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From Formal to Relatable: Using Humor, Trends & Personality in Government Content

Meet the Presenters



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About Jefferson County



- Suburban county in Colorado.
- Home to over 580K residents.
- Diverse mix of urban, rural and mountain communities.



About Jefferson County Public Health (JCPH)

Who we are

- Local Public Health Agency (LPHA) with a broad mission.
- Focused on prevention, health equity and community partnerships.

Where we started

- Reactive
- Informational
- Safe + traditional

The Problem

What we're up against:

- Competing with fast fashion, junk food and clickbait.
- Disinformation moves faster than truth.
- People scroll past what we say.
- Risk-avoidant tone
- Over-explaining
- Talking at people



Internal/Service Audit

Start with your reality

- What is your team actually doing?
- What's draining your time?
- What shouldn't live with comms?

What we did

- Shifted design work (Canva access)
- Focused on strategy + content
- Proved value beyond "flyers"

You can't be creative if you're stuck in production.

Brand/Voice Audit

Define your voice before you try to be "funny".

Ask:

- What do we sound like now?
- What do we want to sound like?
- Who are we trying to connect with?
- What would success mean to you?

Test tone on social and pay close attention to what gets traction.

3-Second Relevance Test



**During your audit,
do some feed scrolling, ask:**

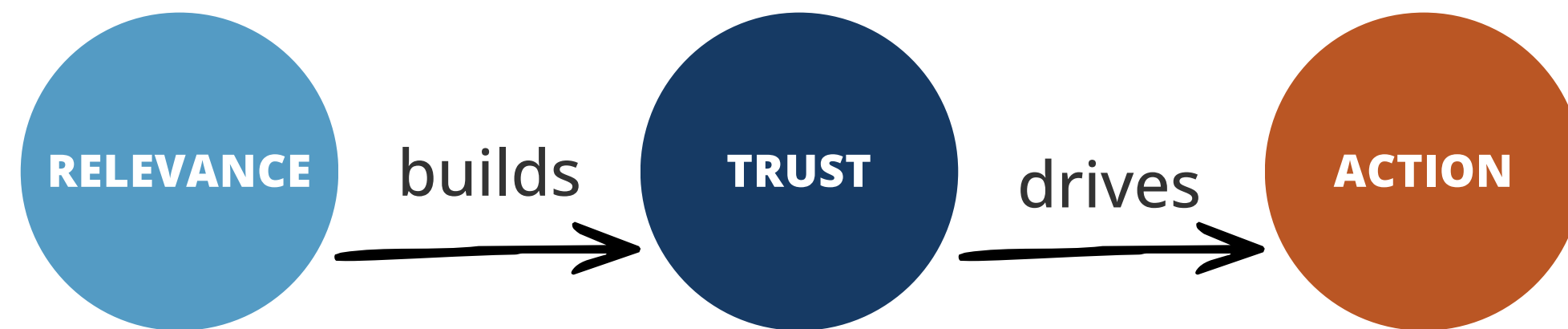
- What about this made me stop scrolling?
- Is this something that we can adapt/try?

Before posting, ask:

- Would this stop me mid-scroll?
- Does this sound like a human?
- Would I share this with a friend?

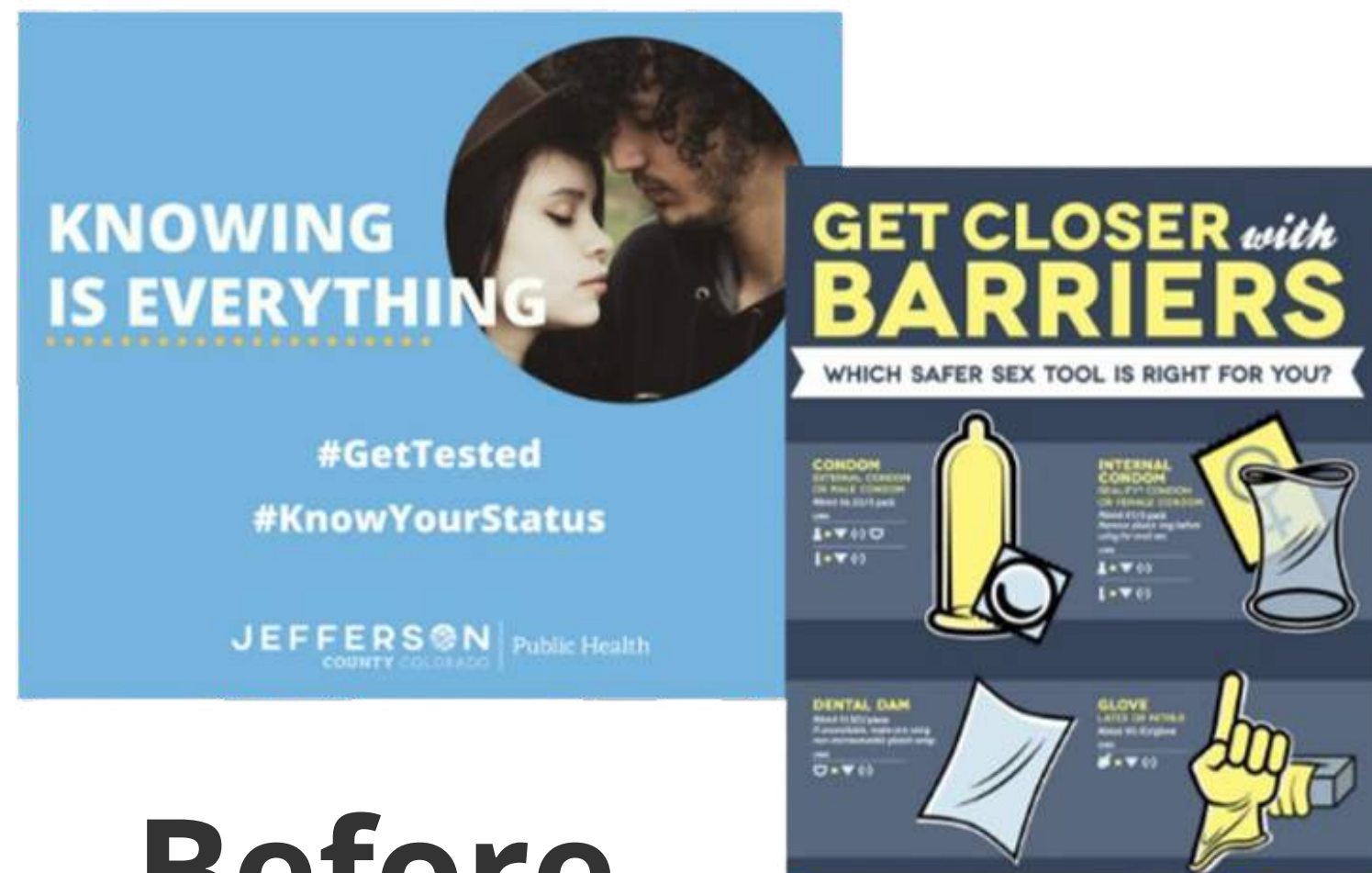
What Social Media is For

Build a brand, not a bulletin board



Marketing isn't a dirty word.

Before & After: Our Feed Evolution



Before

Same topic. Different outcome.



After



Before & After: Our Feed Evolution



Before

Same topic. Different outcome.



After

Before & After: Our Feed Evolution



Before



Same topic. Different outcome.

Before & After: Our Feed Evolution



Before

Same topic. Different outcome.



After

What We Mean by "Campaign"

Campaigns can be a way of testing tone in a way that's not going to mess up your feed (clear reason to why you are doing it).

If it doesn't have the outcome you want, then you can pivot back to another strategy.

- Test tone
- Take creative risks
- Try something new



Why Humor Works

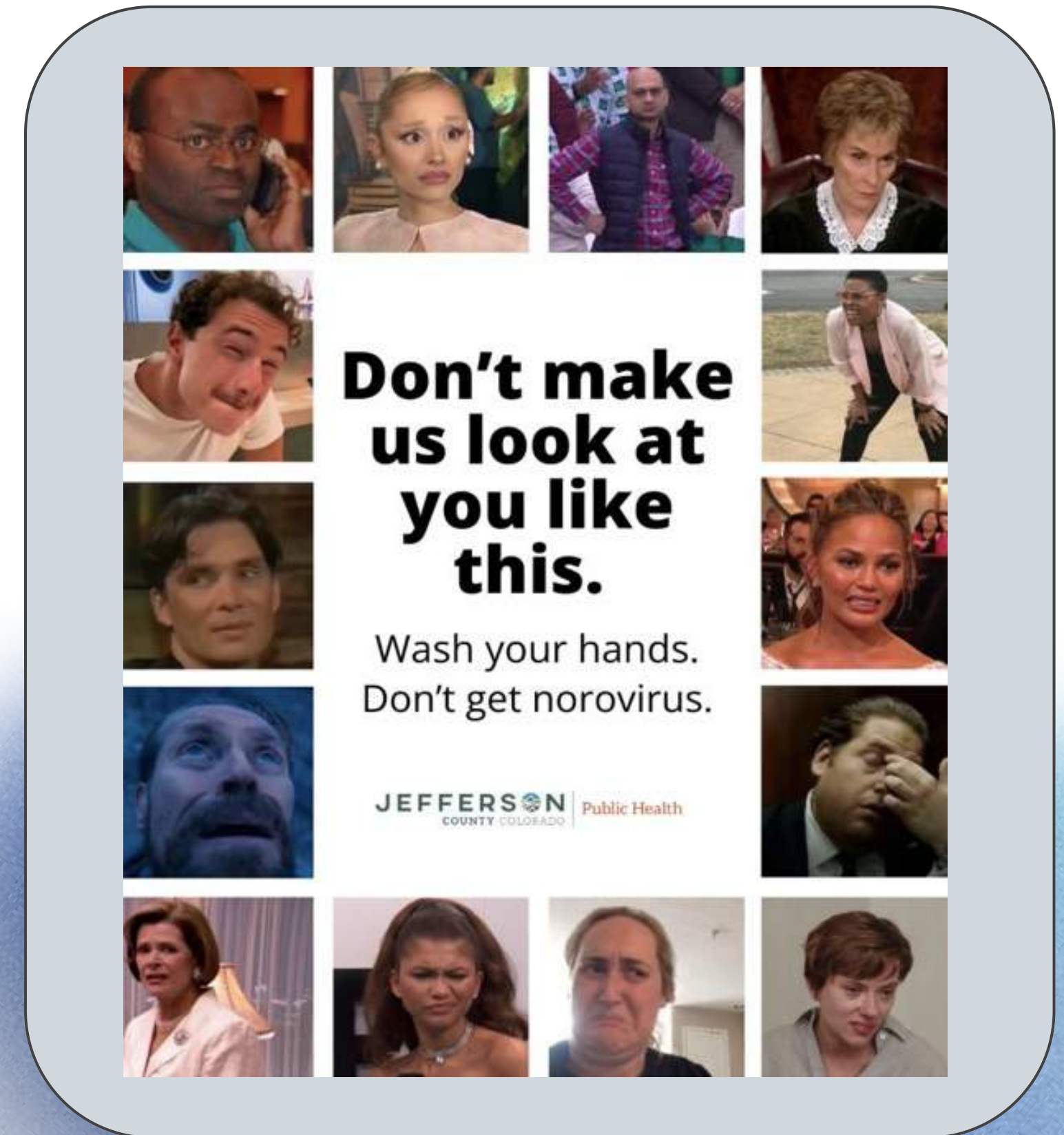
Pattern interruption

Makes your agency feel “human”

Signals that, “we get it”

Invites people in

Absurd ≠ unserious
It means unexpected





Using Trends

Trend

Exact
copy

Your
version



- Adapt, don't copy
- Understand the feeling of the trend
- Match the platform
- Move fast
- Know when to skip it

Borrow the Trend. Then Become the Trend.

START
HERE

- Trends lower risk
- Give you structure
- Build momentum
- Create trust



- Then you stop chasing
- You start shaping
- You create your own formats



Trends are training wheels.
They're not the bike.



Trend



Adapted trend

Case Study: Satirizing "Wellness" Culture



Used satire to
reframe
misinformation



Case Study: Satirizing "Wellness" Culture



Concept:
What are we
reframing?

Risk
assessment
+ knowing
audience

Internal
buy-in



If It Doesn't Feel Relevant, It Won't Be Received

Relatable

- "That's me"
- Everyday moments
- Shared experiences

**When the heater has
been on all day**

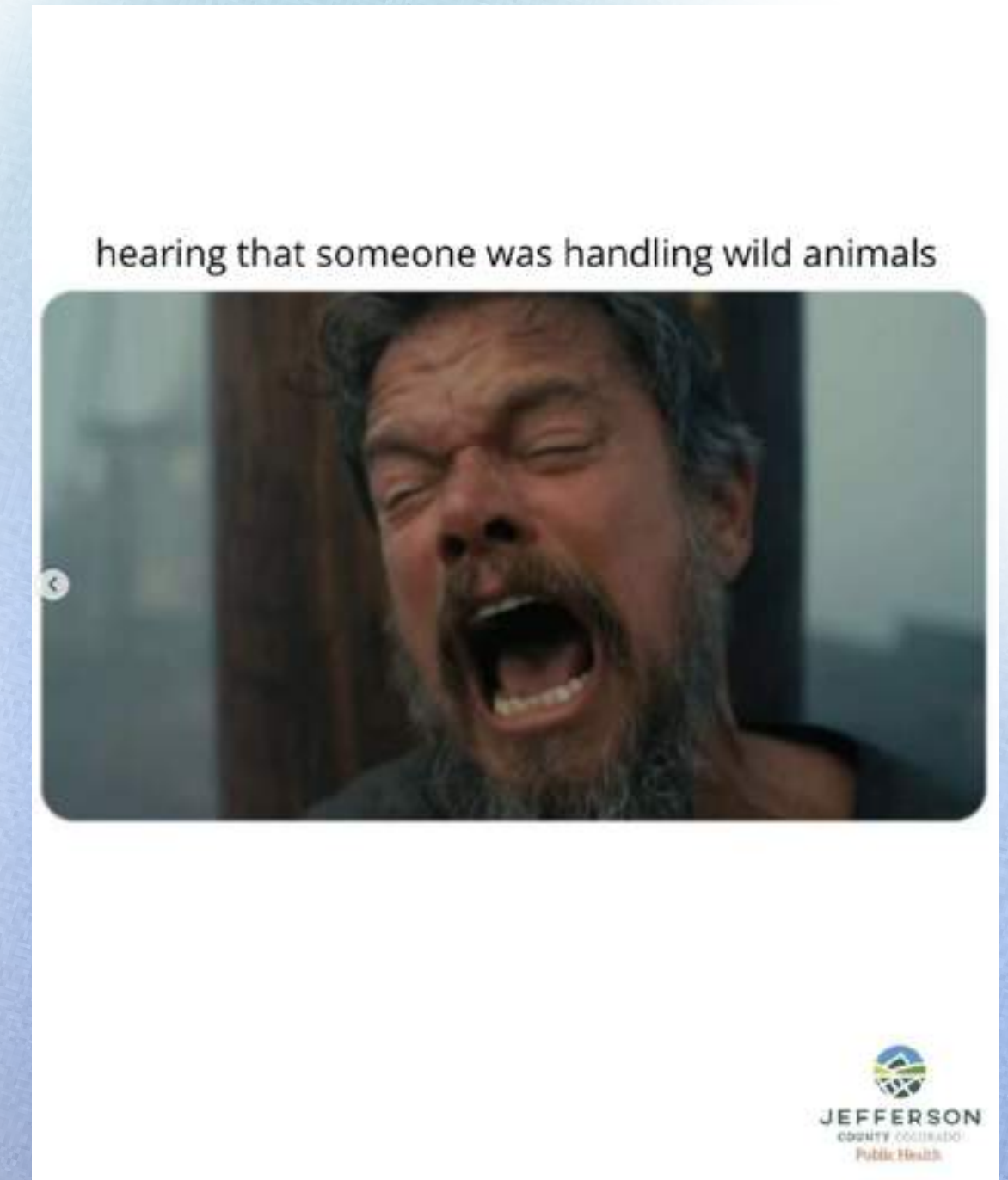


JEFFERSON
COUNTY COLORADO
Public Health

Culturally Relevant

- Trends
- Memes
- Humor
- Satire

Let the Photo do the Heavy Lifting



Participate: Copy Contest

 Write the funniest text to go on this image.

 Make it something relevant to your agency/work.

 Submit using the QR code or link.



bit.ly/4gRqjow

“Happy Monday! Just circling back on thi-”



Platform Personalities

Each platform is different

Same message ≠ same execution



Instagram

personality + visual humor



Facebook

explanation + community



LinkedIn

talking to/with peers



Reels (on FB or IG)

relatability



Twitter/X

immediacy



Bluesky

alternative immediacy



Humanizing Staff

Your staff are your best influencers.

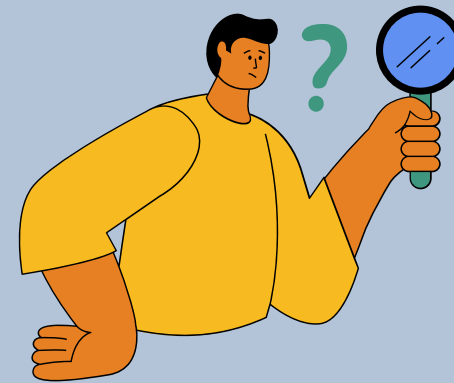
What we did:

- Surveyed comfort levels
- Found on-camera champions
- Made it low pressure
- Normalized imperfection

The Fine Line



Are we punching up?



Could this confuse instead of clarify?



Would we stand by this publicly?

When to Push It and When to Leave It: Decision Matrix



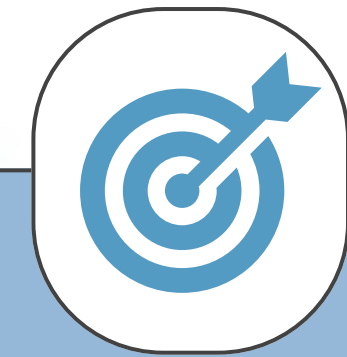
ABSURD

- Low-risk topics
- Behavior change
- Seasonal content



BLEND

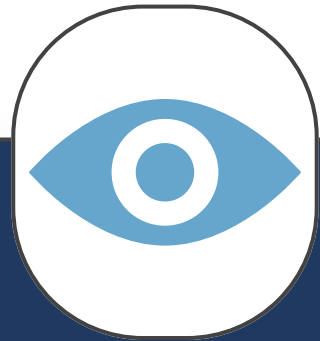
- Medium nuance
- Explanations
- Myth busting



SIMPLE

- High-risk topics
- Legal updates
- Emergencies

Results Snapshot: The First-Year Impact



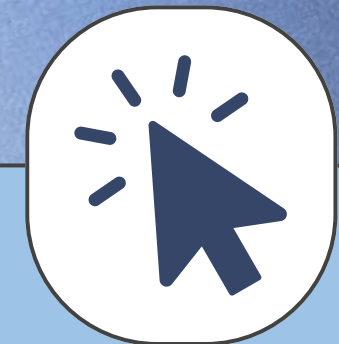
Over 1 million
impressions
across JCPH social
platforms.



+29%
Instagram audience
growth
year over year.



Over 200,000
engagements across
social platforms.



7,000+
clicks to JCPH webpages
from LinkedIn posts.

If Your Feed Feels Human, Your Agency Feels Human



- You don't need a big budget
- You don't need viral magic
- You don't need a creative agency

**You need cultural awareness +
courage + consistency**



Thank You

for your time
and attention



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