

Social Media Best Practices in Health Communication

Presenter: Rebecca L. Cooney

Rebecca L. Cooney

- Educator
- Leader of integrated marketing communication strategy
- Specialist in multimodal curriculum development



INTRODUCTION

Your Goal: Empower Teams to Execute with Confidence

THE LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE

You are busy leaders on long-term care.

You do not need to be the one writing daily posts to be a strategic leader

Your job is to provide the vision, boundaries, and professional tools

Takeaways from Today's Session:

- ✓ **A 6-Step Strategy Framework:** Align daily social media efforts directly with high-level organizational goals.
- ✓ **The Digital Dignity Principle:** Cultivate family trust, respect resident privacy, and eliminate clinical coldness.
- ✓ **The Campaign Planning Template:** A concrete, downloadable, ready-to-use worksheet to pass directly to your marketing team.



PART ONE

The Social Media Strategy Framework

CONTEXT

Where are Families Looking? Healthcare Social Media by the Numbers

84% — Families In Search

of patients and their family caregivers utilize social media specifically to seek health information and research long-term care alternatives.

71% — Reputation is Essential

of prospective families state that a vibrant social media presence and online reviews are critical, deciding factors when choosing a care provider.

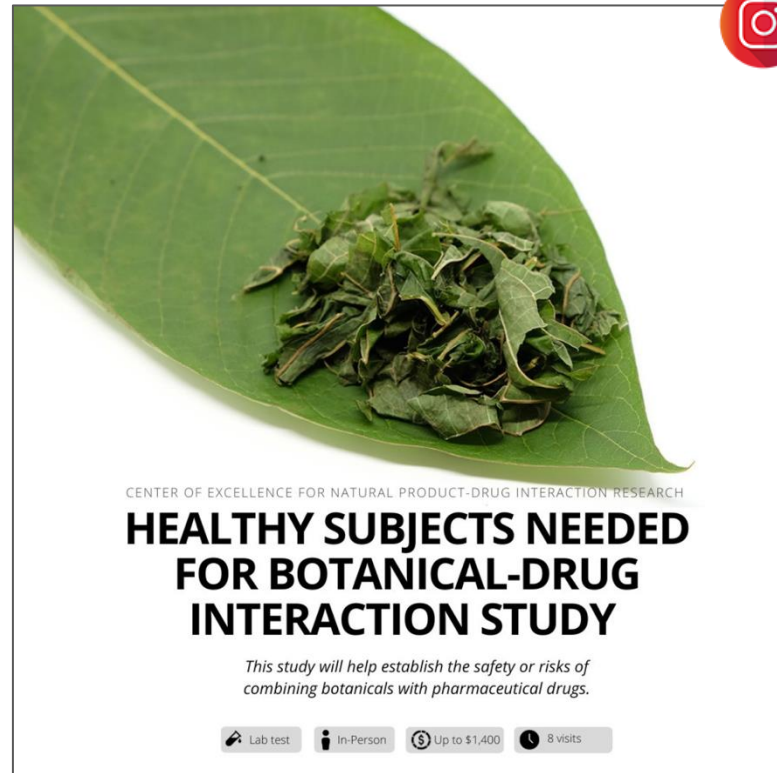
92% — Market Dominance

of top healthcare and senior care organizations are actively leveraging social media networks for community outreach and patient education.

41% — The Digital Journey Begins

of families begin their senior care research journey online, emphasizing that a weak digital presence means your facility is functionally invisible.

SOCIAL MEDIA STYLE GUIDE



napdicenter Researchers at WSU Spokane are seeking healthy males and females for a study that will help establish the safety or risks of combining botanicals with pharmaceutical drugs. Eligibility requirements include: healthy adults, ages 21-45 who weigh between 130-250lbs, and have a body mass index between 19 and 30. All subjects must participate in 8 visits to our offices in Spokane, WA and commit to ~1 hour for 4 of the visits and ~12 hours for the other 4 visits. Participants will receive up to \$1,400 for completing the study.

Learn more at herbstudy.org #kratom #naturalproducts #naturalproductresearch #botanicals #linkinbio



[View Style Guide](#)



napdi.org / @NaPDIcenter



Center of Excellence for Natural Product-Drug Interaction Research

Published by [Rebecca Cooney](#) · July 26 ·

Researchers at [WSU Spokane](#) are seeking healthy males and females for a study that will help establish the safety or risks of combining botanicals with pharmaceutical drugs. Eligibility requirements include: healthy adults, ages 21-45 who weigh between 130-250lbs, and have a body mass index between 19 and 30. All subjects must participate in 8 visits to our offices in Spokane, WA and commit to ~1 hour for 4 of the visits and ~12 hours for the other 4 visits. Participants will receive up to \$1,400 for completing the study. Learn more at herbstudy.org. View poster at <https://drive.google.com/.../10SyxDxmIK0kOsToG4Ns.../view...>



[See insights](#)

Like

Comment

Share



Write a comment...





STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Roadmap: Sculpt's 6-Step Strategy Framework

A complete, cyclical process for digital success. We focus on the first 3 foundational steps today.

1. SET GOALS

What does strategic success actually look like?

2. ESTABLISH AUDIENCE

Who are your Most Valuable Personas (MVPs)?

3. SELECT PLATFORMS

Where does your target audience spend time?

4. DESIGN CONTENT

How do you craft messages with dignity?

5. AMPLIFY

How do you expand organic and paid reach?

6. PLAN EXECUTION

What tasks happen daily, weekly, and monthly?

STEP 1: SET GOALS

Step 1: Focus Goals on Strategic Outcomes, Not Just Activity

Grounded Goal-Setting Principles

- **Outcome over Activity:** Success is not just 'posting 3 times a week' (activity). Success is driving tour inquiries or job applications (outcomes).
- **Keep it SMART:** Ensure goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.
- **Ladder up to Mission:** Align your social media KPIs directly with your facility's operational challenges (e.g., nurse recruitment, census growth).

[X] ACTIVITY-DRIVEN GOAL

'Our goal is to post recruitment flyers and pictures of our facility once a week on Facebook and Instagram to show we are active.'

✓ OUTCOME-BASED SMART GOAL

'Generate 5 inbound nursing job applications per month by sharing weekly short-form nurse video testimonials showing our flexible scheduling on Facebook.'

STEP 2: ESTABLISH AUDIENCE

Step 2: Build Empathy Around Your Most Valuable Personas

REPRESENTATIVE PERSONA PROFILE

Molly | Caring Daughter & Stakeholder

Background: Working mother of three school-age kids. Helps care for her aging, declining parents locally.

Primary Motivation: Wants her parents to be treated with absolute dignity and receive high-quality care.

Anxieties & Objections: Feeling deep 'caregiver guilt.' Fear of institutional clinical coldness; worries about safety and lack of human touch.

Define Your Most Valuable Personas (MVPs)

- **Move Beyond General Targets:** Your target is never just 'the general public.' It is highly specific groups: anxious adult children, potential residents, or prospective clinical staff.
- **Empathy Maps Decisions:** To write content that resonates, your team must understand the MVP's deeper motivations, daily frustrations, and unstated emotional hesitations
- **Guide Content Strategy:** Knowing your target's media habits helps you choose the correct format and messaging angle.

MOLLY

Bio

Molly is a small business owner in a rural town with a population of 7,000 people. She owns a gardening and landscaping supply shop that services the surrounding community of about 50,000 people within a 45mi radius.

She is a working mom with three school-age kids, divorced, and helps take care of her aging parents. She has past challenges with substance abuse but is committed to leading a healthy lifestyle and promoting good habits for her kids.

Health Habits



Tries to stay active and works outside most days



Tries to keep a balanced diet but struggles at times



Tries to stay hydrated; drinks a lot of soda



Seeks to get good rest but is often interrupted



Age
32

Marital Status
Divorced, 3 children

Education
Some college



The health and safety of my children and family are my top priority."

Motivation



Family



Community and building her business



Personal growth and long-term health

Wants

- To stay on a good path of health and wellness
- To be a voice and activist in her community
- More resources or tools for helping others and taking care of her aging parents

Frustrations

- Access to quality healthcare
- Access to mental health resources
- Inconsistent earnings – especially during winter months

STEP 2: ESTABLISH AUDIENCE

Step 2: Establish Audience continued...

Audience Persona Components

- Demographics (age, gender, employment and marital status, home ownership, education level, socio-economic status)
- Attitudes on health
- Hobbies
- Media consumption and technology use
- Personal values

Personas fuel patient-centric healthcare marketing. They...

- Focus on people which aids in addressing their needs
- Make it easier to understand and embody others' points of view
- Build empathy and humanize the process
- Facilitate communication and decision-making for the marketing team
- Provide a preliminary way of measuring marketing success



STEP 3: SELECT PLATFORMS

Step 3: Meet Your Target Audiences Where They Actually Are

Do not try to be everywhere. Focus limited resources on high-adoption channels.



Let's Chat

PARTNER DISCUSSION

Share with your neighbor

1. What is the single biggest operational challenge your facility is hoping to solve using social media right now? (e.g., workforce recruitment, awareness, building local community trust)
2. How can you reframe that challenge into a strategic, measurable outcome-based goal?

PART TWO

Digital Dignity and Content Strategy

DIGITAL DIGNITY

Digital Dignity: The Foundation of Ethical Health Communication

Digital dignity is the strategic practice of crafting respectful, stigma-free health communications that cultivate trust, respect privacy, and empower individuals.

Why This is Critical in Long-Term Care Settings:

- ✓ **Combats Stigma & Clinical Coldness:** Replaces standard institutional clinical terms with person-first, resident-centered storytelling.
- ✓ **Cultivates Deep Trust:** Anxious adult children (like Molly) seek safety and warmth, not sterile hospital-style rooms.
- ✓ **Empowers Residents & Choices:** Ensures residents are never used as mere props; their stories are shared with consent, honor, and agency.





CONTENT STRATEGY

Structured Content to Move Audiences Along their Journey

CARE

Evoke Connection

Content that focuses on human emotion, milestones, or stories.

- Resident spotlight
- CNA work anniversaries
- Daily activity smiles

Example: Celebrating Alice's 90th birthday with a local jazz band!

SHARE

Provide Value

Highly educational or community-focused posts people naturally share.

- Elder care financial tips
- Memory care guide
- Local community events

Example: Tag and thank a local bakery that donated cupcakes for a social event

AWARE

Build Trust

Fact-driven, supportive content to reduce barriers or clinical fears.

- What to expect in rehab
- Patient safety policies
- Nursing qualifications

Example: Show how dining options are personalized for residents

CONVERT

Drive Action

Clear, transparent prompts that guide interested families forward.

- 'Schedule a private tour'
- 'Apply for open nursing roles'
- 'Download our brochure'

Example: 'Schedule a customized tour of our supportive memory care community'



INCLUSIVITY IN ACTION

Empower Staff: Guidelines for Inclusive Language and Visuals

Language Actions for Dignity

✓ Prioritize Person-First Language

Focus on the individual rather than their clinical diagnosis (e.g., 'residents living with memory loss' instead of 'dementia patients').

✓ Eliminate Institutional Jargon

Replace cold words like 'admissions,' 'discharges,' and 'secure facility' with 'welcoming new residents' and 'safe, supportive neighborhood.'

✓ Emphasize Hope & Active Living

Showcase stories highlighting recovery, socialization, personal choices, and engagement, rather than just passive care.

Visual Actions for Dignity

✓ Select Authentic Imagery

Avoid staged or generic stock photos that look fake. Use real photos of your staff and residents (with proper written consent). Smartphone videos shot by staff perform much better than polished videos.

✓ Show Connection & Human Touch

Feature interactions that show active support, emotional warmth, laughing, and deep human bonds - not isolation.

✓ Reject Stereotypes of Aging

Avoid passive, sad, or clinical clichés. Showcase active resident involvement in hobbies, learning, and local community events.

INTERACTIVE EXERCISE

The Digital Dignity Reframe

BEFORE: CLINICAL POSTING

“We have immediate openings in our secure memory care wing. Admissions are open. Call now to tour.”

Why this might fall flat to the audience:

- Clinical and cold ('openings,' 'admissions,' 'wing')
- Feels institutional and scary ('secure wing')
- Focuses on your operational empty beds, not her family's stress or her father's dignity.

YOUR TASK: THE DIGNITY REFRAME

1. **THINK:** How would you rewrite this post to evoke 'Care' or 'Share' values instead of pure clinical 'opening' metrics?
2. **PAIR:** Turn to your neighbor and rewrite the post together. Focus on resident dignity and supportive family peace of mind.
3. **SHARE:** I will call on volunteers to share their rewritten copy. Let's hear examples that emphasize hope, connection, and trust!



REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Respond to Reviews While Protecting HIPAA Privacy

Proactive Reputation Management

- **Respond to Every Review:** Whether it is a 5-star compliment or 1-star complaint, reply to all public comments. It demonstrates that your administration is active and cares.
- **Encourage Positive Advocacy:** Prompt satisfied resident families, volunteers, and staff to share their experiences on Facebook and Google after major care milestones.
- **Nurture the Digital Footprint:** A high volume of authentic, positive reviews suppresses negative reviews and builds solid local SEO rankings.

Protocol & HIPAA Guardrails

- **Never Argue Publicly:** If you receive a negative review, reply calmly and professionally. Acknowledge their concern, show empathy, and immediately offer to take the conversation offline.
- **The Offline Reframe:** Example: 'We hear you, and we take our care standards very seriously. Please contact our Administrator directly at [Email/Phone] so we can resolve this.'
- **Protect HIPAA Boundaries:** Never confirm or disclose any private health or residency information in your responses, even if the reviewer discloses it first. Keep replies general.

PART THREE
Digital Campaign Planning

Hands-On Tool: The Digital Campaign Planning Worksheet

1. CONTEXT & PROBLEM

Define the core operational or perception problem we are trying to solve upfront

2. SMART GOALS

Establish primary goals, tactical secondary objectives, and timeframes for measurement

3. AUDIENCE PERSONAS

Identify primary/secondary audiences, their background, goals, and direct pain points

4. STRATEGIC FORMULA

Build the single-sentence campaign narrative framework (the GET / TO / BY statement)

5. CHANNELS & THEMES

Identify specific roles for each platform and plan distinct content themes and formats

6. DATA-FIRST EVALUATION

Define what metrics actually matter - reach, engagement, conversions, and advocacy



R3CR Integrated Digital Ecosystem

Resource Center for Cannabis and Cannabinoid Research (R3CR)

This project establishes the comprehensive digital footprint for the **Resource Center for Cannabis and Cannabinoid Research (R3CR)**. Designed to serve as a global digital hub, this ecosystem integrates a robust visual identity, a user-friendly web portal, and a four-channel social media strategy (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) to overcome barriers in cannabis research,.

The work showcased below demonstrates the evolution of the R3CR brand - from its earth and teal visual identity system to a data-driven content strategy focused on the mission to **"Learn. Connect. Advance."** By unifying open-access resources, regulatory guidance, and peer-to-peer networks under a cohesive strategy, the campaign successfully drove high-value engagement, including a **156% surge in new users** during peak campaign months and a **300% increase in social amplification**



[View Example](#)

CAMPAIGN PLANNING

The One-Sentence Campaign Strategy: The Get/To/By Formula

GET

Target Audience: Who specifically do you need to reach? Must be focused (e.g., local nursing students, not 'every local resident').

TO

Desired response: What is the specific physical or behavioral response you want them to take? (e.g., click apply on our careers page).

BY

Core Message / Action: What unique value proposition, video, or story will we say or show to overcome their objections?

LONG-TERM CARE RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE:

“**GET** local nursing students and CNAs **TO** apply for our open workforce positions **BY** sharing authentic, short-form video testimonials of our current nurses on Instagram reels showcasing our flexible shifts, tuition reimbursement, and supportive team culture.”

AI as a Co-Pilot: Safe and Ethical Content Generation



1. CONTENT IDEATION

Overcome Writer's Block

Ask AI to generate multiple variations of positive resident or staff milestones.

Example prompt: 'Draft 3 Facebook posts about our therapeutic gardening program, focusing on hope and resident choices.'

2. TRANSLATION AND JARGON

Simplify Complex Jargon

Translate dense regulatory, clinical, or health-policy updates into warm, reassuring, and family-friendly language.

Benefit: Saves time and helps communicate clearly with the public.

3. PERSONA TESTING

Check for Sensitivity

Test your written draft copy against your persona profiles.

Example prompt: 'Critique this draft copy from the perspective of an adult daughter feeling guilty about moving her father to an assisted living home.'

THE GOLDEN RULE OF HEALTHCARE AI: HUMAN REVIEW IS ALWAYS MANDATORY

AI is a co-pilot, not an autopilot. Never publish AI text without a human checking for HIPAA compliance, accuracy, and tone.

PART FOUR
Metrics, Tracking and ROI

Adopt a Data-First Mindset: The Metrics That Actually Matter

REACH

Who Knows?

The total size of the audience being exposed to your campaign.

Core Metrics:

- Video views
- Impressions
- Follower growth
- Post reach

ENGAGEMENT

Who Interacts?

Are they interested and building a digital relationship?

Core Metrics:

- Positive comments
- Post shares
- Review ratings
- Link clicks

CONVERSIONS

Who Takes Action?

Did they complete a high-value operational outcome?

Core Metrics:

- Inbound job applications
- Tour request forms
- Contact clicks
- Phone calls

ADVOCACY

Who Champions?

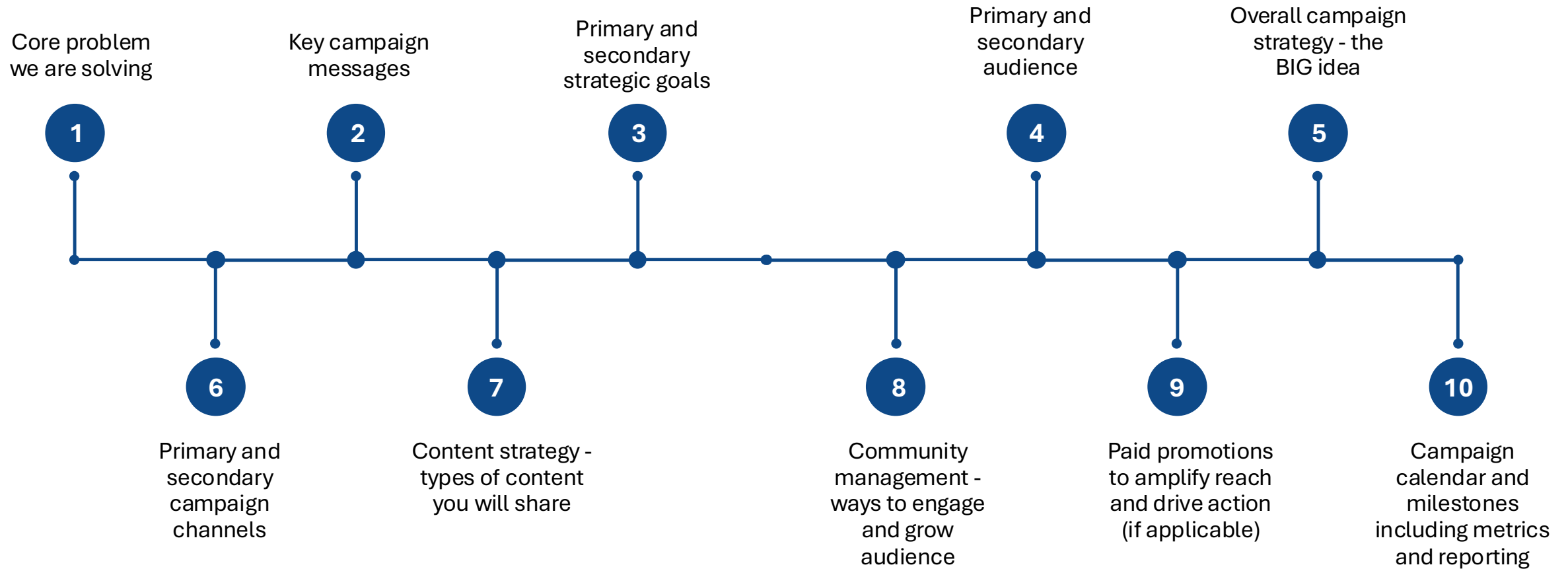
Are your families and staff acting as brand ambassadors?

Core Metrics:

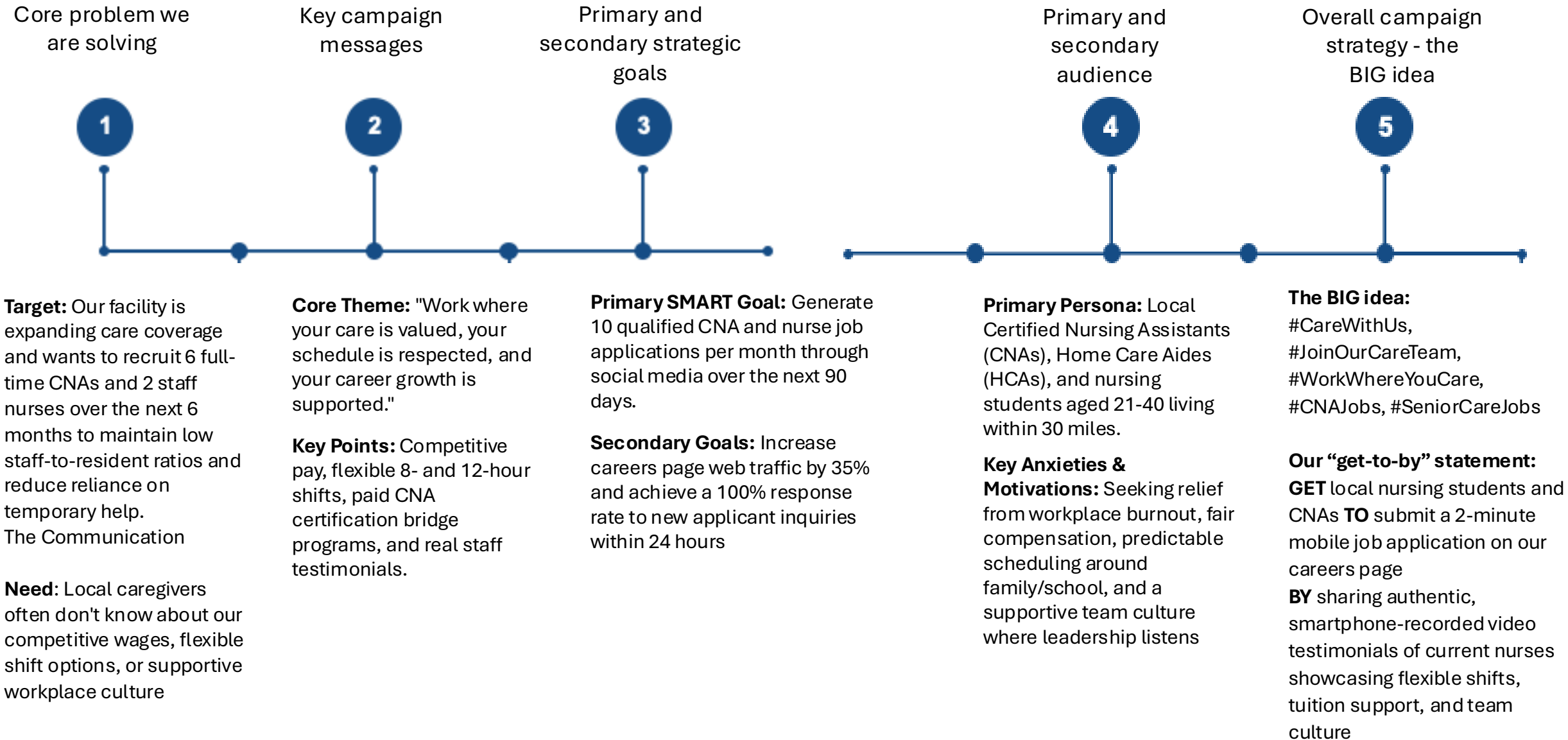
- Testimonials shared
- Organic family posts
- Staff referrals
- Employee reviews

PART FIVE
Key Takeaways

Digital Campaign Planning Template



Mock Campaign: “Care With Us” Sustainable Workforce Campaign



Mock Campaign: “Care With Us” Sustainable Workforce Campaign

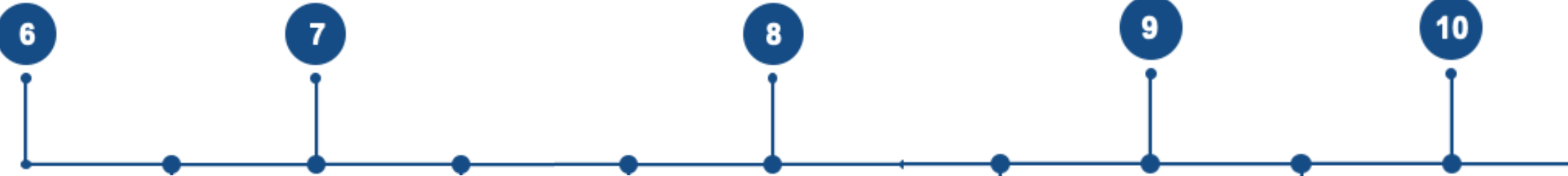
Primary and secondary campaign channels

Content strategy - types of content you will share

Community management - ways to engage and grow audience

Paid promotions to amplify reach and drive action

Campaign calendar and milestones including metrics and reporting



Primary Channels:

- Facebook (broad local community reach)
- Instagram Reels (authentic short video clips)

Secondary Channels:

- LinkedIn (professional nurse recruiting)
- Google Search Ads (targeting "CNA jobs near me")

Types of Content:

- **Care** (Empathy): 60-second smartphone employee spotlights celebrating team milestones and work anniversaries
- **Share** (Value): Posts explaining career growth pathways, paid continuing education, and HCA-to-CNA bridge programs
- **Aware** (Trust): Behind-the-scenes video snapshots showing our updated staff break room, bright resident spaces, and supportive floor leaders
- **Convert** (Action): Simple, 1-click mobile application links with transparent wage ranges and shift choices

Community Management:

- **Active Engagement:** Reply to all comments and message inquiries within 24 hours to demonstrate attentive leadership
- **Privacy Guardrail:** Never discuss personnel or health details in public comments - always transition specific inquiries to private phone or email

Paid Outreach:

- **Targeted Ad Boosts:** Run localized Facebook/Instagram ads targeted to healthcare workers within a 30-mile radius
- **Budget:** \$300-\$500 monthly budget focused on boosting top-performing staff video testimonials

Calendar & Metrics:

Timeline: 6-month active rollout with weekly video post rotations and biweekly ad optimization

Evaluation Metrics: Track Reach (video views), Engagement (shares, positive comments), and Conversions (applications submitted, interviews booked, hires completed)



Session Takeaways

1. Strategic Outcomes Over Activity

Align social media metrics directly with operational outcomes like staffing or census growth.

2. Dignity Builds Deep Trust

Person-first framing and authentic visuals are your strongest tools to connect with families.

3. Pass the Blueprint Down

Empower your coordinators with the Digital Campaign Planning Worksheet to run organized campaigns.

Download Your Strategic Toolkit!

Get direct, editable access to the Digital Campaign Planning Template

Scan QR Code on Handouts or visit:
bit.ly/DigitalCampaignPlanning





Resources

- [“Building our understanding: Key concepts of evaluation.”](#) Applying theory in the evaluation of communication campaigns” from Creating a Culture of Health Living at the CDC’s Healthy Communities Program
- [“Communication toolkit”](#) from Center for Rural Health at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences (2023)
- [“Five types of social media posts that go viral”](#) by Karon Thackston, Marketing Words (Oct 2022)
- [“Cultural competence in health and human services”](#) from National Prevention Information Network (NPIN) via Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (June 2024)
- [“Healthcare marketing personas: What they are and how to use them”](#) from LIFT Healthcare (n.d.)
- [“Implementing social marketing”](#) from Community Tool Box (n.d.)
- [“Social media and healthcare: 10 insightful statistics”](#) by Corey Foster, MediaGPS (Sep 2021)
- [“Social media at CDC”](#) resource page (n.d.)
- [“The history of social media”](#) by Kristi Hines, Search Engine Journal (Sep 2022)
- “What make s a social campaign strategic infographic” by Eye for Pharma that appeared in [“Optimize your customer’s lifecycles with an omnichannel healthcare digital marketing strategy”](#) by Gabrielle Wright, Smart Insights (Mar 2021)
- [Sculpt’s social media framework](#) by Josh Krakauer, Sculpt (2024)
- [“Social media for nonprofits: 11 essential tips for success”](#) by Katie Sehl, Hootsuite (Sep 2020)
- [Visme](#) tool for creating a “health conscious customer persona” audience personas templates (n.d.)

Nevada State Opioid Response

- [Reference Guide](#) for Reproductive Health Complicated by Substance Use
- [Reference Guide](#) for Labor and Delivery Complicated by Substance Use
- [Perinatal Health Media Kit](#)

Let's connect.



Rebecca L. Cooney

rebecca-cooney.com
@rebeccacooney (LinkedIn)