is.

What Is Metadata and Why Is It as Important as the Data Itself?

<https://www.opendatasoft.com/blog/.../what-is-metadata-and-why-is-it-important-data>

Aug 25, 2016 - Have you ever found yourself asking the question, What is Metadata? Jason Hare breaks it down and explains its importance using ...

Deadly Content Writing Sin #3: Poorly Crafted Title Tag and Meta Description

Once you've created rich, appealing content for your pages that organically incorporates longtail keywords and related phrases, don't forget to craft title tags and meta descriptions to boost your SEO in Googlebot's eyes and sell your services to your human audience.

The title tag is the page name that displays in Google's search results, and the meta description is the information that appears just below the title. Like this:

Sandia Wheelchair Solutions :: Homepage :: home medical equipment ...

www.sandiawheelchairs.com/ ▼

home medical equipment, wheelchair and portable oxygen provider.

Rotech Healthcare – Home Medical Equipment Across the US

<https://www.rotech.com/> ▼

Looking for home Oxygen Equipment? We're here for you -- 24/7! Learn more about our outstanding patient and customer support. We provide a wide variety.

As you can see, this example displays two very different styles of meta description. The first one is terrible. The second one is passable (though not as great as it could be). If these were the only two companies you located to provide home oxygen delivery, which one would you choose? I'd say #2, wouldn't you? Now can you see why the meta description is so important?

If you don't write a meta description (which is entered into the coding of your web page, not published on the page itself), Google will do its best to construct one based on the page content.

“Don't let Googlebot write your meta description, because that way leads to a different kind of content hell.”

Here's how to avoid that fate.

Let's say you wrote a wonderfully optimized page about your delivery services for home oxygen supplies, and the page noted that a patient's insurance coverage usually picks up the cost of this service. You could craft a beautiful title tag and meta description like this:

 **Good Title Tag (60 characters max):**

Home Oxygen Delivery in Bedford Falls | Insurance Coverage

 **Good meta description (300 characters max – and use them all!):**

Learn more about our home oxygen delivery within the greater Bedford Falls area. Your insurance may cover the cost! Top-quality oxygen concentrators, tubing, and cannulas delivered right to your door, with free setup too. Call today for more information or to schedule a delivery.

Although I've included meta description in this section about the science of content writing, creating a compelling meta description also falls under the "art" umbrella. On the science side, Google likes congruity between your meta description and the actual page content, but the description is what your human readers will be reading in the search results – so it pays to devote the time to crafting a great one that gets the click.

Enough about the science of content writing

As I said in the preface, my words about keywords and meta tags aren't intended to represent a [comprehensive guide to SEO](#). Search engine optimization is much, much more complex than this. It involves concepts far beyond keywords.

But you can easily research keywords and use them to write excellent content that gets Google's blessing. And that's why I focused on them here.

Of course, if you're not into DIY keywords and content writing, feel free to give me a jingle. I'm happy to help.

Now, that's enough about how to please Googlebot and other search spiders. Let's talk about the fun stuff: the art of content writing and how to add heart to your copy so it connects with your human audience and leads them down the path to conversion.

2.

Part Two: Four Content Writing Sins

That Alienate Readers



Four Content Writing Sins That Alienate Readers

Let's look back at that keyword-stuffing example again.

Lipectomy Tampa • Fat Injection • Fat Transfer

Liposuction improves and redefines body shape by removing diet and exercise-resistant fat deposits and fatty tissue using specialized instruments. Liposuction has recently become one of the most popular cosmetic procedures performed. Tampa liposuction surgeon, Dr. [REDACTED]

Thousands of men and women have chosen liposuction in Tampa as a way to take control of their shape when diet and exercise fail to reduce areas of unwanted fat. Liposuction is effective in sculpting and contouring problem areas with precision.

Tampa plastic surgeon, Dr. [REDACTED] performs liposuction in Tampa using a variety of methods, including the tumescent technique, in which targeted fat cells are infused with a solution of saline and anesthetic, making them larger and easier to remove.

In addition, Tampa liposuction specialist Dr. [REDACTED] offers the state-of-the-art ultrasound-assisted liposuction - UAL. Ultrasound assisted liposuction is a technique in which an ultrasound probe is inserted beneath the skin to "liquefy" the fat for easy, effective removal. The ultrasonic method for Tampa liposuction works well for larger volumes of fat or for fibrous body areas. Ultrasonic liposuction essentially melts or liquefies the fat cells, making for gentle fat removal with superior results and less bruising and pain. Ultrasonic liposuction is available in the Tampa Bay Area, offered by Tampa liposuction surgeon, Dr. [REDACTED]

Liposuction for Tampa patients has never been easier or more effective. Common locations for liposuction include abdomen, buttocks, hips, thighs, neck, upper arms, chin, cheeks, above breasts, knees, calves and ankles. Dr. [REDACTED] often uses fat harvested from liposuction to rejuvenate other areas of a patient's body, offering the latest fat grafting and fat transfer procedures to Tampa patients. Fat transfer and fat grafting have become popular techniques for sculpting areas of the face and body that lose mass and become "hallowed out" with age.

....Liposuction has recently become one of the most popular cosmetic procedures performed by Tampa liposuction surgeon, Dr. [REDACTED]

Thousands of men and women have chosen liposuction in Tampa as a way to take control of their shape when diet and exercise fail to reduce areas of unwanted fat. Liposuction is effective in sculpting and contouring problem areas with precision.

Tampa plastic surgeon, Dr. [REDACTED] performs liposuction in Tampa using a variety of methods, including....

When you read that, does the copy resonate with you? Do you feel an emotional connection with this doctor?

Of course not, because this copy was written to be read by robots.

Web spiders have no heart – but people do, and your content needs it, too, because it’s the one element that creates a human connection between you and your audience.

While it’s true every piece of content should appeal to the [four main buyer types](#), I don’t believe any human being makes a purchasing decision without some emotional involvement. So the following section of the ebook is going to show you how to write with heart in order to connect with readers on a gut level and elicit their engagement.



#4

Deadly Content Writing Sin #4:

Too Much YOU,
Not Enough “you”

Deadly Content Writing Sin #4: Too Much YOU, Not Enough “you”

If you walked into a furniture store to buy a sofa and the salesman immediately started telling you how great he is at his job, how he earned a salesmanship degree from Harvard, and has won 13 consecutive “best salesman” awards from his company, would you rush to do business with him?

Probably not, because, frankly, who cares about the salesman’s background? You likely would be focused on the fact your new Saint Berdoodle puppy tore your sofa to shreds, prompting you to make an unplanned trip to the store.

Real-world salesmen understand the customer relationship is not about them. They know it’s about you. They make their interactions all about the customer in order to close the deal. The best salesmen ask you plenty of questions about what you want and need – what problems you’re trying to solve – and then go on to commiserate (“Man, I had a Rottweiler one time that literally ate one of my sofa cushions – so annoying!”) and offer solutions.

No, you wouldn’t care how many awards your salesman won, or where he was educated, but you would be interested that he can recommend a puppy-proof sofa.

Why is it, then, that so many small practices, medspas, aestheticians, and other professionals make their web content all about the providers – their credentials, their awards, their alma mater – and not about the prospective patient?

Writing a homepage that goes on and on about the providers in me-me-me fashion reeks of vanity and turns off prospective clients by making them feel unimportant – or even invisible – in the relationship. Take this example:

...Welcome to [redacted] Dermatology & SkinSpa. We appreciate your interest in **getting to know us!** There are several things **we'd** like you to know about **our office and our staff** as you decide who to entrust your skin care to.

[redacted] Dermatology & SkinSpa **has a dedicated team** of medical, surgical and aesthetics professionals who genuinely enjoy caring for you and your skin. **Our experienced physician** is a graduate of Mayo Clinic and provides world-class skin care in a down-to-earth, approachable manner. **We....**

Congratulations to [redacted] for receiving TOP DOC from [redacted] Magazine for the 8th Year!

Welcome to [redacted] Dermatology & SkinSpa. We appreciate your interest in getting to know us! There are several things we'd like you to know about our office and our staff as you decide who to entrust your skin care to.

[redacted] Dermatology & SkinSpa **has a dedicated team of medical, surgical and aesthetics professionals who genuinely enjoy caring for you and your skin.** Our experienced physician **is a graduate of Mayo Clinic** and provides world-class skin care in a down-to-earth, approachable manner. We work closely with our Physician Assistants to ensure the same kind of high quality care we'd want for our own families (we take care of kid's skin issues here, too). We are the proud recipient of [redacted] Magazine's "Best Doctors" award for Dermatology and [redacted] Magazine's TOP DOC in Dermatology. Dr. [redacted] was proud to be a 2009 & 2010 nominee for [redacted] in Business Award.

At [redacted] Dermatology & SkinSpa you can usually see one of our medical providers **same day or within one week** of scheduling your appointment. You'll be pleasantly surprised at the amount of time we spend at each visit, listening to you, looking at your skin and providing a solution to your concerns. This is because we believe that quality care takes quality time with your health care provider.

At [redacted] Dermatology & SkinSpa, our priority is restoring and maintaining the health of your skin. Our medical services range from treatment of warts, mole removal, acne, eczema, skin infections and hives to skin cancer and serious skin rashes.

When your skin is healthy, an improved appearance follows naturally. However, to further enhance your look, we offer laser hair removal,

Home People Media Medical & Surgical SkinSpa Services New Patients Products Testimonials [Patient Portal](#)

TOP DOCTOR

2008 Best Doctors

ACCREDITED BUSINESS BBB Rating: A Click for Review

This homepage is all about **them**: the dermatologist and the entire "dedicated team of medical, surgical and aesthetics professionals" who work at this clinic. This self-centered content does nothing to foster a relationship with the reader.

But, but, but I hear you saying, "Don't prospective clients want to do business with a prestigious "Top Doc" who graduated from the Mayo Clinic?"

Well, yes ... and no.

Before I explain in more detail what a homepage is, let's review what it is not. Your homepage is not a:

- Resume
- Curriculum vitae
- Autobiography
- Biography
- Wiki
- FAQ page
- Dissertation
- Research study article

If your homepage reads like a LinkedIn profile, you're clearly missing the mark.

No, your website's main page serves one function, and one function only: It *sells*. And, yes, to a certain extent it sells the physician, aesthetician, or other provider along with the services. But that absolutely does not mean you should write your homepage to focus solely on your providers' credentials.

Instead, like any good salesman, you need to focus first on the prospective client: her needs, concerns, problems, questions. And then, second, you can offer your providers' credentials as part of the solution to those problems. So, how do you do that?

The best thing you can do, from a writing standpoint, is remove most of YOU from your content and replace it with "you."

“You” is intimate. It’s warm. It’s a term we use with friends. It’s a word that forges an instant bond with the reader. When we use second-person voice (i.e.: “you”), we make the content all about the reader instead of about ourselves. Make no mistake: A web page is a dialogue with a person you can’t see. As the prospective client reads, she’s reacting to what you’re “saying” with your content. And who doesn’t feel flattered when the conversation becomes all about them?

Not convinced you should strip out most of the self-referential text on your homepage? Let’s compare actual content from this website with some hypothetical alternative content I crafted to connect emotionally with the reader by making it all about her:

 **Actual website content:**

At [anonymous] Dermatology & SkinSpa, our priority is restoring and maintaining the health of your skin. Our medical services range from treatment of warts, mole removal, acne, eczema, skin infections and hives to skin cancer and serious skin rashes.

 **Hypothetical rewrite:**

You probably find that skin conditions like acne, eczema, moles, and warts are more than a nuisance. They can affect your self-confidence, leaving you feeling anxious and frustrated. We partner with you to maintain your skin health and help you feel good about your appearance again. And should you experience a serious condition like an infection, rash, or skin cancer, we work quickly to restore your skin health and get you back to everyday life as soon as possible.

The first example contains exactly one instance of the word “your.” The second one contains 10 instances. Which example feels like it’s speaking directly to you? Given a choice between Provider A (first example) and Provider B (second example), which one would you say understands your concerns better? Which provider seems more focused on you?

Does this mean you should never mention a provider's qualifications? Or that he was chosen as a "Top Doc"? Of course not! You definitely should mention those things. But provider credentials, accolades, etc., should not become the focus of the page – certainly not the focus of the homepage, anyway. On the "About Us" page? Knock yourself out. In the sidebar? Sure.

But you will convert more prospects by using second-person voice for much of your main web page content because it's the best way to connect with the reader on an emotional level.

Bottom line: For your small practice – or any business – the homepage shouldn't be all about you, the doctor, nurse, or business owner. The homepage copy should be about the audience. And the way you accomplish that is by using a lot of "you" in the content.



#5

Deadly Content Writing Sin #5:

Cold, Unempathetic Voice

Deadly Content Writing Sin #5: Cold, Unempathetic Voice

Closely related to #4, above, this mistake goes beyond the mere absence of second-person voice. Using “you” can create intimacy with the reader, but you also need to cultivate a warm, empathetic, accessible brand voice that your readers can really connect with. To explain what I mean by that, I’m afraid I have to get super nerdy for a moment.

What is “voice”?

Two terms you’ll hear bandied about when people talk about content writing are voice and tone. These can be tricky writing concepts to master, and I’m only going to delve into voice right now because it’s the more relevant of the two for our purposes.

When I earned my degree in creative writing, we talked a lot in the classroom about voice and tone – specifically how to use them in fiction to differentiate between characters in a story, create a reliable (or unreliable) narrator, and help readers connect emotionally with our characters. You need to establish a brand voice for the latter reason here.

Voice refers to the way you “speak” to people across all of your brand assets: website, blog, social media, print brochures – anything you publish that’s intended to be read by clients and prospective clients.

In speaking, your voice expresses your personality. Is she irreverent? A curmudgeon? Intellectual? We infer the answers to these questions by the way a person speaks. An irreverent person might punctuate her sentences with laughter. A curmudgeon might regularly use the term “those idiots” to refer to people he disagrees with. An intellectual person might use big words that are unfamiliar to us.



Your brand voice expresses your brand's personality.

Your speaking voice is consistent (just like your personality), and your brand voice should be consistent too. A consistent brand voice fosters trust with clients and prospective clients, while a constantly changing voice can make clients wonder if they should believe what you're telling them.

In writing, your brand voice is expressed through several principles of composition, such as:

- Diction (word choice)
- Phrasing
- Point-of-view (first, second, or third person)
- Punctuation
- Sentence structure
- Use of emphasis in formatting, such as italics or bold

For consumer-facing content (I take a slightly different approach for business-to-business content), I generally advocate crafting a brand voice that is:

- Conversational yet authoritative
- Plainspoken but compassionate
- Genuine and accessible

These attributes resonate with readers, establish trust in your brand, and promote the type of connection that leads prospects to engage with your brand and ultimately choose you to provide them with care or other services.

Now, how to accomplish that? Well, let's look at a couple of examples ...

Healthcare Office Hours:
9 AM to 5 PM - Weekdays
Phone: [REDACTED]

Care Management Office Hours:
9 AM to 5 PM - Weekdays
Phone: [REDACTED]

Healthcare Services, Inc.

Comfort & Support | Clarity & Solutions | Companions & Specialists

HOME ABOUT US SERVICES RESOURCES OUR TEAM EMPLOYMENT CONTACT

Your Source for [REDACTED] **Home Care**
and **Aging Life Care Professionals**

IN HOME HEALTH CARE
Helping to achieve the highest level of independence, health and safety in an environment which is both familiar and comfortable.

AGING LIFE CARE MANAGEMENT
Professional practice that focuses on determining the individual needs of a client and developing a care plan that maximizes comfort and security for the client.

ABOUT US
From our family to yours, may your journey through caregiving bring peace and memories that are positive and enduring.

Helping to achieve the highest level of independence, health and safety in an environment which is both familiar and comfortable.

Professional practice that focuses on determining the individual needs of a client and developing a care plan that maximizes comfort and security for the client.

This example illustrates a cold, unempathetic voice – the kind I see used too often on healthcare websites. This writing does the opposite of what good web content should do: It creates professional distance instead of closing the emotional gap between provider and client. Notice the weird wording here? “Helping to achieve ...” Helping who? The writer has erased the client from the conversation. Obviously this text needs second-person point-of-view to establish rapport with the reader: “Helping *your loved one* to achieve” But this content’s problems extend far beyond the lack of second-person voice.

This content is the opposite of conversational. I mean, if a stranger at a cocktail party asked you what you do for a living, would you say, “I engage in professional practice that focuses on determining the individual needs of the client ...”? I don’t think you would, and you should not do this when writing a website either. Quite the opposite! You should establish empathy by using conversational language that reflects what a normal person would say. Maybe something more like, “I help elderly people remain in their homes as long as possible by putting support systems in place for them.”

The voice of this brand also fails the “plainspoken but compassionate” test. The writer uses lofty language, like “professional practice,” and quasi-jargon like “care plan.” But, more importantly, where is the compassion here? This uber-professional brand voice gives the impression the provider views home care as nothing more than a business transaction. Do you think that’s how the audience views the situation? Is that how you would view the situation if you were searching for home care?

For just a moment, I want you to pretend you're a person who suddenly requires in-home senior care for your mom because she recently fell and broke her hip and no longer can live safely at home without assistance, but she refuses to even consider leaving the family home.

What might you be feeling as you perform that search? Possibly:

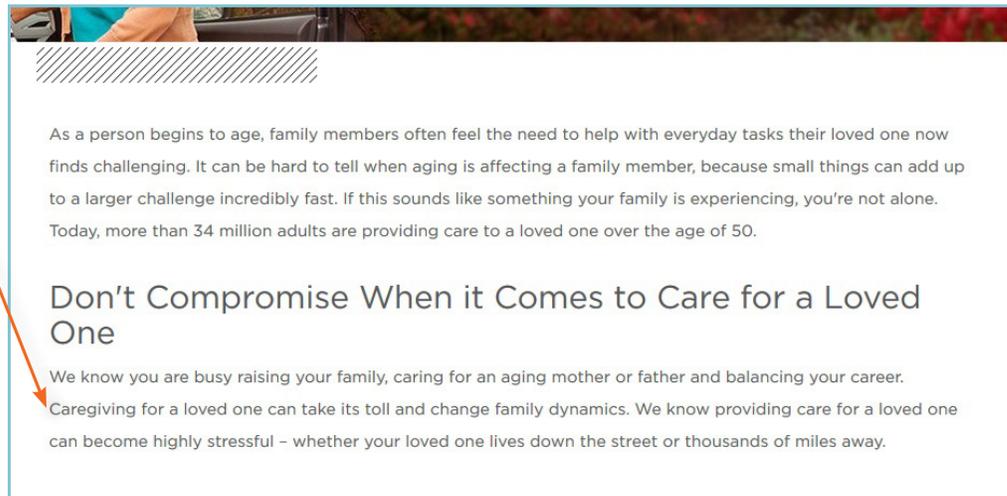
- Worried
- Upset
- Anxious
- Stressed out
- Frustrated
- Angry
- Fearful
- Concerned

I know I would. I'd be worried sick about my mother's well-being and safety moving forward. I'd be frustrated that she stubbornly refused to downsize into assisted living – as I suggested to her months ago – which might have prevented her fall in the first place. I'd be feeling very anxious about how she's going to pay for all this.

Yet this service provider's content doesn't address any of those feelings. Instead, it talks about a "care plan that maximizes comfort and security for the client." The *client*? Do you think of your mother as a "client"?! I don't really want to do business with a provider that views my mother strictly as "a client."

...We know **you** are busy raising **your** family, caring for an aging mother or father and balancing **your** career. Caregiving for a loved one can take its toll and change family dynamics. We know providing care for a loved one can become highly stressful – whether **your** loved one lives down the street or thousands of miles away...

Compare that example to this one:



As a person begins to age, family members often feel the need to help with everyday tasks their loved one now finds challenging. It can be hard to tell when aging is affecting a family member, because small things can add up to a larger challenge incredibly fast. If this sounds like something your family is experiencing, you're not alone. Today, more than 34 million adults are providing care to a loved one over the age of 50.

Don't Compromise When it Comes to Care for a Loved One

We know you are busy raising your family, caring for an aging mother or father and balancing your career. Caregiving for a loved one can take its toll and change family dynamics. We know providing care for a loved one can become highly stressful – whether your loved one lives down the street or thousands of miles away.

This service provider employs a brand voice that is compassionate, understanding, genuine, and accessible. It builds empathy from the very first sentence and goes on to really nail it in the second paragraph:

 **Actual website content:**

“We know you are busy raising your family, caring for an aging mother or father and balancing your career. Caregiving for a loved one can take its toll and change family dynamics. We know providing care for a loved one can become highly stressful – whether your loved one lives down the street or thousands of miles away.”

If I'm the woman whose mother fell and broke her hip, I'm standing up and screaming, “YESSS!” at the screen when I read that. Just look at all the glorious empathy there! This company *knows* I am busy raising my family. They *know* caregiving has taken a toll on me. They recognize this situation is highly *stressful* for me.

This is a company that “gets me.” I'm definitely doing business with them.

How did they accomplish all that (in one paragraph, no less!) with their brand voice?

- ✍️ They use second-person point-of-view to establish instant rapport and close the professional distance between themselves and the reader.
- ✍️ They use a conversational style. You can imagine a good friend sitting across the table at Starbuck’s saying these exact words to you: “I know you’re so busy raising your family, taking care of your mom, **and** balancing your career. No wonder you’re stressed out.”
- ✍️ They choose words and phrases that reflect emotional concepts their target reader may be experiencing: “hard to tell” (doubt), “larger challenge” (overwhelm), “incredibly fast” (uncertainty), “take its toll” (fatigue, stress), “highly stressful.”
- ✍️ They use plain language, like “hard to tell” and “take its toll.” Also, notice they use adverbs – those words that end in “-ly” and that [Stephen King advocates all writers banish](#). But the truth is, many people use adverbs when they **speak**, and that’s why it’s okay to use them when you’re writing conversational web content.
- ✍️ They tell a story – their readers’ story, to be precise: “It can be hard to tell when aging is affecting a family member, because small things can add up to a larger challenge incredibly fast.” Many people with aging parents experience this roller coaster of doubt, trying to figure out if the changes they’re seeing are significant or not – and what to do before the situation devolves into a crisis.
- ✍️ They establish their authority and compassion by using the phrase “we know” several times, almost like a kindly aunt patting you on the shoulder as she advises and reassures you everything is going to be all right.

Voice can be a challenging concept to grasp, let alone to consistently deploy across all of your content assets. For best success, you should spend some time deciding what you want your brand voice to express, and then codifying those attributes in a style guide. That way, every writer who creates content for you will be writing to the same guidelines and using the same voice.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, is shown from the chest up. She has her right hand pressed against her forehead, covering her eyes, and her left hand is held up in a flat, palm-forward gesture, similar to a 'stop' sign. The background is a dark blue gradient with a white geometric pattern of overlapping circles. The entire image is framed by a white border.

#6

Deadly Content Writing Sin #6:

All Selling, No Sharing

Deadly Content Writing Sin #6: All Selling, No Sharing

Up to now, I've talked about mistakes healthcare providers and businesses make on their web pages. But here's a mistake I see repeated often on blogs.

Your blog can be a great place to connect with your audience and build that rapport I've spoken about in order to drive conversions.

Blog content resides at the top of your marketing funnel, which means its goal is to raise awareness of your product or service and initiate a relationship with the prospective client. Basically, your target audience starts reading your blog to get to know you. You can extend that relationship to true connection by using your blog to convey valuable information instead of just selling, selling, selling.

Does this mean you're not allowed to promote your product or services on your blog? No, not at all. And I'll go into more detail in a moment.

But right now I want you to think about what the overall goal of your blog should be.

If you view your blog as merely an advertisement, you're missing a gargantuan opportunity.

For a moment, think of your blog as a person at a professional networking event looking to make connections. Many experts agree the most effective way to start off a professional relationship is by offering something of value to the other party before asking anything in return. You might say, “Hi, Ron. I see you’re in sales for XYZ infusion pumps. My contact Ellen at Bedford Falls Hospital was just telling me how frustrated their nurses are with their current pumps. Might I introduce the two of you?” Your generosity in offering something of value to Ron might pay off later, when Ron calls to invite you to talk about your business at the next lunch meeting of his civic organization.

Your blog can – and should – behave the same way. You can begin a relationship with your readers by offering them valuable, interesting content that doesn’t ask them (directly or otherwise) to spend money before they get to know you.

By taking this approach, you provide an incentive for readers to engage with your blog by subscribing.



When people subscribe to a blog, they are signaling their emerging brand loyalty – often before they have even begun to think about making a purchase.

While your blog may have many engagement goals – such as commenting and sharing – subscriptions should be a primary focus, and you can drive subscriptions by providing content that’s worth subscribing to.

To refine the concept of what “valuable information” consists of, let’s look at a few examples of blogs that miss the mark.

This one is nothing but a repository of news coverage about the medspa:



A blog should not be a media relations page.

This one is merely a place to promote their specials:

MED SPA > BLOG

SPRING INTO BEAUTY SALE

Springtime is back here at Med Spa! With pool season approaching, we know everyone wants to look their best. So if you're feeling self-conscious about unwanted body hair, skin blemishes, or other minor imperfections, allow our skin experts to ...

READ MORE

APRIL 18, 2019 | ANTI-AGING · BEAUTY · FACE & SKIN · MONTHLY SPECIALS · SPECIALS | 0 COMMENTS | BY MEDSPA

HOLIDAY FLASH SALE

The holiday season has arrived. So have the parties, shopping, family gatherings and the office cookie exchange. It's a wonderful time of year, but the stress, rich foods and long days can take their toll on your skin. With a ...

READ MORE

DECEMBER 17, 2018 | ANTI-AGING · BEAUTY · FACE & SKIN · MONTHLY SPECIALS · SPECIALS | 0 COMMENTS | BY MEDSPA

END OF SUMMER SPECIALS

It's that time of year again where we have to say goodbye to summer! So what better way to say goodbye until next year than with fresh, clean skin with our End of Summer Specials! Lets not just say goodbye ...

READ MORE

SEPTEMBER 26, 2018 | ANTI-AGING · BEAUTY · BODYSCULPTING · FACE & SKIN · MONTHLY SPECIALS · SPECIALS | 0 COMMENTS

Your blog should not be just an advertisement.

Would you sign up to subscribe to either of those? Would you visit those sites regularly to post comments and feedback on the posts? Pretty sure you would not. That's why both of these blogs fail. Each of them asks for something of value *from* the reader before offering anything of value *to* the reader. They've got the concept completely backwards.

To create blog posts that people want to subscribe to, you should think like a magazine editor.

What types of news and information would your target audience like to read in relation to the services you offer?

Since I'm using a medspa example for this section, let me give you some ideas that relate to skin care. Perhaps your blog readers would be interested in content like:

- How Much Water Do You Really Need to Drink to Keep Your Skin Well-Hydrated?
- Should You Worry About Sunscreen Chemicals Getting into Your Bloodstream?
- 5 Ways Busy Mothers Can Work Skin Care into Their Daily Routine
- Can Eating More Micronutrients Boost Skin Health?
- Which Foundation is Best for Your Skin Type?

To write these types of blog posts, put on your journalist hat.

Start with the who, what, when, where, why, how, and then add your personal commentary. After all, you're an expert in your niche, whether that's a medspa or home oxygen service company. And this is actually a bonus for professionals who blog: The real local journalists will reach out to you for your expert commentary on relevant news items, earning you great media exposure.

A second bonus of writing blog posts that offer valuable information? They're super easy to use on social media to promote further engagement: comments, blog subscriptions, calls for more information.

Does this mean a medspa's blog should avoid sales-y titles like, "How to Choose the Best Skin Peel for You"? Or that you should never run a post that consists of nothing but a listing of your monthly specials? Absolutely not. But those types of posts should be part of an editorial *mix* that also includes plenty of non-self-serving information.

It's not easy to build a blog editorial calendar like this that includes content people will subscribe to. But it's the single best way to build brand loyalty and authority, connect with readers, and drive conversions.

#7

Deadly Content Writing Sin #7:

No Call to Action



Deadly Content Writing Sin #7: No Call to Action

I've talked a lot about using content to connect with readers. If you put those tips into action, you'll discover readers do, in fact, want to take the next step and interact with your brand.

But many healthcare businesses fail to give readers a way to do that. They go to all the trouble to craft beautiful content that connects, but then they don't provide a way for readers to engage with them – aside, perhaps, from buying something. That's another missed opportunity, since, as I just noted in the chapter above, people can begin to develop loyalty to your brand long before they ever make a purchase.

Your content needs to provide multiple ways for readers to interact with your brand.

Every page of your website, every blog post, and every other digital content asset needs not one but multiple calls-to-action (CTAs). Here's a short list of how to do that:

- Buttons to “contact us,” “schedule an appointment,” get “more information” – you get the idea
- Text links that refer to other pages, blog posts, or content assets (white papers, ebooks, etc.)
- Forms for commenting on blog posts
- Social sharing links

- Demographic capture forms (like the one you filled out to download this ebook)
- Contact forms
- Email links in all types of communications that allow readers to “share your thoughts,” “voice your opinion,” “tell us what you think,” with just a mouse click.
- Phone or text numbers

Many brands think reader engagement occurs willy-nilly: Either someone decides to leave a comment on your blog post, or they don't. Either they choose to share your ebook on social media, or they don't. But that's not really true.

You need to prompt each reader to take a specific action, and you need to clearly spell out how to do it. You do that by writing exceptional CTAs.

In sentence form, a CTA can be as simple as: “Leave your comments below.” This CTA gets points for being very clear and specific, but it's not very sexy, is it? It doesn't really entice the reader to invest the time and effort in taking the specified action.

You should use your creativity to craft compelling CTAs. For a blog post, maybe you dare your readers to respond: “I'll bet you disagree with me on this. Go ahead and tell me why in the comments.” Or you appeal to their altruism: “We sincerely would like to hear your thoughts on this. Are we off base?” Or you might offer an incentive: “Tell us what you think. We'll round up your funniest comments in a future blog post – so be sure to drop your business URL in there too.”

Of course, CTAs take many forms. You should carefully craft each and every one.

- ✍ For buttons, use plain language and few words: “Free Consultation,” “Learn More,” “Download Now.”
- ✍ For phone numbers, label each type to avoid confusion: “Main office: xxx-xxx-xxxx,” “Ask-A-Nurse Line: xxx-xxx-xxxx.”
- ✍ For email forms, add some text to the box to prompt people to use it: “We read each and every comment submitted through this form,” “Email us now for a prompt response.”

By the way, if you’ve found this ebook valuable, please [share a link](#) to it on your social channels.

Remember how I wrote, way back in this ebook’s preface, that *to win at internet marketing today, your content has to appeal equally as much to human beings as to Googlebot*?

It’s true. If you followed the preceding tips to write content that connects, then your CTAs will move the buyer along his journey to the next step: engagement. After engagement? Much of the answer to that question lies with you. Your prospective client’s subsequent interactions with your brand will either drive him to become a valued client ... or will drive him away. Let’s hope you go beyond content marketing to create an excellent experience that converts this client for life.

Afterword

In writing this ebook, I naturally consulted a few experts to get their feedback on my efforts. All of them told me not to give this book away for free.

“You could spin this into a paid 10-week autoresponder course,” one said.

“I can see this as a series of webinars people would be happy to pay for,” said another.

Another said, “This is way too long for a lead magnet. You should offer something super brief, like a tip sheet.”

But I don’t believe in blindly following convention. In my business, I take a relationship-forward approach. Unlike a lot of freelance writers, I don’t aim to amass hundreds of one-off clients. Instead, I seek out clients with whom I can partner over the long term to drive ongoing results for their business. It’s a strategy that works, as evidenced by my years-long relationships with major brands like [Healthgrades](#).

So, as you can see, I decided to break with convention this time, too, and release this ebook for free. Why?

It’s simple: because I, personally, hate that feeling of being tricked into giving up my email address in exchange for a download that turns out to be of little to no value (and then being bombarded with dozens of high-pressure sales emails afterwards). I never want to treat people like that.

I feel it’s bad form to ask people to fork over their valuable contact information for nothing (or for cheap). I wanted to put my own principles into action by offering you something of *real* value – not just mediocre value, but great value – to make you feel comfortable in sharing your email address with me, a complete stranger. I certainly hope you found this ebook to represent a fair exchange.

And, in case you're wondering, now that I have your email address I will **not** be spamming your inbox with day upon day of autoresponder content. I don't believe in treating people like that. I'd rather say simply thank you for downloading this ebook, and I hope it helps you write better content for your business.

Of course, if you're too busy to craft exceptional content, or if you feel you just don't have the chops for it, I'm here to help. [Schedule a free consultation](#) any time or [message me on Facebook](#), and let's work on getting you the content you need to connect with more of your prospects and drive better business results.

Take care.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'B' being particularly large and stylized.

Elizabeth Hanes, RN
CEO

[Hanes Healthcare Communications](#)



Acknowledgments

No project like this comes together without the efforts of a creative team, and I'm pleased to recognize the others who contributed to making this ebook a reality.



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[Brielle Killip, Blue Linen Creative](#)

