



**MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT:
A Healthcare Marketer's Tool Kit**

In recent years, Medicare beneficiaries have had access to a smorgasbord of options — the greatest number of plans to choose from in a decade. And as their satisfaction ratings become increasingly weighted in the stars formula, it's more important than ever that you help your plan stand out from the rest. Before this year's AEP, take a long, hard look at where you're at — and what you can do to optimize your content program to do what content does best: build awareness, deepen trust, and drive conversions.



STAND OUT WHILE SIGNALING YOUR VALUE

With so many fish in the Medicare sea, it's essential that you position your brand as the best-in-class solution. How? By developing a strong and singular voice that conveys your value in no uncertain terms. Are you on track to do so? Let's do a little soul-searching and find out.

Do you have a clear point of view that your content team understands intimately and brings forward in every piece of content you produce?

Yes

No

• Can you characterize that point of view with three adjectives?

Yes

No

• What are the adjectives? (We'll wait.)

Why it matters: You can't establish a consistent and coherent voice if you can't pinpoint your brand's ethos, and without that strong voice, you are far more likely to fade into the vast field of competitors. If you can't describe your POV, you can't stick to it (and we're guessing your content team can't either).

Strength-train: Get your content team together and get aligned on what your voice is and what it sounds like in action. We're not talking a static printout that everyone skims. This should be an active, hands-on workshop so every member of your content team can recognize what is — and isn't — your brand voice at first blush, and they can bring that unique voice to life when crafting outreach.

Do you have an editorial calendar that clearly outlines your content strategy for the year ahead?

Yes

No

- Is that content strategy ruthlessly aligned with driving member value (empowering them to improve their health, demystifying health insurance, motivating them to activate and experience their plan and benefits, and so on)?

Yes

No

- How would you rate your team's ability to quickly create and distribute content when a crisis hits (like, say, a global pandemic)?

①

②

③

④

⑤

SLUDGE SPEED

SUPERCHARGED

Why it matters: Content that doesn't prioritize the needs of members is like launching a confetti cannon into the ocean. Cool but ... what's the point? A strategic editorial calendar ensures that your marketing investment (because that's what content is!) both educates and empowers members so they can actually take action. That's true even when there's no crisis lurking around the corner. But if you want to be a destination for your members in times both tranquil and terrifying, you must demonstrate that you're keepers of the information they need — and that you can nimbly generate authoritative, reliable content on a dime.

Strength-train: If getting new info out to members during the early days of COVID felt like a painful, frustrating slog, now is the time to build more agility into your process. What can you streamline without sacrificing rigor? What ad hoc systems would benefit from more infrastructure? And if updating your content hub is stymied by IT tickets and lengthy waits, does it make sense to license a healthcare-specific engagement platform, such as Linkwell's Healthy Living Engine, to make content creation and distribution seamless? (If so, [contact us!](#))

HOLD THEIR HAND ON THE MEDICARE JOURNEY

When members and prospects come to you, they don't want confusing jargon or empty bloviating about the value you provide. They want a simple but comprehensive road map that can get them through the complex Medicare landscape, and they want to understand how you plan to help, in plain speak. For those of us neck-deep in the ROI of MA AEP (acronym overload!), well, that's not always effortless.

Does your site have a guide to Medicare that's accessible without a member login?

Yes

No

• **Does your pre-login content explain Medicare's different plans in a way that a fifth-grader would understand? Would you bet \$100 on it?**

Yes

No

• **Do you have pre-login content that explains new plan benefits in greater detail for those who want to dig deep?**

Yes

No

Why it matters: When members and prospects come to you for a basic introduction, they're looking for a tone that's factual, not fancy. They're looking for a trusted authority who can decipher this complex system for those who find it confusing, no membership required. That's a surefire way to build trust.

GOAL 2

Strength-train: If you circled “no” for any of the questions above, you know your marching orders: Get thorough, digestible Medicare guides up on your site ASAP. And don’t assume that all potential members will want the exact same info. Offer tailored content, at different levels of detail and for different circumstances, so potential members feel you’re speaking directly to them, in language they understand. (If you don’t have an army of content pros ready to execute, let’s talk.)

Have you double-checked that all messaging around AEP is consistent across call center scripting, TV spots, radio ads, and direct response activities?

Yes

No

Do call center representatives have content examples at their fingertips to help answer questions from members and prospects or share via email follow-ups?

Yes

No

Why it matters: Even a hint of inconsistency in your messaging can call into doubt the trust you’re trying to cultivate with potential members.

Strength-train: While your marketing team might be obsessed with your site, remind them that your call center is likely to be a significant point of contact for many, if not most, of your members and prospects. Making sure call center reps can use existing content to underscore your message is essential. But have them take it one step further by crafting follow-up emails they can send and offering even more value (and another touch point) for would-be members.

DRIVE HOME THAT BRAND CONNECTION

If your members don't hear from you often enough, they lose the sense of connection — and, by extension, loyalty — that drives strong retention rates. It's incumbent upon you to remind them frequently why you're worth their time and dollars.

Do you send content-based, not just transactional, emails to members at least once a month that educates them about ways to maintain their health?

Yes

No

- **Do you have a social media hub (such as Facebook) where you can distribute your content organically and via a regular cadence?**

Yes

No

- **Is there someone on your team obsessing over metrics and making sure your content is responsive to what members want?**

Yes

No

Why it matters: If you pop onto members' radars only when AEP rolls around, you risk looking like you're just there to collect their fees rather than serve as the year-round partner in health they want you to be.

Strength-train: You already know content isn't just a box to check — it's a tool to be used, tracked, and refined. Scrutinize the cadence of how often you're communicating with members, and really dig into the metrics of click-throughs, time on site, and social engagement. Anything below industry benchmark should be a top priority to tweak.

GOAL 3

Do you do targeted content marketing to age-ins and special enrollment outside of AEP?

Yes

No

How often are you promoting special-enrollment content outside of AEP?



Why it matters: As Medicare comes into view for older adults, they want to be prepared. The right content lets them know you're there for them even before they know they need you.

Strength-train: If you have content specifically targeting age-ins, you're off to a great start. Now give that content a once-over to make sure it really hits the mark (no ageist stereotypes, no jargony mumbo jumbo, no generic yawn-inducing writing). Take a similar hard look at your content program for special enrollment. This content may be read by fewer readers than your open enrollment campaign, but the conversion potential is off the charts.



Linkwell Health, the premier consumer experience company serving healthcare and health services companies, creates engaging experiences for consumers that guide them to take actions to improve their health and well-being. Linkwell Health's Healthy Living Engine technology platform delivers world-class content experiences that drive industry-leading engagement, activations, and business results for the biggest brands in healthcare.

Linkwell's expertise with acquisition, onboarding, engagement, conversion, and retention is unparalleled in the healthcare industry, with its content reaching more than 55 million consumers each year. For more information, visit www.linkwellhealth.com.

Find out how Linkwell Health can give your brand a voice and accelerate your results.

Contact us at info@linkwellhealth.com