Innovative Ideation: 3 Must-Ask Questions for Healthcare Marketers

This whitepaper is dedicated to providing healthcare marketers new ways of thinking about their digital tactics.

This whitepaper includes ideation techniques for innovative healthcare marketing such as:

✓ Reducing friction in products or services
✓ Marrying content and context
✓ Leveraging technology to enhance the story
Healthcare marketing has never been more complicated

Times are tough for healthcare marketers. Just as we think we’re getting our heads around Facebook and Twitter, we find out Snapchat’s daily video views have exceeded 10 billion.

That’s with a “b”.

Brand marketers are struggling with the growing number of channels, platforms, targeting and re-targeting options available. And with all the confusion, it can be tempting to fall back on the usual excuses when it comes to innovation, namely, the legal environments we have to work within. There’s a sense that “innovation” entails massive operational changes with huge legal hurdles – but that’s not really the case.

Innovation doesn’t need to be a life-changing, paradigm-shifting idea. We believe the more successful approach to innovation is a series of incremental improvements – slow, steady and never-ending.

Asking the right questions can help you generate innovative ideas and bring those ideas to life – even in the healthcare space.

Innovative ideation: 3 questions you need to ask

As we all know, sometimes ideas flow like a river, and sometimes... well, it can be closer to molasses. Asking yourself the following questions can help get the ideation juices flowing.
1. How can we reduce friction?

“Where is there friction in this workflow, or in my customers’ relationship with my product – and how can I reduce that friction?”

Here is a recent example from the consumer world:

The friction:
Think about the process of taking a cab. The whole point of getting a cab was to be conveniently transported to your destination – and yet the process was absolutely wrought with uncertainty and anxiety from start to finish. You never knew when your cab would actually arrive or how much a trip would cost.

The idea:
Here’s the obligatory Uber reference. Uber has managed to remove nearly all of the friction in the entire cab process by giving users the following information: how much your trip will cost before you book it, where your Uber driver is, how long you have until it arrives and the route you should be taking.

The best part? You don’t have to deal with any physical payments or tip calculations at the end of your ride. Your fare is conveniently auto-calculated and auto-charged to your credit card.

Using the technology that was already in everyone’s pocket, Uber removed almost all of the friction, and frustration, from calling a cab.
Here is an example that shows how it works in healthcare:

The friction:
One of our clients has an injectable therapy product for a chronic condition. It’s a highly complicated therapy process due to the following challenges:

- It can require up to almost 40 injections per treatment.
- It requires medical skill and expertise from physicians – but also a bit of artistry.
- It is essential that the injections be administered consistently during each treatment cycle.

As you can imagine, these types of challenges provide some pretty obvious points of friction. Physicians new to the approach found it difficult to locate all the injection points, and even experienced physicians found tracking injection sites and dosing per injection site challenging (given many visits are spaced more than 6 months apart).

There was a lot of room for error throughout the entire process.

The idea:
Looking at these challenges through a friction-reduction lens, we came up with the idea of creating an injection-tracking app.

By using extremely detailed medical illustrations and leveraging the iPad camera for actual patient photos, we reduced uncertainty by taking tracking and patient charting to a whole new level. As a result:

- HCPs were able to chart a very complex procedure very simply.
- HCP confidence was increased for injectors of all experience and skill levels.
- HCPs were able to inject more accurately with the help of the app from one treatment to the next.
- Patient outcomes were improved, thanks to better consistency from one treatment to the next.

By identifying the friction, we were able to innovate.
2. How can we tailor our content for the context?

“Where and how are audiences consuming my content?”

Here is a recent example from the consumer world:

The context:
Consider mobile search for a moment; searching for a local restaurant, specifically. The process isn’t exactly intuitive is it?

First, you have to enter a food type into a small browser window. After toggling through a few different sites and listings, you find a place that looks appealing. So it’s back to search – but this time using Google Maps to find out where the restaurant is located. Once the restaurant location comes up, you’re then forced to hold your phone parallel to the ground to orient the map so you can see where you need to go.

See what we’re getting at? Throughout this entire process, users are forced to adjust their behaviours to meet the needs of the content, rather than having the content adjust to suit their needs.

The idea:
Yelp, the food-rating app, takes mobile restaurant search content a step further than the rest.

Their search results automatically include a map in the results window on mobile devices. Even better, their Monocle feature uses augmented reality to layer restaurant locations on the camera feed from your phone. No more looking down at your map and then up at the world. With Monocle view, the map content conforms to each user’s unique mobile context for a truly intimate user experience.
Here is an example that shows how it works in healthcare:

The context:
So how does something like the Yelp app apply to your tactics? Well, location tracking is usually a great place to start. Between IP addresses and GPS, you should be able to have a pretty good idea of where your customers are consuming your content – and where the sales force is presenting it.

The idea:
Are you tailoring your messaging to suit the nuances of different regions? Medical sales, insurance coverage, regulations and attitudes change from city to city. How are you serving up the most accurate and appropriate information based on what you know about the region?

At Brightworks, we’ve created various successful dynamic sales tools simply by sitting with the client and asking “how would this message change if we knew exactly where it was being presented?”.

The data already exists, so why not put it to work?
3. How can we leverage technology to enhance the story?

“How can I use technology to communicate the story to audiences in a more meaningful way?”

Here is a recent example in the consumer world:

The story:
This example is a few years old, but we love it for its storytelling simplicity. To build awareness about the breadth of its service to global destinations, British Airways (BA) wanted to recreate the feeling of magic one has as a child when experiencing flight.

The idea:
To accomplish this, they leveraged existing flight data and built custom technology to create a dynamic digital billboard.

Whenever a BA plane flew into the billboard’s trigger zone, that flight’s live data was captured by a custom-built application that communicated with the billboard. Existing billboard content was then interrupted by a BA ad featuring a playful child running across the screen and pointing towards the sky, naming the passing plane’s information. Magic, indeed.
Here is an example that shows how it works in healthcare:

The story:
We were working with a client that wanted to support patients with a specific dermatological condition. The challenge with this specific condition is that sufferers were prone to skin flare-ups – a symptom they felt was unavoidable. Clinical studies, however, showed that weather was a significant causal factor.

The idea:
To help support patients and increase awareness about the relationship between weather and skin flare-ups, we created an app.

The app combined geo-location technology with the Weather Network API and filtered the local weather results through a matrix – creating the first-ever predictive tool for these patients. By simply opening an app, they were given a flare-up alert level for their specific location and were provided with helpful tips for avoiding flare-ups – a combination of technology and science that felt a little magical itself!

Remember, storytelling is all about making an emotional connection.
In summary

If you want to be innovative, you need to start putting your ideas to the test. Look for opportunities to:

- **Reduce the friction** – Seek ways to directly reduce the barriers to your brand operating smoothly in the lives of your customers.
- **Marry content and context** – Put your brand’s benefit directly in the path of your customers’ day-to-day lives.
- **Enhance the story** – Amplify your brand’s story precisely at the point of your customers’ greatest challenges.

We hope this has been a helpful read. As you can probably tell, we’re passionate about great user experiences and helping our clients get the most out of their agency.

If you’d like to learn more about what we do, please don’t hesitate to reach out. We always love meeting new people!

**Want to learn more?**  **Contact Neil.**

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