

Episode #5 transcript – Product Marketing for MedTech w/Marnie Hayutin

00:00:10

Michael: Welcome to the Health Connective Show. I'm your host, Michael Roberts, and I've got Ashley Hohensee, our marketing manager, with me today. Marnie Hayutin, the founder of Writing Health, is joining us again to talk about product marketing for MedTech. Marnie, welcome back. Thank you for joining us.

00:00:26

Marnie: Thank you. It's so nice to be here.

00:00:27

Michael: Absolutely. So if you've listened to our podcast before, you may remember that Marnie coming on our October 10th episode called Finding Your Content Sweet Spot, where we talked about finding the best brand voice for your company and approaching your content strategy with intention. If you missed it, we'll link that episode for you so that you can go back and take a listen. I definitely recommend you taking the time to do so. So Justin, most people aren't into privacy policies, writing them or reading them, and the reason is that they're usually too dense and too difficult to understand. And some of our client work, we were able to help out with revising and even simplifying a privacy policy. Can you speak some to that process? Very few people are excited about legalese.

00:01:11

Justin: Certainly most consumers aren't. But that doesn't mean that you don't have a responsibility to accurately represent what you do, how you track people, and making sure, especially that you're compliant with legal statutes throughout various regions. The way I view it is that we're supposed to be a good partner who is providing expertise everywhere and can guide on the technical front and understands how what we do fits into this broader picture, and how this language is not a bother. It's an essential part of our product succeeding. So yeah, I was excited to talk to a few people on the legal and privacy front about this. We stepped through kind of an initial template that they had that they were borrowing from somewhere else, and we went through it item by item and discussed how that would actually apply and whether it was applicable. So we walked through that and what we came up with for this one

application, it's being applied across other areas within that organization. Now it's become the new template.

00:02:14

Michael: Before we jump into today's topic, the reason that we've got three folks on the phone right now on the call is that I was talking to Ashley earlier this week and said, every time I get to talk to Marnie, it's like content education class, you know? And so we we get to just learn so much. So that's why I wanted to kind of bring all of, all of our content marketing nerds together, because we can all geek out together over the same topic. So today we're talking about product marketing specifically from med tech. And, you know, there's a lot of like very specific considerations that go into product marketing just as a discipline itself.

And then applying that specifically to MedTech, where you're in a much more regulated space, you can't play fast and loose with your language at all. You have to be very deliberate about how you're going through. Also, it's a very highly technical space, so you can very easily overwhelm people. So, Marnie, you're often walking MedTech companies through this process of how to share the features and benefits of a product without overwhelming people. Walk us through your process. What? How does that happen? How do you make that? Yes.

00:03:12

Marnie: Thank you. So the most complicated thing with product marketing is that obviously we're talking about features and benefits, and we're talking about our differentiators, and we want to jump in. And a lot of times people jump in in the middle and they forget their overall brand intro that says, this is what my thing does. So it's really important that the products and features be delivered in the right order because features build on each other. So what you have to ask yourself, and this is what I walk clients through, what do you need to know about your product to understand the next feature, so that we're layering it in the correct order so that people can understand one feature as we add it to the next?

00:03:54

Michael: We were just out at out at a Device Talks event. So it was very deep. And this was it was so funny because at one point I kind of looked around the room and realized that was mostly sitting with engineers. And so when you would hear them talk about what their device did, it was so dense, it was so technical. It was very much, you know, it was very appropriate for the audience that was there. I was just the poor marketer that didn't know what all they were talking about with some of those kinds of things. I think people do run into that, that problem. And whether you're an engineer or a marketer, it's still a trap that we fall into. And so, you

know, there are some resources that you sent. And actually, I'll kind of let you take it from here on, sort of how Mani kind of frames this up.

00:04:32

Ashl: The content look like at each stage of that. Thank you.

00:04:35

Marnie: So basically it's inverted. So the less a company knows about your product, the fewer features you're giving at a time. So the further down the funnel they get, the more they're interested in your product, the more features you give them. So don't know if that made sense, but it's inverted to the funnel. So as the funnel goes down, the features get bigger. I developed this this came about after a HIMSS. What happened was we had a major project product launch and we were all ready for this product launch. We were very excited. We had gotten. Great press about it. We had our one sheets. Everybody was ready.

And what I observed in the booth was we had the sales team there excited somebody would come into the booth. Hey, what are you guys do? And the answer was, we have this new scheduling model. So I realized what a disconnect we had in terms of our readiness to talk and their readiness to listen. And so that's I needed a visual to explain to them, like, this is where your customer is at this stage and this is what they can understand. And so we went sort of down from there and kind of made four stages that match up with the four stages of the marketing funnel.

00:05:48

Michael: When I'm walking through a trade show floor, I am very opposite from my boss, my boss, Scott Zeitzer. He's the guy that wants to go and talk to every single person in every single booth. I've got this like, make no eye contact kind of rule where I'm just trying to get down the aisle and I want to see what's there, but I don't want to be hassled. And there's always such a cognitive load that you have to go through before you engage any of them, because they all sell something complicated.

It's not just like notebooks or, you know, something like really like very obvious. Like you have to get in, you have to understand the pitch, you have to walk through it. So it's a good five minute conversation before you can realize, like, am I even talking to the right person at all? So this concept of like starting much, much higher is so necessary. And I don't see many brands. Maybe this is maybe this is an overgeneralization, but I don't feel like I see many brands doing this.

Well, you know, I guess like what are your thoughts in terms of like tradeshow or trade show floors and how people are hitting on this in terms of like overwhelm?

00:06:46

Marnie: I think it's a huge, a huge issue. I think in general, the trade show conversation is way at the top. So it's basically the hey, what you guys do, and that's your booth messaging and your website copy and your brochures. That's your sort of intro copy. So what you need, the ones that do it the best are the ones that have a table or another place for their senior management to have those deeper conversations. But you're vetting those quick ones with your, you know, front line sales team that is prepared to just answer the basic this is what we do, and this is why it's important.

00:07:20

Michael: As we're kind of comparing back and forth. So that awareness stage is that very thin point of your pyramid there, the top part of your pyramid. And then you've got like booth messaging also sort of in that interest layer. So really you're kind of like that second layer down is where you're really kind of starting to dig in on the booths, then sort of like how do you advise people beyond that? Like you've gotten them past the booth in some fashion? What do you recommend from there?

00:07:43

Marnie: So in my mind, I think the next question after what you guys do, the next question is kind of like, do we need your product? So that's when you're starting to answer. This is mid funnel white papers case studies one sheets. It's hard to explain in more detail. That's kind of next. And then after that is okay I think I do need it. Can your product do this. And that's when you have you know the real best practices. And you're really getting into the details of what you can accomplish. So keeping in mind sort of what that overarching question probably is in the interest stage and the evaluation stage, that's where you can kind of answer that question with the detail in your assets.

00:08:22

Ashley: So kind of as you're advising customers, your customers through this kind of process, do you have any do's and don'ts for creating that? I'm sure you've seen some good examples I do.

00:08:34

Marnie: So don't forget to say this is what my widget does. And honestly, you have to put that in all the stages. So even though you're down in, you know, later, don't forget at some point to anchor us with this is what our product does. If you think of a press release, press releases do those very well. They make their announcement. But the second sentence is always such and such company makes this kind of product. So you've always got to have that in there somewhere. Don't forget it and lose it entirely.

One of my favorite do's is when creating assets for later in the funnel. You can repurpose the same thing by making some additions to the content. So let's say you have an early funnel big audience, big net audience, white paper or e-book that's just talking about a concept. You can turn it into a late stage asset by adding in a sidebar that says, these are the features you should look for. So you've got thought leadership on the front end, but now you've got another version that's got the features and benefits added in, just tacked in as a sidebar in each of those sections. And now you've got a piece that's top funnel and end the funnel.

00:09:44

Michael: Yeah. So many times I just see everybody try to accomplish all the things, every single opportunity they get. So did I get you to download it at all here by us, by our thing, by buy it now. Buy it now. And I feel like especially right now, I don't think there was any point in our history where I was like, geez, I really hope I get more sales material. But you know, throughout the like, as aggressive as people are becoming. Again with outreach, that that softer touch is just so necessary right now, because I know that what I again, what I think about like when working with salespeople, they're always looking for that opportunity to close and for good reason. Like that's their livelihood. And it's how companies keep rolling and all of that kind of stuff. But how do you advise them to have that finesse, to not try to go for the kill every single time that they get a chance to talk to somebody?

00:10:35

Marnie: It's hard to do. It takes a special kind of it's almost empathy, you know, really understanding where if you think about it from the perspective of your customer, if you put yourself in their shoes and try to understand what they're ready to hear. So it's really not about finding an opportunity to say what you want to say, but really understanding what they're ready to hear. And then it doesn't become a how can I throw more stuff in it? It becomes, how can I answer the question that you have right now?

00:11:00

Michael: Yeah, I love the way that you visualize information. And again, for listeners, we're not teasing you. There will be links to these things, these resources where you can actually see them as well as what we're talking about. But you do such a great job at visualizing content and kind of pulling these ideas together. So marketing funnels on one side. People are kind of moving down this process. Ideally, you know, even people bounce between stages and all of that fun stuff, but they're ideally moving down towards the sale. We're getting more in-depth with what we're telling them, kind of revealing more about why they should make this decision. Here's this visual, and I love it.

Now, how do you map that against the varying personas that you're dealing with? You know, how do you kind of combine like, okay, I'll take our company just because I've been doing a lot of work on this particular idea. You know, we deal a lot with sort of product marketer directors to managers at MedTech companies. So you get your product marketers and then you have your R&D managers or R&D directors who are thinking holistically about the problem that you're trying to solve. Vastly different audiences, you know, vastly different needs, different cares, concerns, interests, all that fun kind of stuff. So how do you kind of combine personas and funnel and pyramid and all of the many things in one kind of concept, I guess.

00:12:15

Marnie: Yeah, I think that's a version of the same thing where we're taking an asset and we're adding in the features and benefits to make it a late stage. Think you can do that with personas too? So you can have some you can take your content and adjust it for personas and kind of do the same. You could have the whole marketing funnel and the message pyramid for each persona. You could be thinking, if you can create that much content, you can have a set of it for each, but you could cross purpose them by adding in sections. And a lot of times ebooks and things are easiest to digest anyway when they're in sections, so it's becomes easy to take sections in and out, add sidebars in and out. To change it a little bit. Change your focus. It doesn't have to be a brand new piece of content just because now we're talking to a different.

00:13:02

Michael: That's a really good point. It's a really good point because that's something that we, you know, we are always trying to figure out. And, you know, same with you actually in terms of like working with different types of physicians, working with office administrators versus working with physicians, you know, with the P3 brand that we have same kinds of challenges to face. How has that kind of played out? I'm going to turn the table to you here for just a second, actually, as you're kind of like, how do you see this kind of playing out in how you're reaching out to marketers and to physicians and to all the different folks that you have to try to reach out to?

00:13:32

Ashley: Yeah. No, I think that repurposing point is really smart. It is something that we have done, you know, just speaking to different specialties, right, because each specialty has different things that they're talking about. So we've definitely before taken the same e-book content and kind of adapted it to different specialties. And then we also kind of we do a similar thing where we're reaching out to like an office manager versus a physician type of audience. So we'll, you know, we'll start with the same base content. But a lot of times, like our newsletters and stuff, we do that kind of thing where we tailor it a little bit.

00:14:05

Michael: Thinking through this process, you focus a lot on the content creation itself, on telling the story in a way that that makes sense all the way through this process. What are ways that, I guess you see companies really do a good job of differentiating when people access this content, you know, like, hey, you talked about the e-book example earlier up in your pyramid and your funnel where they're getting sort of like, here's the thought leadership piece of it. But then later on they're getting that with sort of the mapped out to why you should buy. How are companies delivering that in a way that makes sense. So like, let's say I'm totally with you. I've written all the things. Now what do I do with them? What's that step?

00:14:44

Marnie: One of the things that I've seen done very, very well is some of that later stage content is handed out personally by the sales team and even the CEO. So often I've seen the CEO get excited about sort of a mid-funnel piece and send it out to a prospect in advance of a meeting. So I find that certainly the typical gated ebooks and things like. That for top of funnel content is great. Sometimes the addition of the personal touch is better for those lower stage assets, and it really helps with the sale because a lot of times the salesperson is kind of at a loss. They need an opportunity to reach out again, and those kinds of assets are excellent for that.

00:15:28

Michael: One of the ways that Scott's referred to this a lot is having something else in the bag, you know, like very old school, like coming in with your like bag of things to sell and being like, oh, well, this time I have something just to give you and I don't have to sell it to you this time.

00:15:42

Marnie: We made something once called a closure kit that basically was just new content. Like it wasn't it wasn't sales materials. It was very end stage content that they could send out personally. And it worked very.

00:15:53

Michael: That's really interesting. That mesh between like what marketing is trying to do and what sales is trying to do. You can't always come back with the okay, did you make a decision yet? You know, that email just over and over and over because and especially these very big, very complicated products, they likely have very high price tags. And so they're going to need a lot of people to all buy into this. So having something else that kind of says like, yeah. And reinforces the whole pitch and all that kind of stuff, that's a fantastic idea.

00:16:22

Ashley: So you do you do a lot of like e-books and that kind, you know, white papers, that kind of thing. Is there ever any kind of like, do they ever do any kind of blogging or anything like that?

00:16:32

Marnie: So the blogging people are doing a little less blogging, but those end up just sort of being thought leadership, you know, the perspective of the CEO, the kind of thing they want to say. I will say one thing that I'm doing a lot of is messaging. We talked about messaging last time. I'm doing a lot of messaging and helping, particularly the leadership, understand sort of how to talk about this. And one example that I've used a lot with them that seems to resonate is this sort of idea.

When you're talking about features and benefits, it's kind of like you're in a car dealership and or something. You're you have somebody talk to you about a product and they want to tell you about their air conditioning. They want to tell you about their lighted dashboards. They want to tell you about their beautiful leather. And you're like, are you a bus? Are you a car like. And they can't even process the features and benefits because they're busy trying to figure out, like, are you a car?

Like, I'm trying to wrap my head around what this is. And with tech, it's like, are you a portal? Are you a they'll say something kind of ambiguous, like, as a benefit, we are a care collaboration platform that reduces physician burnout. And again, you're like, okay, are you communication?

Are you a portal? Are you a data platform? Like we're really not sure. So it's extra. Don't forget to tell him you're a car. Like really seems to resonate with. Yeah.

00:17:46

Ashley: It's always like, you know we're an experience but like what is. That's a that's an overused one to like what is the experience. That could be anything.

00:17:55

Marnie: Or the old faithful. Everybody says we improve patient care.

00:17:57

Michael: One of the things that you threw out there was sort of like the gated material. And there's always I feel like there's a debate on this, like on an ongoing basis in terms of like the value of gated material versus having it sort of wide open as people are asking you about this, or maybe as you're advising companies on sort of how to get information out there. What are your thoughts about gating material early on? Is there a certain type of resource where you say, like, this should always be gated. This should be gated, like what are your thoughts on that?

00:18:26

Marnie: That's an interesting one. So I've heard people say that case studies should never be gated. A lot of people think that that's something that we should just make those available to everybody. I do find in general, gated content is good. I prefer to gate not the stuff that really talks about the company, but the stuff that's real thought leadership.

So I find that if they're if they're giving over their name and contact information, it should be a really valuable piece on how to make a big change or an improvement, something that's very well researched and actually less about your product. So I don't think they really want to give over their contact information to get your sales brochure, but they would if you had a, you know, patient navigation report or something, that would be a real source of new learning and education for them.

00:19:16

Michael: I wish I could remember the source off the top of my head, but I just saw something on LinkedIn, I think this week that was talking about the reluctance that B2B marketers have to gate content because they fear that consumers are going to hate it so much versus what B2B consumers actually think. And it was much more in favor of like, yes, I'll give my information if this is relevant to what I do, and this is helpful to what I do, sure, I'll give it, but I think I know I've been gun shy about gating content, and I think that. Do you see that as a trend? Like are people more scared to gate content? Some of the reasons I've seen is just like one you're turning off people to. It's better for SEO, like all of the different things that people will use as arguments towards them. You know, I don't.

00:20:01

Marnie: Know if I'm seeing more or less of it. I know that people are definitely still trying to grow their mailing list, so I think they're getting. Creative about how to do that. I think gated content is still part of the mix. Maybe if people were reticent, they'd have a little less. But again, it's finding that content that is special. And then in a way, the more special it is, the more the team feels good about getting it, because, hey, this is really quality content.

00:20:28

Michael: So something I'm thinking about now, we talked a little bit about, you know, content last time around. And one of the things that we have done in the past is that we would have something like, here are relevant events, you know, that you should attend. And we'd have like a sort of an updated list on our website, and it still performs relatively decently. I think that type of content is kind of decreasing in value, as there are more and more like search engines are getting better at kind of spitting out that information on behalf of the searcher.

I think AI tools are going to be able to start doing that kind of stuff more natively and won't need these kinds of lists, you know, the listicles and all that kind of stuff that that people use to use all the time, I guess, like you're talking about, hey, there's specialized content that's going to stand out. How do you compare that sort of specialized content versus things like the listicles, the SEO kinds of things that used to be kind of the way that you kind of prop up your overall traffic to hopefully get you some sort of attention.

00:21:26

Marnie: It's tough because it's definitely those catchy headlines still draw people. So I think it becomes you have to do both. I think it becomes important for us to ratchet up the quality. So the listicles, they're still good, but the more that we can create really different content that

nobody else is putting out there, that's going to really make a difference. And that's what you should get.

00:21:50

Michael: Mark Schaefer, who's marketer that I look up to a lot, is definitely, you know, talked a lot about things like so much of the playbook is dead to small marketers, you know, to small companies that don't have major, major resources to behind it and this kind of stuff that really stands out and can only be unique to your business, I think, is the way that so many of us have to shift at this point. I could keep on quizzing you on just random things that I'm thinking about and struggles that I'm dealing with for content marketing, I guess. Are there any more sort of tips or advice that you would give people around, sort of their kind of their marketing message structure, this, this funnel versus pyramid?

00:22:28

Marnie: I think in general, it's just making sure it's making sure everything's in the right order that it's so important to switch places with your customer, understand what it takes to understand your product. Go back to the drawing board. Remember when this was all new to you and put it in the order? That makes sense so that you understand as we add, what is it that I have to know about the last thing to understand? The next thing very.

00:22:56

Michael: Well said, very well said. So just to kind of a recap for everybody, we had the chance to kind of go through quite a quite a few topics here. But you know, we definitely talked about, you know, how med tech companies can discuss features and benefits without overwhelming people. We've got Marnie's message pyramid. I want to put like a trademark there. You know something cool. But Marnie's message pyramid for content, for creating content at each funnel stage. And then sort of the do's and don'ts of product marketing content. Marnie, thank you so much as always, so very educational to have you on here. Thank you to our listeners for joining us for this episode. You know, for more on the Health Connected Show, please visit HC.show for previous episodes and Health Connective as a company.