CONTENT ANALYSIS

Motor Neuron Disease Association

mnda
motor neurone disease
association

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to a request by the *Moter Neuron Disease (MND) Association*'s Board of Directors, this report contains an analysis of the organization's digital content on its website (**mndassociation.org**) and social media channels (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube). The aim of this analysis was to determine if the current content aligns with business goals as defined in the organization's management strategy from Bernard Marr & Co.

The management strategy includes the organization's mission and vision as well as a core group of objectives for organizational performance. Based on an understanding of the goals of the organization's audience, the content was examined for how well it supports the organization's mission and objectives, specifically in relation to providing resources to those with MND, fundraising for research, and recruiting volunteers.

This examination found that current content is well designed to help with these objectives, although opportunity exists to optimize it. Notably, content on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter was found to be heavily weighted toward fundraising and volunteer objectives. A higher percentage of content dedicated to directly helping those with MND and their families and caregivers could better align it with both business and audience goals.

As well, content featuring the personal and individual stories of volunteers, fundraisers, and those affected by MND has high prominence on social media, but not on the website. Integrating this social, emotional content better and more prominently on the site could help with multiple business goals. Opportunity also exists to create a more integrated, multi-channel content approach that improves user navigation between the site and social media and discoverability of content.

A list of key performance indicators (KPIs) was developed and included in this report in order to facilitate the continued evaluation of content alignment and improvements in relation to business objectives.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Business Goals

Based on the management strategy as outlined by Bernard Marr & Co. the following business goals were identified as being most relevant to website and social media content.

- **Help those with MND, their families, and their caregivers**
  A key tenet of the organization's mission is ensuring that "everyone with MND can access the best care, support, and information possible from diagnosis to death." This includes supporting their families and caregivers. It also has the objective of sharing its knowledge and learning. As website and social media content can themselves be vehicles for accomplishing this mission, both literally through information sharing and as connective aids to other resources, it reasons that content can and should help with this goal.

- **Fundraise for MND research**
  Raising funds, generating income, and funding research are all organizational objectives the management strategy includes. Website and social media content can be very capable of driving fundraising, both new giving and increased giving, particularly through emotional appeals and value propositions. For a non-profit organization, a content marketing approach to fundraising is necessary and expected on these platforms.

- **Recruit and retain volunteers**
  Objectives in the management strategy include inspiring and empowering volunteers as well as developing them. These objectives all work toward the goal of creating a large, active group of volunteers for the *MND Association*. Website and social media content can help with this by raising awareness of volunteer opportunities with the organization and by reinvigorating and continually inspiring current volunteers to prevent attrition.

Content Objectives

For each of the above business goals, a short list of content objectives was developed. These are the specific ways in which website and social media content can contribute toward achieving these 3 business goals. Current content was examined for whether it was fulfilling these objectives from the perspective of the organization's audience.

Business Goals	Content Objectives
Help those with MND, their families, and their caregivers	• Clearly communicate information about MND and living with it • Connect users easily with support services
Fundraise for MND research	• Demonstrate the impact of the *MND Association* • Share why others donate to and fundraise for MND research
Recruit and retain volunteers	• Explain and demonstrate ways volunteers make a difference • Portray a sense of community and shared purpose amongst *MND Association* supporters

Table 1: Business goals and content objectives

ABOUT THE AUDIENCE

Primary User Groups

The *MND Association* website and social media channels serve a spectrum of different user groups. For this content analysis, the following list of groups was the focus. Content across the organization's digital platforms must meet the needs of these types of users in order to support the aforementioned 3 business goals. Each of these user groups can also be related to multiple business goals. For example, families, caregivers, and volunteers can all also contribute to fundraising efforts.

- Individuals with MND
- Families and caregivers of those with MND
- Individuals interested in volunteer work
- Philanthropic minded individuals

User Goals

Each of these user groups has many reasons for visiting the *MND Association* website or engaging with its social media channels. The following user goals were identified as being the most related to the targeted business goals.

- Learn about MND: the signs, symptoms, progression, and what to expect
- Find services and support for those with MND
- Find services and support for families and caregivers of those with MND
- Find and learn about MND-related medical research
- Learn about what the *MND Association* does
- Make a difference for those with MND or in MND research
- Select and sign up for volunteer opportunities with the *MND Association*
- Make a donation or participate in a fundraiser

CONTENT OBSERVATIONS

Website Content

In general, the *MND Association*'s website is designed with the primary user groups mentioned in this report in mind. It features a global navigation menu with the related categories of "About MND," "Support and information," "Get Involved," and "Research" along with a very easy to notice "Donate" button. Each category is well organized and pages are easy to scan and navigate. Of note, is the choice to use accordions and menu style landing pages with minimal text. Not only does this help all users quickly and easily locate exactly what information they need, but it is also more accessible for users with MND who may be using assistive devices to navigate the site.

Figure 1: An example of a menu style landing page with minimal text.

Figure 2: An example of the use of accordions on the site.

Content on the site consists of text, photos, and videos embedded from YouTube. Text is kept short, very clear, and approachable. The use of scientific or medical terms is kept to a minimum when the intended audience of a page is not medical professionals. This is beneficial for helping users affected by MND when they are looking to learn about MND or seeking services and support. Too much jargon or a clinical tone could intimidate and confuse these users, especially those who may be emotionally dealing with a new diagnosis.

The site contains extensive educational content on MND and life with it, as well as exstensive informational content about finding services and support for those affected by MND. Examples include content on available local services that is searchable by location and a support forum where users can connect with others affected by MND. Overall, the site content is very well aligned with the business goal of helping those with MND, their families, and their caregivers.
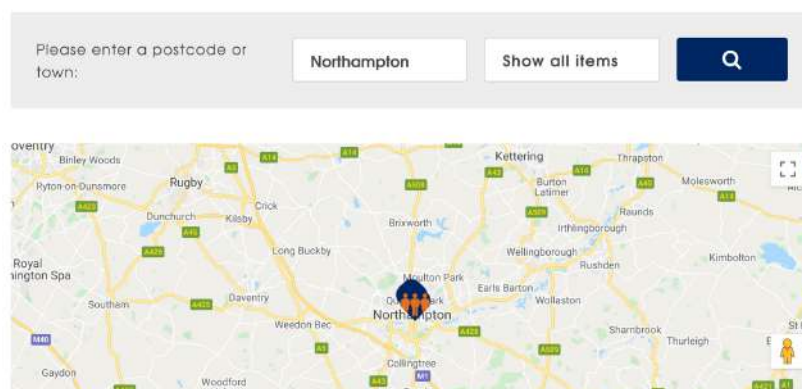

Figure 3: How users can search for local MND services.
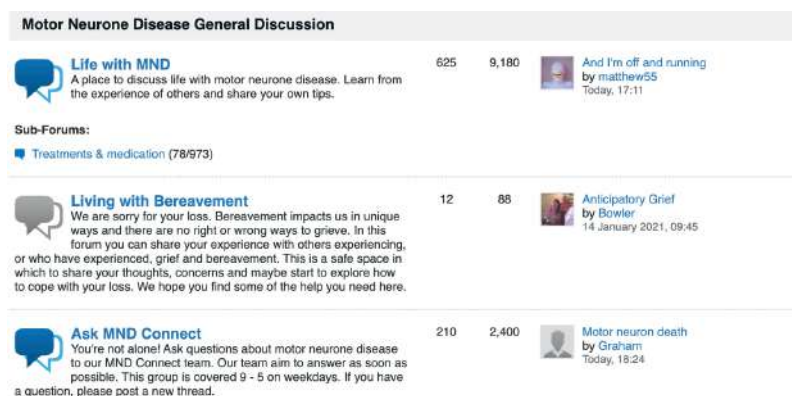

Figure 4: The support forum on the site where those with MND and their families and caregivers go talk to each other and share information and experiences.

In terms of supporting the business goal of fundraising for research, the site makes it easy to donate and clearly communicates all the different options for donating and fundraising. However, the emotional appeal of why a user should donate or fundraise is more limited than informational content. There is plenty of well organized and easy to understand content on the research the organization funds, but not as much about how this is directly impacting those with MND right now.

Photos feature individuals with MND and their families and caregivers, as well as many people participating in fundraising events, but there's little attempt to humanize who these people are in terms of their experiences, stories, and motivations for participating with the *MND Association*.

Stories about individuals or businesses helping to fundraise are not heavily featured. The only prominent content about a fundraiser was found on the top of the homepage. The rest of these types of profiles or news stories are relegated to the bottom of the homepage with no visuals to draw attention to them. This type of personal story content is also not present on fundraising-specific pages much at all

Figure 5: Top story on the homepage. One of the few pieces of content featuring a personal story on the site.

Figure 6: The only way to access news type stories featuring fundraising participants on the site is through this unassuming section on the bottom of the homepage.

Content on the site does a good job of communicating the various opportunities that are available for users interested in volunteering. There are extensive listings of specific opportunities and it is made very clear how a user can become a volunteer. Like with fundraising, though, there's still not much of an emotional appeal to recruit volunteers. Photos show groups of people involved in volunteer activities and there are some quotes from actual, named volunteers, but not much more about who these people are and their motivations to which users can relate.

These photos do a good job of creating the sense that being a volunteer for the organization means being part of a mission-driven team of like-minded individuals. However, this sense of community with other volunteers that may keep existing volunteers engaged isn't present in other content. The user-generated content in the support forum for those affected by MND offers a sense of person-to-person connection. But if volunteers are also not in this other user group, site content doesn't provide them with this type of motivation to stay involved.

Figure 7: Photos on the volunteer section of the site depict a sense of connection and social community among volunteers that is absent from other site content.

Figure 8: One of a couple of featured quotes from volunteers. This one is from Evelyn Hayward and reads "It's so rewarding when they realise that we're cheering for them. The best part for us is seeing that we're making a difference."

Social Media Content

Where the organization's website content falls short, its social media content excels. Content on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram is very geared toward fundraising and volunteering efforts. It does so through many stories and profiles of people involved with and impacted by the *MND Association*. These take the form of personal testimonies, videos, and photos (often user-generated).

The content on these channels creates a strong sense of genuine community within and surrounding the organization. Users see and relate to others' stories and experiences which in turn makes the idea of supporting the *MND Association* more tangible of a possibility for them. They say to themselves, "I want to be like X person." This content emotionally and socially motivates users to donate, run fundraisers, become a volunteer, and continue to stay involved as a volunteer, but it secondarily gives those with MND and their families and caregivers a sense of positivity and that they are not alone in their fight.

The organization also uses social media content to communicate timely opportunities for fundraising and volunteering, such as advertising different fundraising challenges or advocating for policy that affects those with MND. This content often drives users to the website to consume more content there.

Figure 9: An Instagram post featuring a short story and photo of a fundraiser and why they're involved to inspire donations.

Figure 10: A tweet introducing a fundraiser and his motivation as well as information and a link about a way to fundraise.

Content on social media is not as focused as the website is on sharing information about MND and about services and support options for those affected by MND. Content on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram that relates to this objective mostly does so indirectly.

For example, the video in the Facebook post below features a woman involved in an *MND Association* fundraiser and includes mentions of the services the association provided her family member. This could help someone with MND learn how the organization can help them, but it wouldn't connect them directly with the right website content and tell them what they'd need to do access this help. This content example does, though, help to show potential donors and fundraisers how the organization makes a difference for individuals with the funds it receives.
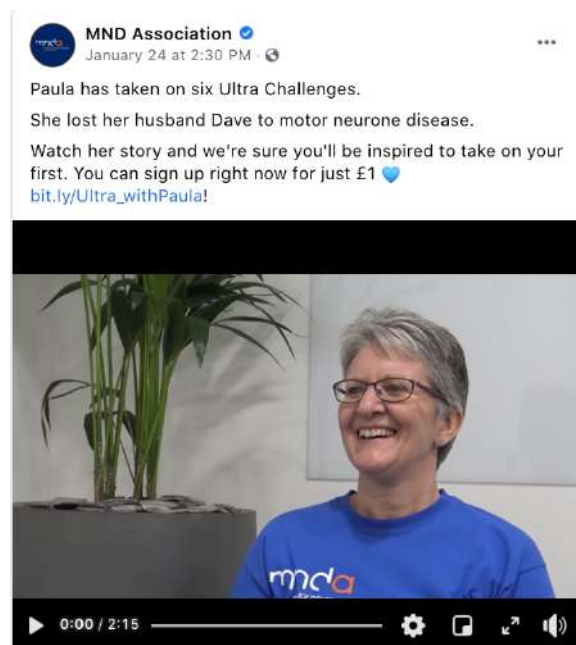

Figure 11: A Facebook video post in support of a fundraiser with testimony from a women who participates in fundraising and who has a family member who the organization provided services to.

Figure 12: One of the few social media posts intended directly to support the content objective of providing MND information. This post indicates this type of content is only posted once a month.

The organization does maintain an active Facebook group for those with MND and their families and caregivers which, like the website support forum, aligns with the business goal of helping these user groups. The organization also offers groups for those involved in specific fundraising efforts, which gives users an opportunity for that team connection that was identified as missing from the website.

YouTube does the best job of balancing the goals of MND awareness and support with fundraising and volunteering recruitment. It does so through dedicated playlists that speak to different user groups about different subjects. This is likely, though, because YouTube is used to host videos on the website.

The organization's social media content also does overall a good job of linking users back to the website for more information and encouraging them to take immediate action on donations, fundraiser sign-ups, and volunteer sign-ups. However, content on Instagram currently just features calls to action in the post captions with no way to link to exactly where and how users can take action. The platform's limitation of links to only a single one in the account bio is a hurdle for this content to actually support the targeted business goals.
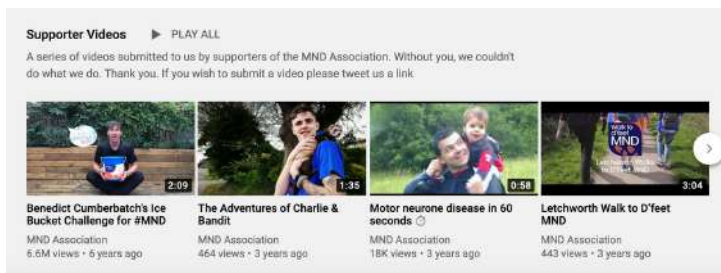

Figure 13: A playlist example from YouTube featuring a playlist profiling MND Association supporters.

Figure 14: Facebook groups run by the MND Association where members of its community can connect and share experiences and user-generated.

FINDINGS

Analysis

Examination of website and social media content found that certain business goals are supported better on certain platforms than on others.

Website content is focused on being educational and informative which makes it well-aligned with content objectives related to sharing about MND, about services and support resources, and about the impact the *MND Association* has in terms of the research it funds.

Social media content, though, is more emotional and personal, helping with content objectives related to providing motivation and inspiration for fundraising and volunteering and fulfilling user desires for shared purpose and community.

Together the content currently found across the *MND Association* platforms is well aligned to support the business goals of helping those with MND, their families, and their caregivers; fundraising for MND research; and recruiting and retaining volunteers. However, opportunities exist to optimize content on each platform to better support all 3 business goals through a more integrated, multi-channel content approach.

Recommendations

Based on the content analysis the following is recommended to better align the *MND Association* digital content with business goals.

- **Integrate more personal or community-driven content into the website to provide a more emotional appeal.** This can make the website more inspirational and drive users to donate, fundraise, or volunteer when they had not previously intended to or drive them to deepen their commitment to the organization. All of this translates to supporting the business goals of fundraising for MND research and recruiting and retaining volunteers.

- **Plan more content on social media intended to educate and connect individuals with MND to the resources they need.** The dominant style of personal stories and user–generated content on social media currently can still work for this goal if it is built to drive traffic back to pages on the website with information specifically for those affected by MND. Doing this can help to make social media content a resource for spreading this information and reaching people whom the organization would not necessarily reach through other means. In doing so it makes social media work more to support the business goal of helping those with MND and their families and caregivers.

- **Promote social media on the website more in order to inform users that those channels are the organization's spaces for community connection, especially for fundraisers and volunteers.** If the organization's social media usage is more prominent on the website then website users are more likely to follow the organization on one or more channels. Since most users visit social media often they are more likely to see something about the organization, engage with it, and develop a deeper connection to it and its community. This connection is helpful in driving higher giving and higher participation in activities, better supporting fundraising and volunteer goals.

- **Make sure there is a clear, two-way navigation path for users between the website and social media.** For example, use a bio link manager on Instagram and point users to the link in the account bio to drive traffic to the site. The more work a user must do to take the desired action the less likely they will follow through. This reality can challenge all user groups regardless of goal and negatively impact the ability of content to support all business goals.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The following key performance indicators (KPIs) were chosen to track the performance of digital content as it relates to the 3 targeted business goals outlined in this report. Each KPI also works to help answer one of a list of key performance questions (KPQs) that the *MND Association* created in conjunction with Bernard Marr & Co. during the development of its management strategy.

- **Track traffic from social media to the website, specifically to pages related to information on MND and resources for those affected by MND**
Tracking the traffic to the "About MND" and "Support and information" sections of the website, in general, can reveal how many potential people affected by MND the organization's content may be helping and how well it is supporting that business goal. Tracking traffic specifically from social media, especially looking for any increases, can help determine if content changes in alignment with this report's recommendations are having an impact on connecting people with the information and resources they need.

   A KPQ for organizational performance related to the *MND Association* mission is "Does everyone with MND have a timely and equitable access to care that meets the Association's Standards of Care?" The first step in answering that question with a yes is raising awareness of the organization as a resource. Social media presents a way to provide access to the care the organization believes everyone deserves to a potentially new group of users, such as younger family members of those with MND.

   Measurement can be taken a step further by regularly tracking the number of inquiries for services coming from forms on the aforementioned sections of the site. If an increased percentage of visitors to these sections are requesting assistance from the organization that can be an indication that the content is reaching its intended audience. A tool like Google Analytics may even be able to be set up to identify the submissions on these forms from users who were referred to the site specifically from social media.

- **Track the number of donations being made through the website or social media channels, whether these are coming from new or existing donors, and the average amount per transaction**
Increases in new donors, frequency of giving by current donors, or average donation amount could signal that content is more persuasive to users, more capable of driving conversions, and thus more aligned with the business goal of fundraising for MND research.

  One of the KPQs for the organization is "How do we ensure financial resources to meet the strategic vision of the Association?" Having a reliable flow of donations from individuals is a step to ensuring that plans can be made and resources can be made dependably available to work toward achieving the organization's vision of using research to one day end MND.

  Dips or increases in individual donations made online could be a sign of how well or not content is delivering on its intended goal. Being able to identify a content problem early or pour gas on the fire can help to make sure there is no financial interruption or slow down in the pursuit of the organization's mission.

- **Track the number of new submissions from the Volunteering Enquiry Form and the Student Volunteering Form on the site and the number of volunteers who actively work for the organization each month**
Two of the identified KPQs ask "Are staff and volunteers inspired and empowered?" and "Are we recruiting and deploying the skills and talents needed?" The more new volunteer sign-ups the organization receives the more likely users found the content persuasive or inspiring.

  As well, any dips in the number of volunteers working on projects in a month when plenty of open opportunities still exist could be a sign of growing disengagement. Deploying the right content at the right time could work to re-engage existing volunteers and make sure the organization continues to have the right human resources it needs available and ready to help.

  Tracking the pages that users visit before completing a volunteer form or signing up for a specific opportunity could also help to identify specifically what kind of content is or is not working to convert a user to a volunteer or persuade an existing volunteer to donate more of their time.