

Hospital Marketing White Paper



2017 Hospital Marketing Trends

Shifting gears for the evolving world of healthcare



TOP 10 HOSPITAL MARKETING TRENDS

Shifting Gears For The Evolving World Of Healthcare

With population health and high-deductible health insurance plans at the forefront of care, organizations will benefit from providing a more proactive and personalized patient experience. Hospitals and health systems that gain the attention of niche audiences and provide resources to help patients make healthier choices will outsmart the competition in 2017.

In this white paper, we'll discuss our predictions for hospital marketing trends in 2017 and how organizations can shift their focus from illness to wellness through the use of technology, content and customer service.



Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Trend: Staying one step ahead of the consumer and two steps ahead of the competition

With the healthcare landscape becoming more competitive than ever before, it seems like marketers are in a race to get to consumers before they even know they have an issue. Likewise, once your hospital or health system engages patients, it's imperative to manage their journey from their first point of contact to when they buy-in to a service. CRM can help store and centralize this data in a way that's efficient for your hospital and your patients.

In 2017, hospital marketers will use CRM even more as a vehicle to attract new and retain existing patients while measuring marketing outcomes. The benefits are quantifiable. Organizations can use this platform to track campaign results and ROI. The benefits are also altruistic. With CRM, marketers can tailor messages and target people who can benefit the most from your care services. For example, during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, hospitals can use their database to identify women who are at risk or are overdue for a mammogram. Overall, a CRM system can save your organization money by marketing to the right audiences, and provide consumers with a better patient experience by delivering them the appropriate messages for their decision stage.



Focused marketing

Trend: Narrowing target audiences to combat keyword ownership

Competing for search ranking is almost impossible in an oversaturated content marketing world. Larger medical centers and services such as The Cleveland Clinic or WebMD tend to dominate search queries and divert traffic from your organization's website. To counter the competition, hospital marketers should step back from 'big picture' strategies and start directing their attention toward narrower, focused audiences.

In 2017, marketers who create content that's specific to niche groups, such as minorities, young mothers, or medical tourists will gain an advantage in traffic. Niche audiences tend to be more passionate about their specific interests, values and hobbies. By adding a dimension of differentiation, you can zero in on specific audiences and better compete for their attention. Your next orthopedic campaign could target older couples who regularly compete in pickle-ball tournaments and are at an increased risk of joint injury. Or your next cardiac campaign can target Hispanic males who are at a high risk for heart disease. Your target audience may decrease in size, but your variables of engagement are going to increase significantly.



Location-based advertising

Trend: Exploiting the location of consumers to serve them tailored messages

With 30% of the world's population already using location-based marketing services, geo-conquesting and geofencing are on the rise as one of the most measurable and hyper-targeted media out there. These digital tools generate a deep pool of analytical data; hospital marketers can use this information to find out how well their targeted offerings bring patients into their organization. With geofencing and geo-conquesting, your hospital or health system can target people who walk into a community gym, shop at a local farmers market or visit one of your locations.

These initiatives not only help drive awareness and build volume, but can also contribute to stronger relationships with your consumers. Use geo-fencing tactics to send your patients health alerts, reminders, and informational tidbits concerning general health awareness and wellness.

By exploiting a consumer's location, you can deliver content that may not have been sought after, but puts your organization on their radar.



Voice command search

Trend: Adjusting keywords according to consumer behavior

The use of vocal search is becoming ubiquitous as consumers lean on search services such as Siri and Alexa for answers. According to a Google report, 20% of all mobile queries are vocal search queries and voice command search is three times more likely to be location-based than text search. In 2017, hospitals that create localized content and long tail keywords to market their services will capitalize on this trend.

We are already noting a trend in consumers using longer and more specific search phrases to achieve more accurate results. Users no longer have to comply with robotic speech patterns that have dominated voice search in the past. Instead of asking Siri, "Find a hospital, Brooklyn, NY," consumers can ask, "Find a hospital that will treat my broken leg in Brooklyn, NY near an active bus line." Vocal search is easy, convenient and provides consumers with accurate information at the blink of an eye. Hospitals and health systems should adjust their keywords accordingly if they want to keep up with this trend.



Promoting population health

Trend: Shifting marketing efforts toward wellness and prevention

The shift from fee-for-service to value-based reimbursement is transitioning how hospitals and health systems manage their patients' health. Organizations are tasked with focusing their attention on wellness and prevention and less on illnesses. One way to adapt to this shift in healthcare is to create content that helps patients be more proactive about their health, such as blog posts about fitness, cooking videos featuring healthy recipes and fitness apps that reward patients for healthy behavior. Produce content that empowers consumers to maintain a healthier lifestyle and you'll stay ahead of the game in 2017.

Investing in a hospital wellness center is an expensive, yet progressive population health initiative. Fitness centers can motivate patients to maintain a healthier lifestyle by offering additional resources than the local gym. Patients will find access to knowledgeable staff, trained physicians and state of the art equipment. In most cases, these wellness centers offer services to patients for free, forging a longer lasting relationship with your organization. A more costly initiative, the ROI may be worth the investment. As trips to the emergency room start to dwindle, these centers can act as the new front door to your hospital.



10x video

Trend: Creating web video that is 10 times better than the competition

Video isn't the unicorn of content marketing anymore. Almost every hospital is using web video as a vehicle to engage care consumers and generate results. Especially in hospital marketing, it can help boost click-through rates and assist in capturing leads. So here's the caveat - video isn't going to cut it in 2017. Marketers will need to create video that is 10 times better than the competition to stand out.

Don't panic; hospital marketers can create outstanding footage. However, you can't overlook the most important piece of the puzzle: a great story. Creating a story that inspires loyalty and engages consumers can be a challenge, but helps outshine the competition. The reason web video is popular among consumers — particularly healthcare consumers — is its ability to

translate serious subject matter into interesting and relatable stories. Video that is 10 times better should have a plot, climax and a resolution. Much like a movie, it should have a beginning, a middle and an end. Don't be afraid to push the envelope. If you tell a great story, consumers will want to become part of the next chapter.



Marketing to out-of-pocket consumers

Trends: Marketing prevention to consumers with high deductible health insurance plans

The number of care consumers with high deductible health insurance plans is adding up, and the largest generation in history (Millennials) is part of that equation. For some people, that means paying out-of-pocket for care. And for hospitals and health systems, that means patients might ignore serious health concerns and delay treatment to save money. That could end in a costly trip to the emergency room and a stack of unpaid bills.

To respond to this trend, hospitals and health systems can market preventative care to these "out-of-pocket" consumers to urge them to be proactive about their health. Use mobile apps to market health and wellness initiatives to younger millennial groups. For families, market a more holistic approach to care such as family medicine practices. Create tools that can help patients get the most out of every visit, such as a checkup checklist to use at annual doctor visits or an app to help them better manage their health records. By marketing preventative care, it might feel like you're giving away free advice. However, it's all about building trust between you and the patient. Not to mention, your organization's goodwill might spread word-of-mouth around the community.

These out-of-pocket consumers may not have the money to invest in your organization, but if you keep them engaged and informed they'll feel confident choosing your services down the road. People change jobs, switch insurance providers, get married and/or grow their income. Play the long game now and you'll see the return on investment later.



The patient experience

Trend: Focusing on internal alignment to wow empowered care consumers

The patient experience is quickly becoming one of the most important factors in choosing a hospital or health system for care. Providing a superior patient experience not only helps boost your brand's reputation, but research shows that organizations that provide a better patient experience are likely to achieve a healthier bottom line. Before your organization can provide a higher level of customer service, however, it's imperative to get your hospital staff on board with its brand messaging.

Most hospitals develop a mission statement to help explain the ultimate goal of the organization. That's great, but ask any of your employees to recite that mission and they'll probably respond with blank stares. In 2017, having a brand positioning statement that resonates with your surrounding environment will help employees approach every day with a goal in mind. This statement is your battle cry, your mantra, the sentence that best describes the relationship with your community. With a new statement in place, it can help contribute to how patients view and react to your hospital or health system in the future.



Telemedicine

Trend: Adapting to physician demand and accessibility with new uses of technology

More than 85% of the American population has health insurance and physicians are stretching themselves thin to meet the needs of their expanded clientele. In 2017, telemedicine offers a viable solution to this shift in healthcare and answers a convenience factor many patients demand.

As technology becomes more accessible, telemedicine becomes more attainable. Changes in state laws across the country have allowed physicians to establish relationships with patients and prescribe medication via video chat. This type of care meets an affordability factor that many patients are demanding— the average telemedicine visit is \$40. As mentioned, the majority of consumers have high deductible plans and are likely to put off care. Simply put, they don't want to take time off from work to take care of their health. Telemedicine can help your organization reach out to these consumers without co-opting too much of their time.



Digital advertising 3.0

Trend: Forcing older ads out of the digital game with newer marketing tactics

Digital advertising is old news, but recently more proactive and engaging methods have risen to the occasion. For a while, digital display and banner ads dominated the digital advertising scene. According to comScore, digital display ads view-ability rates plateaued in 2014. They have become that pesky, unavoidable pop-up ad that many people ignore.

In 2017, hospital marketers should focus on digital advertising that is less invasive and more tailored to consumers' needs, such as native advertising, retargeting and paid search. According to Dedicated Media, on average native ads (ads that match the function and format of a website) are viewed 53% more than banner ads. They blend into a website like a chameleon and are hardly recognizable as advertising. Twitter has recently capitalized on this trend using "promoted tweets" to rack up impressions.

We've all heard of "marketing in micro-moments," meaning reaching out to consumers at the exact time they need your product or service. At the first point of contact with your hospital or health system, a patient might not be ready to buy-in to your services. With retargeting, your hospital is ready for patients when they need your services the most. Similarly, paid search is the least invasive type of advertising and a better way to stop larger hospitals or health systems from dominating search rankings. Use localized and service line specific keywords to attract community members and pinpoint issues they are facing.

In 2017, hospitals and health systems will need to focus their marketing efforts on prevention and personalized care. Consumers are becoming smart shoppers and are more empowered than ever to conduct research about your brand. By being proactive about these hospital marketing trends and underlying consumer behaviors, healthcare organizations can stay ahead of the competition. ©

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