



From Patient to Powerhouse

Brenda Snow's Vision and the
Agencies Bringing It to Life

May 2025

OmnicomHealth

Introduction

When Brenda Snow was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, the life she knew changed overnight. But instead of fading into the background of a complex and impersonal healthcare system, she found a voice—and then built a platform to elevate others. Her book, *DIAGNOSED*, is a roadmap to help patients find their way through the challenges presented by life-changing health conditions. It's also a manifesto. It champions a truth too often overlooked in pharma marketing—that patients are not data points. They are people. And they deserve to be seen, heard, and understood.

To explore the themes of the book and how they apply to modern health marketing, Deb Deaver, CEO of Patients & Purpose, sat down with Brenda Snow for a conversation about the patient experience, agency leadership, and what it takes to truly connect.

Part 1: Diagnosed – The Power of the Patient Perspective



Deb Deaver: Brenda, *DIAGNOSED* is incredibly personal. What made you decide to share your story?



Brenda Snow: I wanted people—especially those in healthcare marketing—to understand what a diagnosis really feels like. The fear, the confusion, the isolation. It's not just about symptoms and treatments; it's about navigating an unfamiliar world without a map. I wrote *DIAGNOSED* to give voice to that experience.

**"I was forced into vulnerability—and then realized it could be powerful."
—Brenda Snow**



What was that journey like for you, from diagnosis to where you are today?



When I was diagnosed with MS, I was a young professional, a mother, someone with a full life ahead. Suddenly, everything was uncertain. It took time to process not just what the disease meant medically, but what it meant for my identity. I faced judgment, fear, even shame. But over time, I realized that the vulnerability I was forced into could be powerful. That's when I started turning my story into something larger.



You write, "I know patients... because I am one." How has that shaped your work?



That perspective is foundational. When I founded Snow Companies, I knew that if we could help brands speak with patients instead of at them, everything would change. Real stories, real voices, real connections—that's where trust begins. And because I had lived it, I could see what was missing in the way our industry talked to people.





One of the biggest themes in your book is voice—whose voice gets heard, and why that matters. Why do you think marketers need to hear that message now more than ever?



Because the stakes are higher than ever. We're in a moment where medical innovation is accelerating, but communication isn't keeping up. If a patient doesn't understand or feel seen in the message, the medicine doesn't matter. Voice is power. And when we elevate the patient's voice, we give people a sense of control, dignity, and hope.

"If a patient doesn't feel seen in the message, the medicine doesn't matter."

—Brenda Snow



What do you think marketers still miss?



They often assume information alone is enough. But patients want to feel understood. You can have the best treatment in the world, but if you can't connect to the person who needs it, you're not going to make an impact. We need to meet people emotionally, not just intellectually. That's what *DIAGNOSED* is about—the humanity behind the health journey.



Part 2: The 4 Lessons Every Health Marketer Should Know

1. Patients Don't Just Want Information—They Want Understanding



One of the things we've both seen is that information alone doesn't create connection.



Right. Patients are overwhelmed. What they need is someone who understands the emotional reality they're living through.







And when that happens—when messaging reflects what someone's actually experiencing—that's when trust forms.



That's why real patient stories matter. Whether it's videos, peer mentorship, or digital content, the point is to make the information feel human.





2. Empathy is Strategy, Not Sentiment

-  **I've always believed that empathy isn't a soft skill—it's a sharp tool. It's how we build trust.**
-  Exactly. Empathy is how you design communication that actually lands. When we craft messaging, the tone and language are as important as the content.
-  **It's not about being soft—it's about being real, clear, and responsive to people's needs.**
-  Empathy isn't an add-on; it's a design principle.

3. Patients are Unique. So Should Your Marketing Be.

-  **Representation and inclusivity aren't trends—they're necessities. We have to consider cultural nuance, language, accessibility—all of it.**
-  Absolutely. Patients come from every background and every walk of life. Each one brings a different set of experiences and expectations. If they can't see themselves in your message, they won't believe it's for them.
-  **And that disconnect can lead to lost engagement—or worse, lost trust.**

4. Technology Doesn't Replace Humanity—It Should Amplify It

-  **We're seeing so much innovation with digital tools and AI—it's exciting, but it also raises a big question: how do we keep humanity at the center?**
-  It starts with intent. Every use of tech should ask, “Does this help someone feel more seen?”
-  **Right—tech should enable more responsive, empathetic communication, not remove the human touch.**
-  When used well, technology doesn't diminish humanity. It deepens connection at scale.



A Shift in Perspective: Aligning with Brenda's Message

At Omnicom Health, we are fortunate to have agencies whose missions align deeply with the values articulated in *DIAGNOSED*. Snow Companies and Patients & Purpose have long understood that better outcomes start with better conversations. Their work is rooted in elevating the patient voice, promoting inclusive storytelling, and creating truly human connections.

For 25 years, Snow Companies has stayed anchored to the belief that real patients and caregivers belong at the center of life science communication. With its ever-evolving range of storytelling and co-creation services, which originated with Snow's signature Patient Ambassador® Programs, the agency is the global leader in patient engagement. Patients & Purpose, a premier patient and consumer agency, has spent the last 25 years transforming the patient experience through breakthrough DTC campaigns, best-in-class support programs, and culturally attuned messaging. Together, these agencies exemplify what it means to not just speak to patients—but to understand them. And as we reflect on the patient-centered values Brenda shares in *DIAGNOSED*, we believe there are key lessons every health marketer can apply to build stronger, more empathetic, and more effective communication.

Conclusion



Brenda, your story and your work are reminders that behind every data point is a person with a story. *DIAGNOSED* is a wake-up call for our industry.



Thank you, Deb. My hope is that we continue to build a healthcare system where communication is not just accurate, but compassionate. Where patients are not just informed, but empowered.



At Omnicom Health, and especially within P&P and Snow Companies, we're proud to carry that mission forward. Empathy isn't just part of what we do—it's who we are.

Learn More

If you'd like to explore more about the patient-first thinking featured in this piece, we invite you to connect with the leaders who bring that mission to life every day.

For more on *DIAGNOSED* and Brenda's personal story, feel free to reach out to her directly. For questions related to Snow Companies, contact Blake Shewey. And for insights into the work happening at Patients & Purpose, please contact Deb Deaver..



Brenda Snow

Founder, Snow Companies

brenda@brendasnow.com



Blake Shewey

CEO, Snow Companies

bshevey@snow-companies.com



Deb Deaver

CEO, Patients & Purpose

ddeaver@patientsandpurpose.com

Read or purchase *DIAGNOSED* by Brenda Snow:

<https://www.amazon.com/Diagnosed-Brenda-Snow/dp/BOCNWWL9CV>



Learn more about Snow Companies:
<https://snow-companies.com/>



Learn more about Patients & Purpose:
<https://www.patientsandpurpose.com>