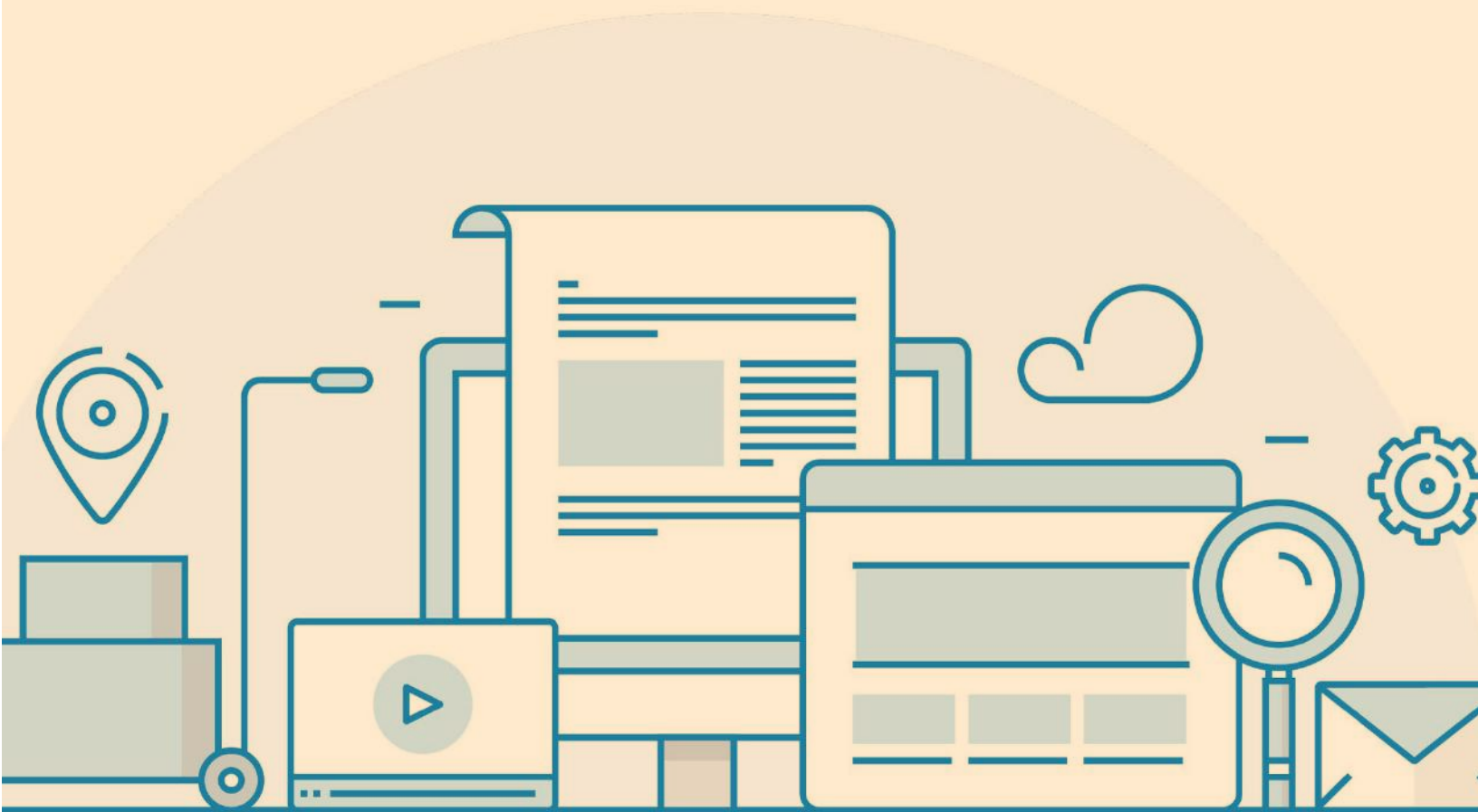




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# Why Addiction Facilities Need to Focus on Content Marketing



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# Addiction epidemic

The addiction epidemic in the United States has become one of the worst public health crises the country has ever experienced.

**A report** from the U.S. Surgeon General estimates that one out of every seven people will face a substance abuse issue in their lifetime – which has inevitably caused a rapid expansion in the rehab facility industry.

Unfortunately, a survey conducted by the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** found that as many as 90 percent of people who most need drug rehab do not receive it. Among people who do receive treatment for addiction, between **40 and 60 percent of people with addictions recover**.

When individuals or their loved ones need help, the Internet is typically the first place they turn to for information and Google is the largest referral for addiction treatment. Treatment facilities play an important role in the public health effort against the addiction crisis, so the information available about them must be accessible and reliable.

New ad restrictions from Google have placed increased pressure on addiction treatment facilities to diversify their advertising efforts.

**To that end, content marketing is a cost-conscious, effective means of promoting a business while communicating essential information.**

# Problem definition

Treatment marketing in the addiction space is a sensitive and complex subject, and Google has said certain players in the market have been providing misleading information via their advertising practices. Many people suffering from addiction have been seeing advertisements for facilities that were unable to meet their needs or even put their lives in jeopardy. This is both counterproductive and unethical toward people with addiction, Google claims.

In response, in September 2017 Google began restricting the advertisements that appear when somebody searches for addiction treatment. "We found a number of misleading experiences among rehabilitation treatment centers that led to our decision," Google spokeswoman Elisa Greene said in a statement to *The New York Times*.

Google Adwords, a popular marketing tool for businesses of all industries, can be particularly important for business owners with small advertising budgets. Many rehabilitation facilities rely on such advertising campaigns to make sure information about their services can reach patients all over the country. **A study** conducted by media analysis firm Kantar Media that analyzed searches between August 2016 and July 2017 revealed that alcohol, drug, and smoking addiction keywords accounted for \$35.2 million in paid search ad spending during that time.

In the wake of these advertising rule changes, addiction and rehabilitation facilities have seen fewer impressions on their sites, which is directly associated with revenue potential. Since ad space related to searches like "drug rehab" or "alcohol treatment centers" is no longer available, addiction treatment facilities must find other ways to promote visibility on search engines.

**Given the changes, content marketing should be the preferred method of marketing for addiction treatment facilities.**

# High-level solution

Google's stated reason for restricting the number of ads tied to drug rehab keywords is that the practice can be misleading for addicts or their loved ones.

## Content marketing, on the other hand, is transparent.

Content marketing is an advertising strategy that employs online content such as blogs, videos, and infographics to reach a specific target audience, drive steady traffic, and convert non-clients into clients.

Content topics can and should cover a wide variety of subject areas, including former client testimonials, explanations of treatment modalities and medications, prevention strategies to avoid relapse, or any other topic that touches on issues relevant to a client's journey from addiction to sobriety.

Addiction treatment centers can produce content that promotes their treatment philosophy, methodology, medical staff, facilities, and other important features, all of which can inform prospective clients or their loved ones about what exactly they can expect from the treatment program. Doing so is important because it reinforces feelings of trust and comfort.

Content that attracts and engages visitors can ultimately affect placement in search results. Timely health content can brand facilities as an "authority," which can build brand reputation. More content on a website means more reasons for people to visit a page regularly. Every page added goes into Google's page index, which can increase the likelihood of visibility.



## Solution details

**Creating a viable and successful content marketing strategy can be a smooth process. Ways to get on the right path when it comes to content marketing include:**

### Understanding the audience.

It is important for addiction treatment facilities to take into account the headspace of the individuals searching for rehab services. The tone should be compassionate, yet informed and authoritative.

### Putting together a standout content team.

Content marketing pieces should ideally be developed by an expert in the subject matter with exceptional writing skills. If that person does not exist in-house or no one has the time to dedicate to a new responsibility, there are many ways to contract an outside writer to create accurate and clean copy for you.

### Conducting frequent research.

It is important to stay up-to-date on the latest treatment modalities and studies in order to provide prospective clients with timely, reliable information. Timely posts can encourage real conversations through comments, which has a compounding effect on site traffic.

### Pursuing a variety of ideas.

Content marketing should not be a simple regurgitation of the services offered at the treatment facility. Evergreen content about addiction in general, family dynamics, sober living, and major information areas all have a place on a facility's website.

### Matching ideas with the appropriate sharing medium.

Some pieces of content may do well on Facebook, while others may have more reach on Instagram. Consider the intended audience for the content itself.

For example, if the post is geared toward support for loved ones, Facebook may be the best medium, as it tends to draw an older crowd. Content is not limited to just words – photos, videos, and infographics should all be incorporated as often as possible to draw the eye.

# Business benefits

**Beyond helping people get the right information for pursuing treatment, there are several other benefits associated with content marketing.**

The primary cost for content marketing is time – making it one of the most affordable ways to attract new leads for addiction treatment centers. Once the content is written, it can be placed on the facility's website at no additional cost, and it can continue to serve as evergreen advertising when leveraged on social media accounts.

Content marketing can also start a relationship with a prospective client or their loved one. Relationships are essential in rehabilitation to help people feel comfortable with staff and know that they are ethical, caring, and supportive.

## Summary

Substance abuse professionals must balance the need to combat stigmatization of addiction issues while staying competitive in the addiction treatment market. Content marketing serves as an excellent opportunity to control the narrative of addiction treatment and contribute to ongoing education for potential clients and their loved ones.

**Kick-starting an effective content marketing strategy is not a long or difficult process. Written pieces can pay short- and long-term dividends.**