BUDGET SPLIT

Content vs paid ads: how to split the effort

Paid buys attention now and stops when the budget stops. Content builds an asset that lowers the cost of every future patient.

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THE COMPARISON

Content and paid, side by side

SPEED	Slow and compounding vs immediate
COST	Upfront effort, low marginal vs ongoing, rising with competition
BUILDS	An owned asset and authority vs reach while you pay
AI VISIBILITY	Feeds AI answers vs little direct effect
RISK	Poor content misleads vs claims scrutiny, dependency

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BY MATURITY

Lean one way depending on stage

NEW UNIT	Paid, with content built in parallel
GROWING UNIT	Balanced: paid fills gaps while content starts ranking
ESTABLISHED	Content, with paid for specific gaps

Owned traffic lowers cost per patient over time.

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WHERE PAID WINS

Four jobs paid still does best

- Launching a new unit or service line
- Urgent, high-intent searches you do not yet rank for
- Seasonal demand: monsoon illnesses, health-check drives
- Testing which messages resonate before investing in content

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CONTENT THAT COMPOUNDS

What keeps working after it is published

SERVICE PAGES	Rank for local high-intent searches, cited by AI
DOCTOR PAGES	Capture name searches, which grow with reputation
FAQS	Match how patients and assistants ask
COST PAGES	Answer the question patients most want answered
RECOVERY GUIDES	Reduce anxiety and no-shows, earn links

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THE SPLIT RULE

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Fund paid media to cover the demand you cannot yet capture organically, and fund content to shrink that gap each quarter.

As organic enquiries grow for one service line, move part of its paid budget into content for the next.

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MEASURE FAIRLY

Judge both on cost per treated patient

1. Track organic enquiries by landing page in the CRM
2. Allow content months, not weeks
3. Count assisted journeys that enquired through another channel
4. Use AI citations as early signals for new content
5. Load content team costs into the organic number

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WHEN TO CUT PAID

Test by stepping spend down

- Cut when organic and AI reliably capture that demand
- Watch total treated patients, not just paid ones
- If the total holds, paid was buying patients who would have come anyway

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READ THE FULL GUIDE

Content vs paid ads for hospitals, in full

- What good hospital content looks like
- Keeping content accurate and reviewed
- Who should own hospital content
- gauravphogat.com/content-vs-paid-ads-hospitals

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