

athenahealth Case Study

Increasing awareness of
thought leadership content
to improve lead generation



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Amanda Melander
Advertising Manager, athenahealth

Bringing thought leadership to a targeted audience

athenahealth’s cloud-based practice management, electronic health record and patient communication services are targeted to executives at the highest level of health care organizations. Making the decision to choose athenahealth services is a complex one that impacts budgets, systems, and patient care. The challenge for athenahealth is to reach these decision-makers with in-depth information that helps them understand the value of the services.

“Our target audience is very busy, and their time is limited,” explains Amanda Melander, advertising manager for athenahealth. “They’re looking at many news sources every day, so they’re bombarded with messages about trends in the industry, and ideas and solutions for solving the problems they face in managing healthcare information.”

To highlight its position as a leading provider of cloud-based services for medical groups, athenahealth produces thought leadership materials, such as white papers, blog posts and videos that advise executives on best practices for improving patient care while driving revenue growth. Delivering these materials is challenging because they need to be placed in venues where executives spend time and are inclined to explore them.

Challenge

- Showcase thought leadership material
- Reach highest level of decision-makers
- Capture prospect info for lead generation

Solution

- Increase access to thought leadership via LinkedIn content ad unit
- Target C-level executives in healthcare, as well as other influencers
- Drive traffic to corporate website and Twitter

Why LinkedIn?

- Innovative marketing tools to engage members
- Largest audience of executive professionals
- Precise targeting by job title and industry
- Support from marketing solutions team to refine campaign reach

Results

- 61% rise in click-to-conversion rate
- More names and contact info for lead-gen pipeline
- Increase in Twitter followers improves social media reach

“We’re in a good position to start a conversation about leading through change,” Melander says. “Part of that means cutting through the clutter of messages that our target audience receives. We need to be able to tell them the part of our story that sets us apart from our competition.”

Content ad unit promotes engagement

While athenahealth’s existing marketing efforts, such as email campaigns and events, were meeting goals, the company sought new ideas for delivering leadership materials to its selected audience. athenahealth’s interactive marketing agency, Digitas Health, suggested the company advertise on LinkedIn. “Our audience is technologically savvy, so LinkedIn is an effective way to reach them – they were already spending time with the site,” Melander explains.

LinkedIn’s marketing solutions experts suggested that athenahealth test a custom content ad unit that allows advertisers to deliver multiple streams of content – such as documents, blog posts, Twitter feeds, and videos – in a single ad. The content ad unit’s interactivity appealed to athenahealth. For instance, people interested in reading athenahealth’s white papers must provide their contact information before downloading. This gives the company valuable prospects for its lead pipeline.

“We hadn’t seen a tool like the content ad unit before,” Melander says. “It’s not just a standard display ad – it’s engaging and interactive, and really helps us showcase our point of view. The fact that it looks less like an ad and more like editorial content encourages executives to spend more time with the content ad – which means they spend more time learning about athenahealth.”

Click-to-submission conversions rise 61%

athenahealth uses LinkedIn’s highly specific targeting capabilities to bring the content ad unit to LinkedIn members most likely to respond, such as C-suite executives with healthcare organizations. LinkedIn’s account team helped athenahealth expand the reach of the content ad unit, while retaining the focus on LinkedIn members who can influence decision-makers, such as vice presidents of healthcare-related businesses.

“We’ve widened our target audience to include members of LinkedIn groups related to the pharmaceutical and biotech industries, since they may have an interest in our products or may influence someone else,” Melander says.

With the inclusion of LinkedIn, the click-to-submission conversion rate for athenahealth’s entire display advertising program rose 61% between March and July 2011, greatly improving the company’s ability to capture information for lead generation. In addition, athenahealth’s Twitter followers increased.

“When we can engage with healthcare executives and showcase our vision, we can turn them into partners in our goal to drive innovation in the healthcare system,” Melander says. “The LinkedIn content ad unit is the perfect way to connect to our executive prospects.”



athenahealth content ad unit on LinkedIn