

The 10 Rules of **STORYTELLING** IN HEALTH CARE

INSPIRED BY THE THE [22 RULES OF STORYTELLING FROM PIXAR](#), HERE ARE OUR GUIDELINES FOR MARKETERS BASED ON 30 YEARS OF CRAFTING ENGAGING AND EFFECTIVE STORIES FOR HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS.



1. BE AUTHENTIC. Bad things happen to good people. Those stories can be powerful illustrations of compassion that connect with your readers, donors and community. Connect with your readers' [basic human needs](#).

2. SHOWCASE WHAT YOUR AUDIENCE CARES ABOUT, NOT WHAT YOUR BOTTOM LINE CARES ABOUT. Your readers will not care how many slices your CT scanner has. Technology isn't the hero. Spotlight the people leveraging the tools to get your patients back to doing the things they love.

3. FIND THE UNDERLYING UNIVERSAL TRUTH. Shakespeare is Shakespeare because the root of his stories speak to everyone and therefore stand the test of time. What is it about your story that everyone can relate to? Did someone overcome fear? Did they finally take action to change their life, realize their dream, overcome suffering?

4. CONNECT THE INTERNAL DOTS. Most stories in your organization cross multiple service lines and departments. How can you highlight each of those in the story and lift up your organization as a whole? This builds trust internally and makes a better story for your reader.

5. BE A GOOD EDITOR AND PROOFREADER. No one will notice if there are no mistakes. Everyone will notice if there is one glaring error. If you don't have someone on your team who is trained, hire a good writer, editor, proofreader and/or fact-checker. In health care, [accuracy is vital](#).

6. TAKE [QUALITY] ORIGINAL PHOTOS. A picture is worth a thousand words. Capturing your story well visually [will go a long way](#). High-resolution photography lends credibility to an organization in a way that cell phone photos can't. If a photographer is not in your budget, invest in a good camera (like a DSLR) and lens and educate yourself on how to take good photos. A little investment goes a long way.

7. TELL IT, THEN TELL IT AGAIN. So you told this great story on your blog. Where else can you tell it? How do you repurpose it for social, print, direct mail, posters and more? Develop a distribution strategy with the story itself—and be sure to optimize for each specific channel.

8. DOCUMENT THE PLAN. If you have a content strategy in place both annually and granularly (per story), you will [have a leg to stand on](#) if and when other service

lines or systems within your organization ask why their specialty, technology, award and so on are not featured.

9. CREATE A CULTURE OF STORYTELLING. Encourage others in your health system to [share good stories](#) when they hear them. When others are excited about the power of storytelling, it makes your job easier.

10. PROVIDE A BENEFIT TO YOUR AUDIENCE. If you have to talk about your new robotic surgical system or award, talk about the benefit it will have on the community and the patients who visit your facility. Even better, tell the story of how a patient benefited from the technology or best practices that led to winning the award.

LET US HELP TELL YOUR STORY!

Contact CMO Jason Skinner at 423.305.7692 or jskinner@truenorthcustom.com to learn more about the strategic stories we're developing for organizations like yours.

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