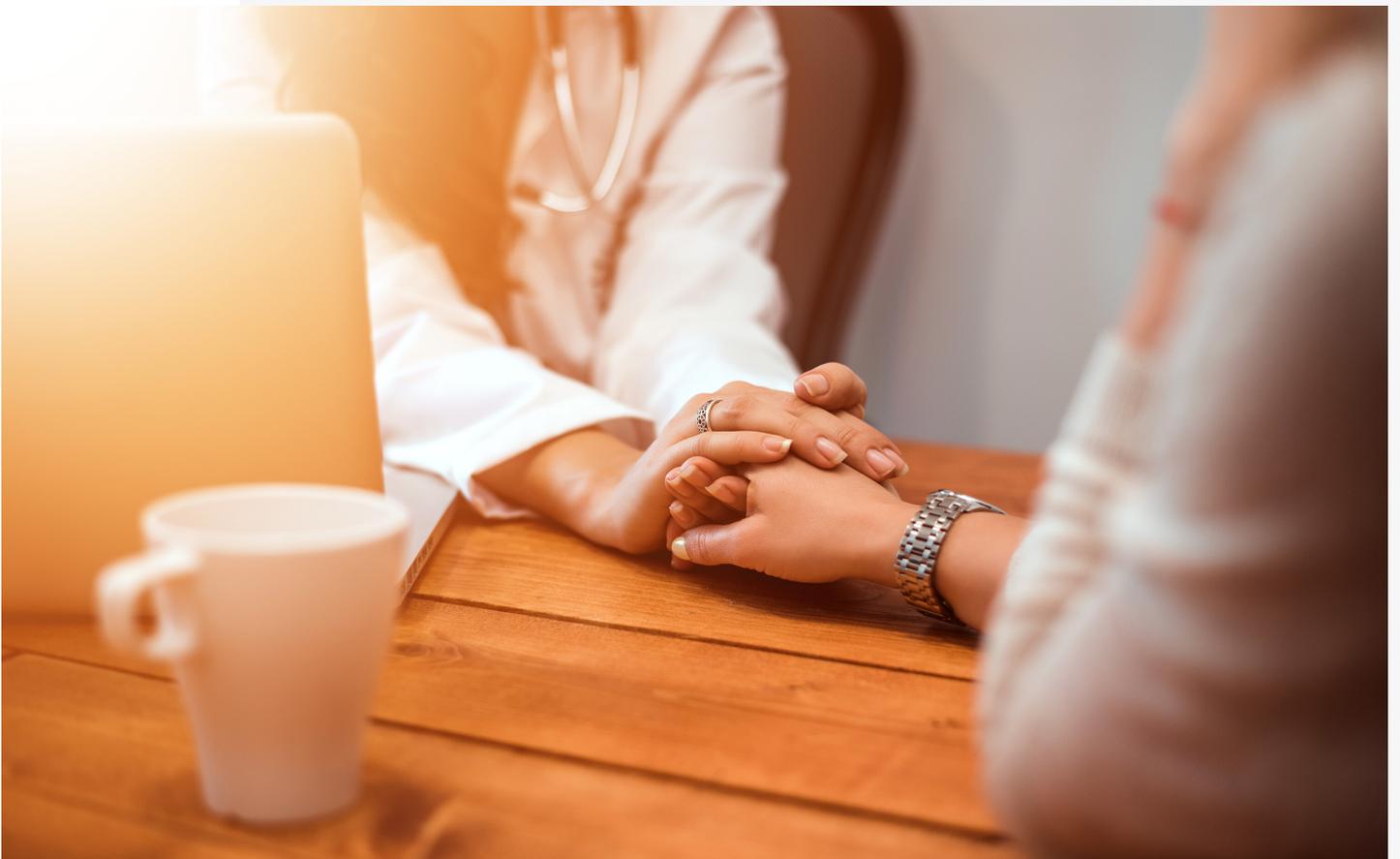


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## 9 INSPIRING EXAMPLES

# EMPATHY IN HEALTHCARE CONTENT MARKETING



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BY LISA STOCKWELL

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# INTRODUCTION

“Our mission is to provide the best care.”

“We meet the individual needs of the patients we serve.”

“We deliver solutions that make your life easier.”

When your content starts with a statement about who you are or what you do—a common tactic in healthcare marketing—it doesn’t matter how much you say you care. As long as you focus on yourself and not your audience, you aren’t communicating empathy.

Empathy—your ability to understand how another person is feeling and might be thinking—is an essential ingredient for effective healthcare content marketing. If you’re not getting the results you want from the content you create, it may be time to change your perspective. You have the best chance to engage your audience and encourage them to take action when you focus on their story, not your own.

Your link to your audience, whether they are patients, healthcare professionals or healthcare business executives, is through their frame of reference. Develop your communications around their experience, not your own, and you’ll make honest connections and start the process of building successful and profitable relationships.

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# START WITH LISTENING

Empathy requires a certain amount of guesswork to determine what others are thinking. To be as empathetic as possible, be willing to learn more. Also, be willing to let go of any personal biases and welcome feedback. You can get to know your target audience better using one or more of the following tools to listen in.

- Read case studies, white papers, and industry reports done by marketers in similar businesses.
- Evaluate what your competition is communicating to their potential customers.
- Conduct qualitative surveys using existing patients/customers.
- Interview employees who have direct contact with your patients/customers
- Read online healthcare forums or use social listening software to learn what questions your audience is asking, what problems they're having, and what topics are trending.

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# MAKE USE OF THEIR STORY

With a good grip on your audience's perspective, you can develop messaging that speaks to their goals. Paint a picture of where they are now, what issues they're struggling with, and what they want their future to look like. Use the second person point of view to help your audience imagine themselves in the scenario you're presenting. Or share a genuine story that exemplifies your audience's experience and connects with them emotionally.

Once you have captured their attention and created a connection, you can demonstrate how your organization fits into their story and how your services or products can help their future selves.

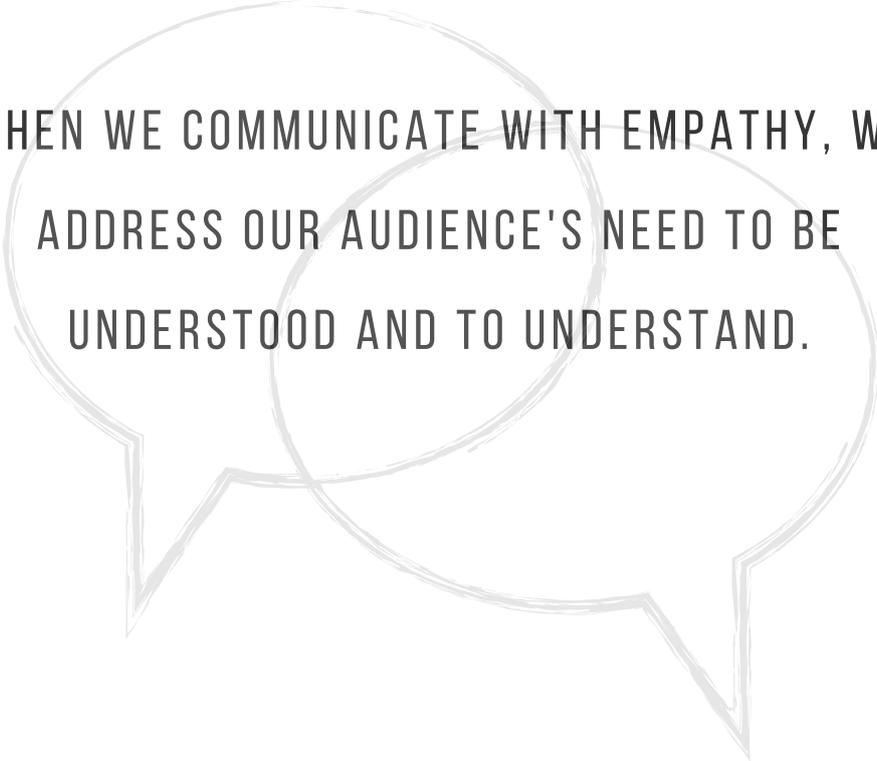
Empathy isn't limited to feelings. When you're an empathetic marketer, you also consider your audience's communication preferences—written, video, audio, language—and how much time they have to learn about your solutions. A millennial may prefer to get information in a tweet or 30 second video, while a retired boomer may spend considerable time reading a white paper or longform article. But there are still plenty of boomers who tweet and millennials who like to read. The more critical their issue, the more time they'll be willing to spend doing research.

Understanding your audience's point of view is the best way to provide compelling content that not only helps improve their health, work, or profitability, but also earns you a larger and more loyal patient/customer base.

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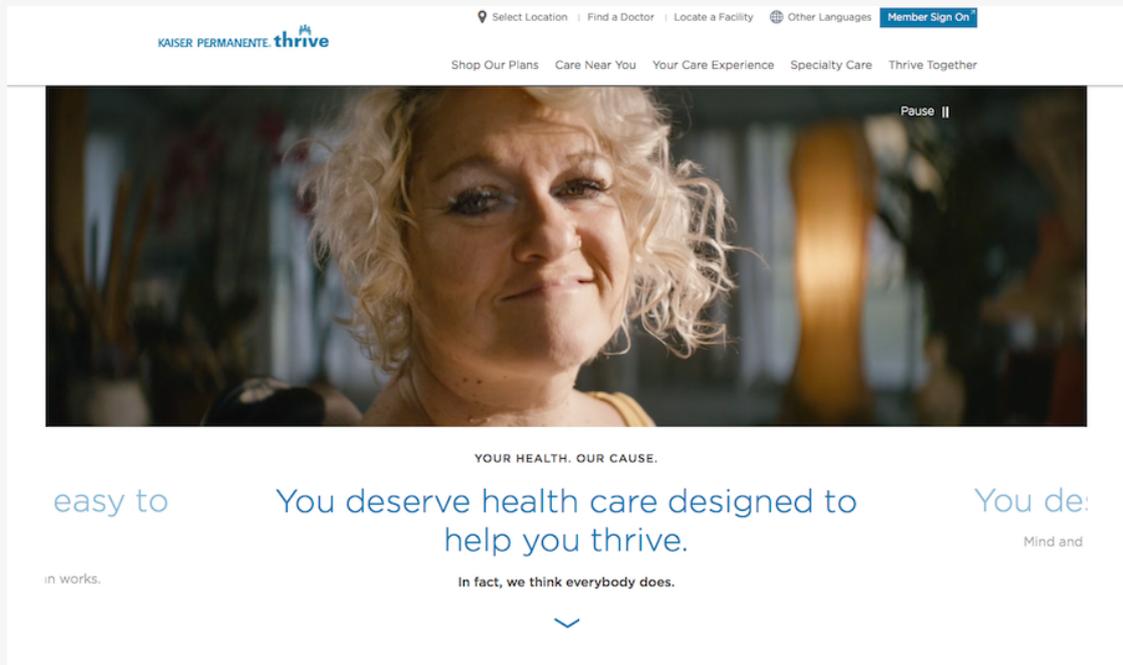
# 9 EXCELLENT EXAMPLES OF CONTENT THAT CONNECTS

I am continually looking for great examples of empathy-driven content in three categories: healthcare providers, health IT companies and medical device companies. Empathy is not the norm. From major organizations to small startups, too many healthcare marketers focus their primary messaging on what they do or their status in the industry. The following nine examples are customer-centric, putting their audience's needs ahead of their own. Not surprisingly, some of the organizations doing the best job communicating empathy are also the most successful in their field.



WHEN WE COMMUNICATE WITH EMPATHY, WE  
ADDRESS OUR AUDIENCE'S NEED TO BE  
UNDERSTOOD AND TO UNDERSTAND.

# HOSPITALS & HEALTHCARE PROVIDER MARKETING

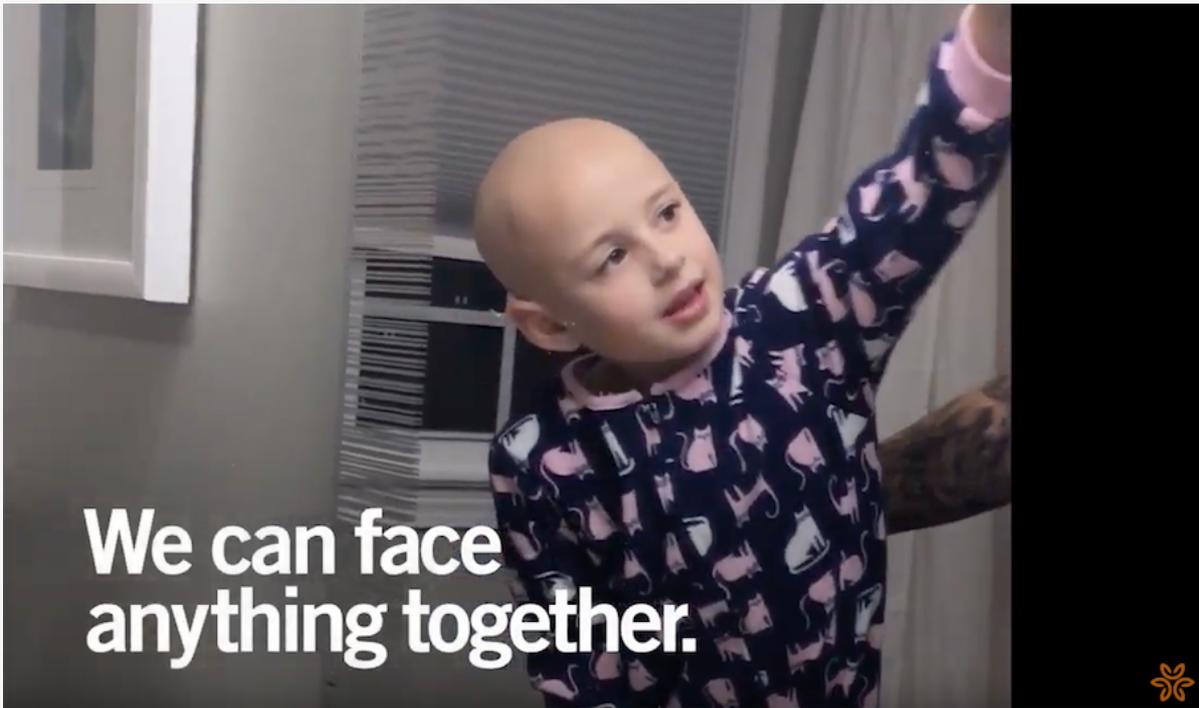


## 1. KAISER PERMANENTE WEBSITE

***"It's not your job to keep track of your preventive care schedule. It's ours. Need a specialist? We'll connect you – and they'll have your health records in hand. Your doctor, specialists, and health plan all work together to get things done faster, easier, and better. And they do it for one very important cause. You."***

Kaiser Permanente captures the frustration so many patients have with today's healthcare system—that it's hard to navigate and is too impersonal. The lead message on K-P's website assures patients that they will get personalized care. And they won't have to navigate the healthcare system on their own. All content on the home page relates to their patient audience, addressing common issues with solutions.

The home page also uses unique patient photos to communicate a story visually for those who may not want to read the copy from top to bottom. And it provides easy links at the top of the page to get to the most common sections of the website quickly. Navigation is designed with the user's needs in mind.



## 2. DIGNITY HEALTH VIDEO

***"We can face anything together."***

As part of Dignity Health's *Hello Humankindness* campaign, Dignity created a television spot that focuses on a single health condition: alopecia. The only mention of Dignity Health is a logo at the beginning and end of the ad. They successfully communicate compassionate empathy by example: a father shaving his head so he can look like his 7-year-old daughter, who suffers from this hair loss condition.

Dignity Health effectively makes an emotional connection with its audience. No sales pitch. No call to action. It leaves it up to patients—those looking for a healthcare system that will treat them with dignity—to take the next step. There is a Spanish language version of the ad as well, which is a great way to demonstrate empathy for those with language barriers.

## Health & Wellness

DISCOVER HEALTH EVENTS AND CLASSES QUICK GUIDES SUPPORT GROUPS HEALTHY RECIPES VIDEO LIBRARY

### Invasion of the Body Bashers

How your body image can affect your self-esteem

Have you said, or thought, "I look fat" hundreds of times? And despite reassurances from your friends, spouse and maybe even your doctor, do you still feel flabby?

If you're hung up on some aspect of your physical appearance, you're not alone.

Millions of men and women bash their bodies for one reason or another. So why do so many of us find fault with ourselves? How can we learn to accept the way we look, flaws and all? And how do we



[Find a psychologist](#)

[Women's mental health experts](#)

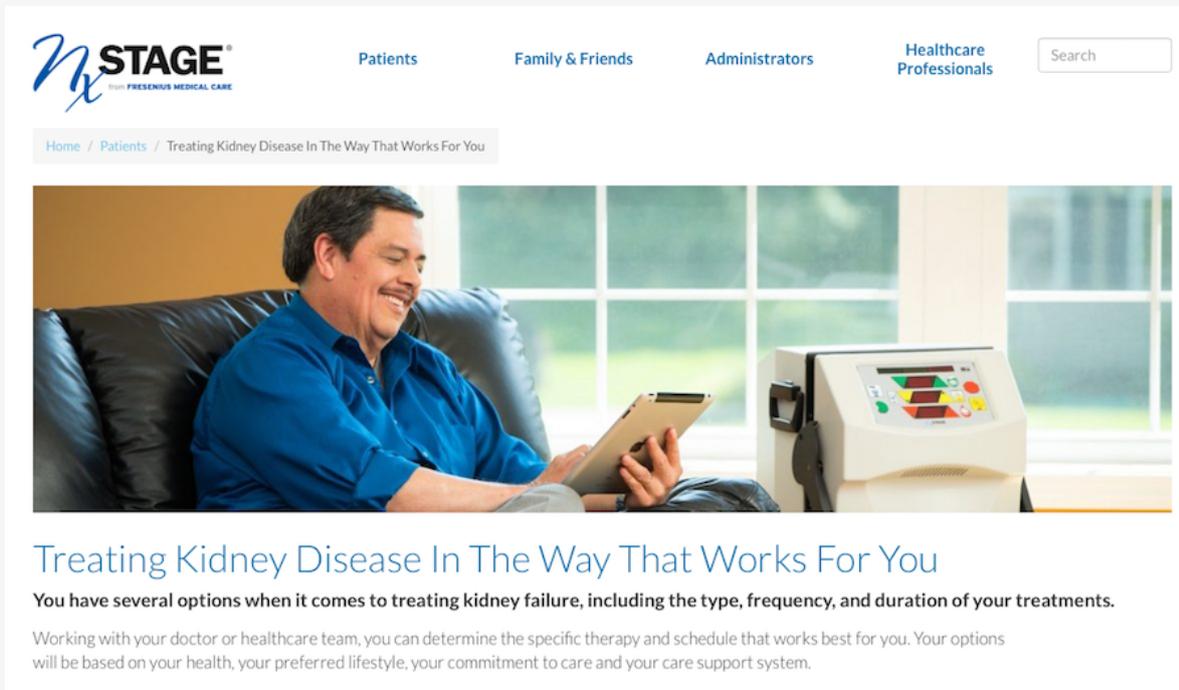
### 3. RUSH UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER BLOG POST

***"Have you said, or thought, "I look fat," hundreds of times? And despite reassurances from your friends, spouse and maybe even your doctor, do you still feel flabby?"***

Rush University Medical Center claims on their home page that "We're right there with you." Their patient education section is proof in point. The topics relate to some of the tougher issues people have with their health, and I suspect that this blog post on Invasion of the Body Bashers enjoyed significant traffic.

The post not only addresses its audience's pain points with well researched information and recommendations, it also makes it easy to find links to its network of psychologists and women's mental health experts and other relevant content.

# MEDICAL DEVICE MARKETING



The screenshot shows the NxStage website header with navigation links for Patients, Family & Friends, Administrators, and Healthcare Professionals. A search bar is located on the right. Below the header is a breadcrumb trail: Home / Patients / Treating Kidney Disease In The Way That Works For You. The main content area features a photograph of a man in a blue shirt sitting on a black leather couch, smiling while looking at a tablet. A white hemodialysis machine is visible next to him. Below the image is the heading "Treating Kidney Disease In The Way That Works For You" and a subheading: "You have several options when it comes to treating kidney failure, including the type, frequency, and duration of your treatments." A paragraph of text follows: "Working with your doctor or healthcare team, you can determine the specific therapy and schedule that works best for you. Your options will be based on your health, your preferred lifestyle, your commitment to care and your care support system."

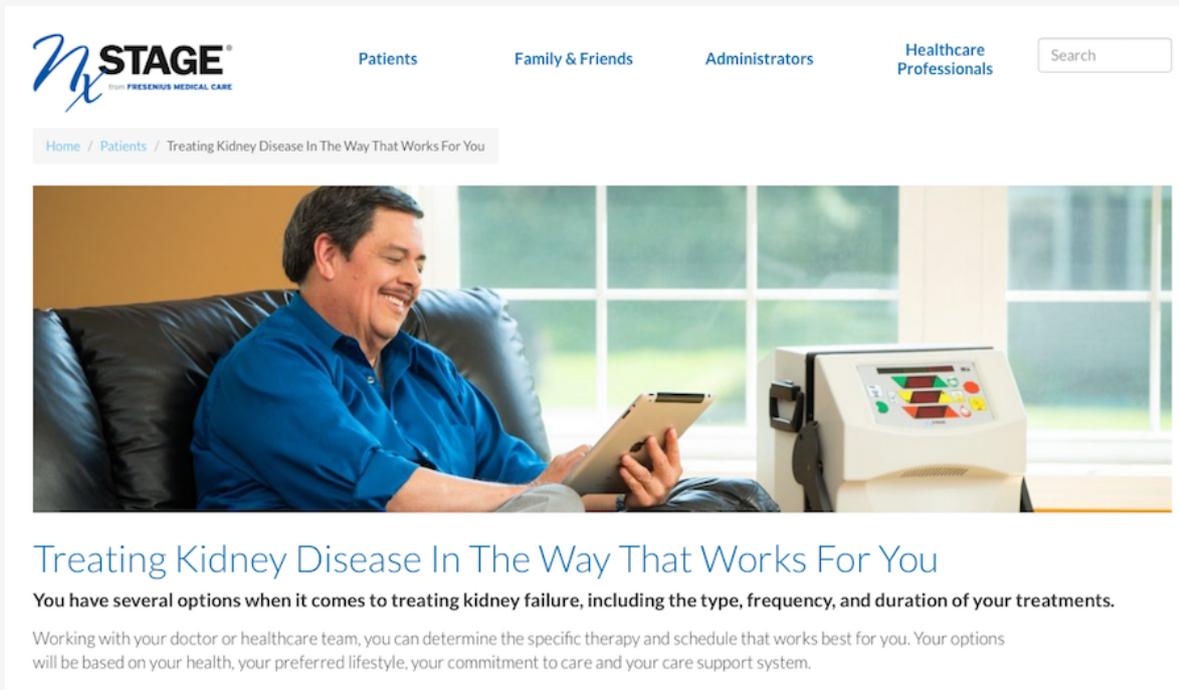
## 4. NXSTAGE WEB PAGES

***"Get your life back. Home hemodialysis could be your ticket to a healthier, better, longer life."***

NxStage, which makes home hemodialysis machines, speaks directly to its patients and their family and friends in a section of its website designed specifically for those audiences. Medical device marketing can be intimidating and complex.

But NxStage makes both their device and the subject of home hemodialysis accessible with web copy and downloadable content that speaks in a language patients can understand.

# MEDICAL DEVICE MARKETING



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## 5. GE HEALTHCARE BROCHURE, WEB PAGES, VIDEO

***"Through themed imaging rooms, GE Healthcare leverages captivating characters, lush visuals, and hands-on activities to enhance the imaging experience for children and their families."***

GE Healthcare asks its audience to "put children first" in marketing its Adventure Series™ imaging equipment marketing. They've taken medical imaging equipment that most people associate with noise and claustrophobia and turned it into a fantasy experience for kids.

In creating a pediatric environment for imaging, GE Healthcare has addressed children's fears of the sterile, clinical environment of the traditional imaging room and given parents peace of mind that their children will not be left with emotional scarring from the experience.



## 6. AURIS HEALTH VIDEO

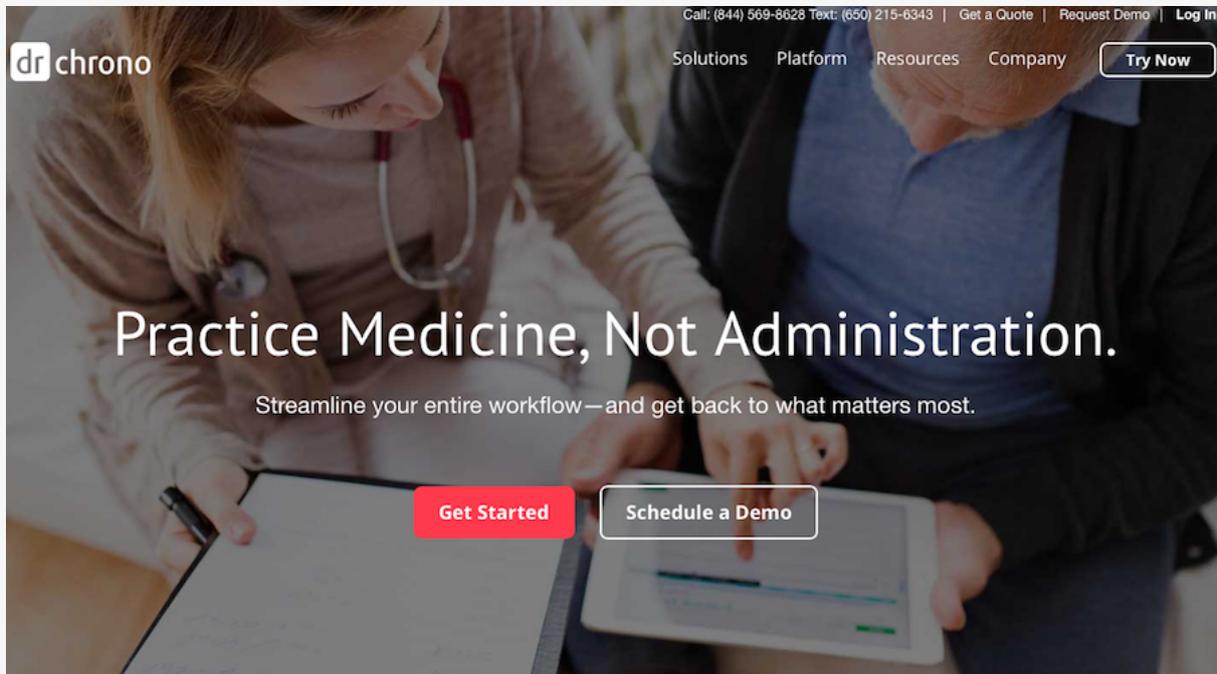
***"Never lose sight of what is most important: your patient."***

In an effort to communicate the importance of having an unobstructed view throughout a lung biopsy procedure, this Auris Health video starts by asking the viewer to consider other critical situations where vision is mandatory. Rather than telling the audience what's great about their Monarch platform, they place them in the story they're telling.

In the end, Auris Health reminds us the importance of perspective. While many assume marketers are always focused on profitability, in this video, the company shows an empathetic goal: to help their clients improve patients' lives, not their own.

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# HEALTHCARE IT MARKETING



## 7. DR CHRONO WEBSITE

*"Have your practice at your fingertips on the web, iPhone and iPad."*

Dr Chrono, a health tech company, addresses one of the primary complaints doctors have about using EHR software. The Dr Chrono website promises to streamline the mandatory documentation process with easy-to-understand solutions, communicated from the user's perspective.

If your goal is to save someone's time with improved workflows, don't waste it with complex marketing content on your own website. Dr Chrono's clear communication shows empathy and respect for their busy prospects, with a range of clear and compelling content.

## How to Select Software for Your Healthcare at Home Agency in 2017

*Are you starting the new year with a software search for your home health or hospice agency? If you're like most agencies, you're using a software solution that was purchased many years ago that's been long-since outgrown. Your agency has diversified and evolved. Is your software keeping up? Let's explore how to make the right decision for your next technology partner.*

### Decide why it's time to make a change

Does your old software requires numerous updates that disrupt care or drain resources? Or is it a web-



## 8. DEVERO WHITE PAPER

***"Your decision is important as you'll likely be living with your software solution for a long time.***

Many tech companies make the mistake of leaving their audience out of their communications entirely as they talk only about themselves. DeVero, a developer of home healthcare software solutions, talks to their audience directly, with solutions that demonstrate they have listened to their issues.

This white paper, *How to Select Software for Your Healthcare at Home Agency*, directly addresses an audience that is in the home healthcare business, not the software business. Both the tone and recommendations respect the audience's level of knowledge, without marketing anything directly.



## 9. ATHENA HEALTH PODCAST

***"A podcast about how the industry is changing from within."***

Athena does a great job of addressing common healthcare industry concerns from a prospect's perspective in all the content they create. Their podcast series, *Decoding Healthcare*, is a great example of empathetic marketing, responding to their market's need for education.

Each podcast tackles an industry issue that may affect operations or profitability. The focus is on transforming the healthcare industry as a whole and making it better for patients and the organizations that serve them. It's a great way to grow an audience organically and gain loyalty.

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# CONCLUSION

Showing empathy in your healthcare marketing is an effective choice when your ultimate goal is to make your patients' or customers' lives easier—whether you want to help them navigate a difficult health condition, make a more exact diagnosis, or implement a new IT platform.

Empathetic marketing feels like you're helping your audience, because you are. When you adopt a customer-centric mindset, you no longer focus on promoting your organization's superiority. You focus on inspiring connections based on trust. Your prospects come to you not because you told them to, but because they believe you understand their problems and trust you to help them find the right solutions.

In our changing healthcare environment, where confusion and distrust are common, empathy-based marketing gives you a significant edge. It builds leads. It builds loyalty. And it can be a lot more fun.

## ABOUT LISA STOCKWELL

*Lisa Stockwell is a content marketing strategist, consultant, award-winning copywriter and the author of nine books. As a marketing communications consultant and writer with over 25 years freelance experience, she helps healthcare organizations develop empathetic content that gives prospects and clients the information they seek in a form they can digest.*

*For more information, visit [lisastockwell.com](http://lisastockwell.com).*