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The Importance of Personal Stories in Flu Awareness & Prevention Efforts

Serese Marotta
Chief Operating Officer
Families Fighting Flu
May 15, 2018
Overview

- Forms of personal stories can include:
  - Photos
  - Videos
  - Earned media (broadcast, print, online)

- Personal stories are a vital component of outreach efforts
  - Successful sharing ≠ fear-mongering
  - Education = empowerment

- The sharing of personal stories resonates with people and has the capacity to change vaccination behavior for vaccine-hesitant individuals!
Background

- Flu vaccination rates for most age groups are < Healthy People 2020 goal

Figure 1. Seasonal Flu Vaccination Coverage, by Age Group and Season, United States, 2010-2017

Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals around the estimates. Starting with the 2011-12 season, adult estimates reflect changes in NHANES survey methods: the addition of cellular telephone samples and a new weighting method.

Source: CDC. Flu Vaccination Coverage, United States, 2016-17 Influenza Season
https://www.cdc.gov/flu/fluuvaxview/coverage-1617estimates.htm

- Early-season CDC data for 2017-2018: 38.6% for all persons

  Our goal is to increase flu vaccination coverage across the lifespan!
Communication Strategy

- **FFF message content:**
  - Flu facts
  - Flu news
  - Personal stories

- **General approach:**
  1. Identify target audience(s)
  2. Identify target communication channels
     a) Social media (organic & paid advertising)
     b) Digital media (e.g., websites, blogs)
     c) Earned media (broadcast, print, online)
  3. Develop target messages
What do our global communications data show?
Digital media metrics

Website Page Views: Sept 1, 2017 - Apr 1, 2018

- Family Stories: 49%
- Flu Activity Trackers: 0.3%
- Flu Facts: 14%
- Flu Materials: 6%
- Flu Resources: 11%
- Grief & Support: 1%
- Home Page: 17%
- Programs: 1%
- Organization Info: 3%

Total: 100%
What do our digital stories look like on the Families Fighting Flu website?
What’s driving website traffic?

- Audience is 54% men, 46% women; primarily ages 18 – 44
- Users: mobile = 55%, desktop = 38%, tablet = 7%
### Social media metrics: Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>No. of Posts*</th>
<th>Impressions (Reach)</th>
<th>Reactions, Comments, Shares</th>
<th>Post Clicks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flu &amp; Flu Vaccine Facts</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>86,088</td>
<td>1,886</td>
<td>4,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Information on FFF</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24,635</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>1,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flu Surveillance</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>78,815</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>5,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flu &amp; Flu Vaccine Research</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22,108</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>1,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Stories</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>255,196</td>
<td>6,498</td>
<td>23,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>466,842</td>
<td>11,686</td>
<td>36,816</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Time period: Sept 1, 2017 – Apr 1, 2018

### Facebook Post Content

- Flu & Flu Vaccine Facts: 32%
- Flu & Flu Vaccine Research: 9%
- Flu Surveillance: 16%
- FFF Organization Info: 15%
- Personal Stories: 28%

### Facebook Post Engagement

- Personal Stories: 56%
- Flu & Flu Vaccine Facts: 16%
- FFF Organization Info: 6%
- Flu Surveillance: 16%
- Flu & Flu Vaccine Research: 6%
Facebook Engagement

~50% Higher for Personal Stories Than All Other Content

Photo Stories
average 18% engagement

Video Stories
average 10% engagement

Personal Stories From
Current Season
average 11% engagement

Personal Stories From
Previous Season
average 8% engagement
## Social media metrics: Twitter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>No. of Tweets*</th>
<th>Impressions (Reach)</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Avg. Engagement Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flu &amp; Flu Vaccine Facts</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>169,184</td>
<td>1,679</td>
<td>1.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Information on FFF</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>30,450</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>1.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flu Surveillance</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>65,579</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>2.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flu &amp; Flu Vaccine Research</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>51,565</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Stories</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>87,201</td>
<td>1,628</td>
<td>2.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>403,979</td>
<td>4,596</td>
<td>9.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Time period: Sept 1, 2017 – Apr 1, 2018*
Twitter Engagement

~35% Higher for Personal Stories Than All Other Content

Photo Stories

Personal Stories From Current Season

Video Stories

Personal Stories From Previous Season
Here’s the proof...
Take-Aways

**Conclusion:** The sharing of personal stories resonates with people and has the capacity to change vaccination behavior.

**Lessons Learned:**
- Personal stories are a vital component of outreach efforts
  - Successful sharing ≠ fear-mongering
  - Education = empowerment
- Use social media as a communication tool to actively engage with your audience(s)
  - Use various formats and content for social media communications to engage different audiences
  - Paid boosts & ads can greatly increase your reach & engagement
  - Use geo-targeting (e.g., target specific ages, zip codes) for more local “grass-roots” outreach and engagement
  - Allow both positive and negative dialogue on social media feeds

**Put a face on flu!**
Remember…
It’s not “just the flu”…

Together, we can save lives…
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Your Best Shot: Insights from a New Health Education Series on Vaccines

May 15, 2018

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National Vaccine Program Office
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Vaccines.gov

Background
Vaccines.gov Background

• Launched in 2011
• **Mission:** To provide trusted, consumer-friendly information about vaccines and vaccine-preventable diseases
  – First cross-government website devoted to consumer information on vaccines and immunization
  – English and Spanish content
• **Users:**
  – Women (76%)
  – 18-34 years old (64%)
  – Seeking information for herself or her family (59%)
Video content is what Vaccines.gov users want and is where online digital content is moving

- Moms, the health decision-makers in most families, are overwhelmingly searching for answers to their questions online with **3 in 5 turning to online video**
  - Dads are also turning to online video for questions about child health

- **Video is one of the fastest growing types of online content**
  - Quick and easy to consume
  - Promise for overcoming plain-language and health literacy barriers
  - Integrated with social platforms like Facebook, Twitter, etc.
  - Additional benefits: user engagement, search engine optimization through linking

83% of moms search for answers to their questions online

Of those, 3 in 5 turn to online video

59% of millennial dads seek out videos about baby health.
Credible, reliable, and evidence-based video content on vaccines and immunizations is hard to find...
Video is yet to be harnessed as part of a larger health education strategy...

Existing videos from credible sources are often:

- Campaign messaging or public service announcements
- Designed for health care provider audiences
- Talking heads or webinars that may not resonate as well with consumers
- One-offs without a comprehensive brand or strategy
Overview of the Video Series

• **Scope and Purpose:** Develop and pilot-test 2-3 short, punchy, *educational* videos designed to raise awareness of vaccines and the basic information about them (modeled after Vaccines.gov structure)
  – The “bite” in a bite-snack-meal content strategy.

• **Structure for Each Video**
  – Introduction
  – What is the disease?
  – Who needs the vaccine?
  – How to get vaccinated
  – Recap

• **Topics:** Pneumococcal disease, whooping cough, shingles
  – Recommended across lifespan, few videos on these topics, and fit with NVPO’s focus

• **Animated:** Lower budget, but still visually appealing, and easy to update and adjust

• **Partner:** Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion’s Healthfinder.gov
Research, Test, Refine, Repeat!

- **User testing**
  - Research, prototype, test, analyze, refine
  - Engage end-users early and often to ensure concept, messages, etc. resonate with users

- **Limitations**
  - Limited resources and Paperwork Reduction Act restricts feedback options
  - Not scientific or broadly generalizable

- **User testing for this project:**
  - **Before development:** Informal survey, informal interviews, and literature scan
  - **During development:** In-depth interviews
Informal Survey

- Informal survey (2018) to gauge existing knowledge, awareness, and importance of messages for shingles, pneumococcal disease, and whooping cough

- 10 question survey distributed to federal employees who opted into government-wide community of practice listservs on user experience, plain language, and content managers

- 100 responses available for analysis
Informal Survey: Key Takeaways

General Knowledge and Awareness:
• Most respondents were familiar with all three diseases and their recommendations with shingles disease the most familiar and pneumococcal disease the least familiar

Most Important Messages
• Whooping cough:
  – The threat of whooping cough in the first few months of life and likelihood of hospitalization
  – Importance of vaccination for families and caregivers of young infants
• Pneumococcal disease:
  – It can be difficult to treat and it can cause serious long-term health problems
  – The vaccines can protect against serious illnesses (meningitis, bacteremia, and pneumonia)
• Shingles:
  – Nearly 1 out of 3 people will develop shingles in their lifetime
  – Shingles may lead to other serious complications involving the eye causing vision loss
  – The vaccine reduces the risk of developing shingles and the long-term pain that can follow
• Vaccination in general:
  – The vaccine is safe and effective.
  – The best way to protect yourself against serious illnesses
  – Covered by most health insurance plans without cost-sharing
Informal Interviews

Informal interviews (2017) to share thoughts on existing videos

• 7 phone interviews with mothers of young children
• Participants viewed 3 health-related videos and discussed:
  – Likes and dislikes (animation, narration, graphics, etc.)
  – What was memorable
  – Call-to-action
  – Likelihood of taking action after viewing the video
Informal Interviews: Key Takeaways

• Moms are interested in health-related videos for two primary reasons:
  – For themselves to help diagnose their child or understand a certain disease condition
  – To watch with children and teach them why they have to do something like wash their hands

• Obvious and easy-to-understand graphics work best. Avoid being juvenile.
• Real life examples and statistics are memorable.
• A strong hook must grab attention in the first few seconds. Avoid talking heads and easily outdated elements.
• Limit the number of messages to ensure the call to action remains clear.
• Ensure animated elements are easy-to-understand and well-paced—especially on-screen text.
• Other considerations:
  • Target moms during pregnancy and/or in sync with the vaccine schedule.
  • The importance of other caregivers receiving whooping cough vaccine resonated with mothers.
  • Moms often view videos on YouTube and parenting websites (e.g., Parenting.com) followed by Facebook and Google.
Literature Scan

- **Literature scan (2018)** conducted to identify best practices for communicating health information using videos

- Articles and resources:
  - English
  - Peer-reviewed academic literature and trade publications, but may appear on popular websites that cover digital marketing or video development
  - Published between 2011 and 2016

- Scan centered around 5 central themes:
  - Developing videos based on health promotion principles
  - Developing videos based on health education theory
  - Usability best practices for videos
  - Video marketing to moms and caregivers
  - Health literacy best practices for videos
## Literature Scan: Key Takeaways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Promotion Principles</th>
<th>Health Education Theory</th>
<th>Usability Best Practices</th>
<th>Health Literacy Best Practices</th>
<th>Video Marketing to Moms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colorful, animated videos may be more engaging, memorable, and relatable than print materials or videos with actors</td>
<td>The Health Belief Model and Extended Parallel Processing Model may be beneficial to guide script development</td>
<td>Ensure audio, video, and captions are synced up to avoid cognitive overload</td>
<td>Avoid busy backgrounds and simultaneous music, narration to keep the audience focused</td>
<td>Caregivers and those living with chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, cancer) are more likely than other internet users to search for health information online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older adults respond positively to animation and ethnically diverse characters</td>
<td>Health messages that evoke emotions (fear, compassion) gain audiences’ attention better than emotionally neutral messages</td>
<td>Present main message(s) early (~20% of viewers abandon videos within the first 10 seconds of play)</td>
<td>Many moms search for information to clarify and supplement what they’ve been told by a doctor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What We Learned:

- Animated videos hold promise for reaching mothers and seniors alike—and they can overcome many health literacy challenges
- Specific considerations when developing video content
  - Strong hook
  - Statistics and real life examples
  - Clear, easy-to-understand graphics
  - Well-paced animation, text, etc.
- Messages most important to include in the video
- Theories to help guide script development (Health Belief Model, Extended Parallel Processing Model)

User testing validated the decision to pursue animated videos and helped identify important considerations for video design and messages
Vaccines.gov Videos
Concept & Message Testing
Creative Concept

• Opted for a lighter, tongue-in-cheek concept that would appeal to adult audiences

• Inspired by Australia’s “Dumb Ways to Die” campaign

• Each “germ” has a personality and is the focus of the introduction.
Creative Concept: “Pneumo” – The Smug One
Self-described as "God’s Gift to Bacteria," — He knows exactly what he’s doing
In-Depth Interviews

• **In-depth interviews** conducted at a research facility to gauge understanding and receptivity to messages, assess appropriateness of tone, identify areas to refine prior to production

• Participants were racially, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse:
  – Moms of children ages 0-7
  – Adults ages 60 and older

• **Two rounds:**
  – **Pneumococcal Disease:** Users viewed low resolution animatic and storyboard
  – **Whooping Cough and Shingles:** Users viewed print copies of the characters and select scenes
In-Depth Interviews: Key Takeaways

Pneumococcal

General Message & Content Structure

• “Just right” in terms of the amount, type, sequence, and pace of information
• Covered essential information in a clear order — particularly liked the recap.
• Use of levity was engaging, yet balanced by straightforward health information and statistics
• Story and language hit the right balance between simple and technical
• The purpose and call-to-action of the video were clear
• The video — including animation and use of characters — was relevant to all audiences
• Seniors were more likely to say they’d follow up with their health care provider after seeing the video.
• Alternatively, mothers were more likely to say they’d look for additional information online — specifically on vaccines.gov and healthfinder.gov.
In-Depth Interviews: Key Takeaways

Pneumococcal

Overall Design & Style
• Participants liked the use of vibrant colors, bold fonts and diverse imagery.
• Multiple participants noted the diversity of age, gender and race/ethnicity of the people represented in the video. For several, this drove home the point that pneumococcal disease can be “easily spread” in daily life.

Character
• Overall participants felt Pneumo was an engaging character who grabs viewers attention and makes a point about the value of vaccination.
• Pneumo’s shape, color, and personality received mixed reactions with some expressing love for his hair, eyebrows, and “bad guy” blue tone. Others preferred a less humanized germ or wanted him to be more “edgy” or “menacing.”
In-Depth Interviews: Key Takeaways

Pneumococcal

What needs improvement...

• Mothers and seniors did not feel the video was specifically tailored to them
• Participants noted they would passively view the video (e.g. on TV or a clinic waiting room) and not actively seek them out
• Several participants expressed an interest in knowing about vaccine efficacy and duration.
• The question-based section title frames and narration were repetitive.
• The female narrator sounded too young.
• The trend line graphic needed to be more realistic
• Some representations of characters could be improved (e.g., making the older adult more youthful)
In-Depth Interviews (Round II)

Whooping Cough

What worked well...

• Overall participants liked the concept and found it persuasive
• Participants found numbers and extreme outcomes (e.g., broken ribs) particularly memorable
• Almost all participants preferred Character Option 1

What needs improvement...

• Several participants were surprised “relatively few” (20,000) people get whooping cough each year
• Understood germs were targeting the baby and grandmother, but confused why they were in the grandmother’s hair
• Several struggled to distinguish between colds, pneumonia, and whooping cough
• Confusion around who needs vaccinated and when – particularly which infants can receive the vaccine and that it’s recommended for pregnant women and caregivers
In-Depth Interviews (Round II)

Shingles

What worked well...
- Overall, participants liked the concept
- Numbers (e.g., “1 in 3”) and extreme outcomes (e.g., “unbearable pain”) were particularly memorable
- The relevance to older adults was clear
- Almost all participants preferred Character Option 1

What needs improvement...
- Several participants were distracted by or unfamiliar with the name “herpes zoster”
- Participants suggested the boy should have chickenpox to tie the image explicitly to shingles
- Some representations of characters could be improved (e.g., making the older adult more youthful)
- The statement “The shingles vaccine works” seemed at odds with information about “people getting shingles”
- Most participants did not like a text-only image and did not understand the purpose of the downward arrows
Interested in Viewing the Final Videos? 
Join us for a special “sneak peek” session to view and discuss the videos before they are released!

To sign-up, email: vaccines@hhs.gov
Thank you!

Email: jordan.broderick@hhs.gov