



Healthcare Marketing White Paper



# HEALTHCARE MARKETING ANALYTICS

USING INBOUND AND OUTBOUND  
MARKETING METRICS TO BUILD A PLAN,  
TRACK RESULTS AND PROVE ROI



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## HEALTHCARE MARKETING ANALYTICS

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TO BUILD A PLAN, TRACK RESULTS AND PROVE ROI

The business of healthcare is ruled by numbers – revenue, reimbursement, patient volumes – why should marketing be any different? This white paper covers the importance of building measurement into a marketing plan, what to measure, and the best tools to help track and report campaign results.

### WHY MEASURE?

Measurement is what every healthcare marketing campaign should start and end with. It is an essential step to determine success, failure, and what can be done better. Without it, hospitals and physician practices blindly deplete their budgets with no way of tracking if any dollar spent brought them any closer to reaching their goals.

#### **Here's why it's important to measure marketing results:**

- To evaluate and refine tactics: This step comes at the beginning and end of every campaign to determine what's working, what isn't working, and in what ways the marketing team can improve.
- To prioritize marketing efforts based on performance: If budget cuts occur throughout the year, measurement will allow strategic cuts to reduce the budget while still making the biggest impact possible based on the media spend. It's important to note that not always the most expensive forms of media are the most effective. In fact, in some cases it is the opposite.
- To determine which tactics should be given more attention or funding: If a direct mail piece didn't deliver an acceptable ROI, it can be cut from the budget next year and those dollars can be allocated to an SEM campaign that showed promising results. Without measurement, this would never be discovered and a hospital could continue dumping dollars into a medium that isn't benefiting anyone.
- To take a proactive approach to marketing efforts: If after the first month the campaign is not doing well, the marketing team has the insights to make changes and turn results around. Just because a campaign is off to a shaky start doesn't mean that all dollars are lost.
- To prove ROI of marketing efforts: This justifies campaign costs, reinforces media decisions, and helps to keep physicians and staff aligned to the campaign goals, while keeping extraneous demands at bay.

## BUILDING A CAMPAIGN AROUND ANALYTICS

Before the marketing team builds a campaign for a hospital brand or service line, they first need to know the end goal. Having a measurable goal and identified metrics will help to keep the campaign on track and manage expectations. There are a number of components to consider, including benchmarks, goals, and indicators.

### **Benchmarking**

Benchmarking is a way to compare campaign results and performance metrics to current conditions, historical data, competitive data, or industry standards. A benchmark study is when current trends are recorded to compare tactical goals before and after a campaign. This determines whether a campaign is successful in achieving its goals. Historical data are older metrics recorded about the specific hospital or physician practice to view trends over time. The results of both can inform future planning, especially campaigns that aim to accomplish similar goals or reach a similar audience.

Competitive data benchmarking compares business performance or marketshare to a hospital's or practice's direct competitors. This type of benchmark study is helpful because it allows hospitals to see how they measure up to others in their market and puts its individual results into perspective; however, competitive data collected by governments and other regulating bodies is often old. It can take six months or more from the date of collection before it becomes available, so while it can be used for long-term planning, it's not very useful for monthly or quarterly planning.

Industry standards are national standards for hospitals or practices of similar sizes or in markets of similar demographics. This type of benchmarking does not always draw a direct line to a specific hospital or practice, but similar to competitive data, it helps a hospital understand how they performed in comparison to similar organizations.

### **Big Picture v. Tactical Goals**

Big picture goals are the overall objective to all marketing efforts. For a hospital, this could be gaining market share, increasing inpatient volume, being the preferred hospital brand in its market, or improving the overall attitude and awareness towards a hospital in the community. These goals are affixed to the business side of healthcare.

Tactical goals are related to the marketing side of healthcare. These are the smaller objectives, or stepping stones, related to each individual campaign. This could be increasing traffic on the hospital website, getting prospective patients to attend an open house at a new facility, increasing video views, or improving attendance of web chats held by physicians. Both big picture and tactical goals need to be kept in mind when forming a new campaign. Marketing efforts should address both sets of goals.

### **Leading v. Lagging Indicators**

Leading indicators are activities or incidences that suggest trend. While they are not guarantees, basic assumptions can be made based on performance. Leading indicators also provide an early warning system to anticipate results and adjust tactics as needed to improve the trend. Just like accomplishing tactical goals brings a hospital closer to achieving its big picture goals, positive leading indicators suggest positive lagging indicators. Lagging indicators are when the task or goal has been reached.

For example, let's say a hospital runs an advertising campaign to increase patient visits. The creative drives patients to a landing page on the website with a phone number to make an appointment at a new office. A high number of people arriving on the landing page and spending time there is a leading indicator that they are interested and the campaign will be a success. However, the number of people who actually call the phone number and make an appointment is the lagging indicator. This determines the actual success of the campaign.

## WHAT TO MEASURE

Depending on the type of campaign running, what the big picture goal is, and how often it will be measured, there are different ways to measure results, and different metrics that check the campaign from all angles. The weight of the various results will be contingent on the goal of the campaign. Here is an overview of popular metrics to use in various types of marketing campaigns, and the tools available to measure them.

### MASS MEDIA ADVERTISING

Mass media advertising includes print, TV, radio, outdoor and transit advertising. These types of marketing do not provide an analytics report of ad performance, but there are tools that report how many people were reached with the hospital's message.

#### Leading Indicators

The standard measurements for traditional media are reach, frequency, and rating points. These give the estimated number of people the campaign will reach when the advertising runs. Different services allow advertisers to gather more information about the estimated audience, including demographics, psychographics and behavior of the targeted group. This information is a leading indicator that the campaign will be successful because it tells the hospital who and how many people will be exposed to the marketing message.

#### Measurement Tools for Leading Indicators of Mass Media Advertising:

- Nielsen Ratings, Alliance for Audited Media, and Traffic Audit Bureau track & estimate audience size and viewer demographics
- Scarborough, Simmons Market Research Bureau, and GfK Mediamark Research & Intelligence measure audience psychographics and behavior by medium and content

#### Lagging Indicators

The lagging indicator of mass media advertising is the actual number of people reached by the marketing messages. It is virtually impossible to determine whether someone reacts specifically to a TV commercial, but if trackable calls to action are built into the spot, such as iTV or unique phone numbers, engagement can be measured. Lagging indicators then could be phone calls, inquiries, or booked appointments. Unless the creative has a unique, measurable metric, or it is event specific, the only lagging indicator that can be pulled from mass media advertising is actual audience size and awareness.

#### Measurement Tools for Lagging Indicators of Mass Media Advertising:

- Call tracking phone numbers measure advertising response by campaign, medium or service line
- Advertising recall studies measure aided and unaided brand awareness
- Post-buy analyses compare actual reach, frequency and impressions to estimates

## ONLINE ADVERTISING

Online advertising makes it easier to track ROI than traditional advertising because it provides a full report at the end of each campaign that illustrates how the ads performed. Almost any tracking information needed can be obtained with the right tools.

### Leading Indicators

Online ads track impressions, clicks, the click through rate (CTR, percentage of clicks per impression), cost per click, post-click activity (how many actions someone takes on the site after clicking on an ad) and post-impression activity (how many actions someone takes on the site after seeing an ad, doesn't click on it, but then goes to the site on their own). If these numbers are good, that indicates that the creative caught peoples' attention, but it does not necessarily mean that the campaign will be successful at achieving specific goals, such as patient volume or brand preference. Also, similar to mass media advertising, online advertising has tools to estimate audience size and demographics.

#### Measurement Tools for Leading Indicators of Online Advertising:

- Alexa, Compete, Quantcast, and Google Analytics estimate audience size and behavior
- Google AdWords, Bing Ads, and post-campaign reports from ad networks or individual sites evaluate online ad impressions, clicks, and CTR
- Google Analytics and Bing Webmaster Tools track website traffic from online ads
- Nielsen Online Campaign Ratings analyzes who ads reached and their performance across different platforms (TV, computers and tablets)

### Lagging Indicators

When it comes to lagging indicators, the most important metric is the conversion rate. It can also be broken down and analyzed by the cost per conversion and view through conversions, which is when someone sees an ad and doesn't click on it, but then goes to the site on their own and converts. The conversion rate determines if the campaign was successful in achieving the tactical goals.

#### Measurement Tools for Lagging Indicators of Online Advertising:

- Google Analytics and Bing Ads Campaign Analytics Tool measure online ad conversion rate

## WEBSITE ACTIVITY & SEO

Similar to online advertising, website marketing creates a deep pool of metrics for analysis and reporting. No matter what the tactical goals are, website analytics have a way to track leading and lagging indicators.

### Leading Indicators

Today's sophisticated analytics tools can view site traffic, such as: page views, unique page views, repeat visitors, unique visitors, actions on page, average time spent on the page, the bounce rate, video views and completions, audience demographics, and how SEO is performing.

There are three ways people can arrive on a website: direct, organic, and referral.

- Direct is when someone types in the URL directly or visits it from a bookmark in their browser.
- Organic is when people arrive on the site through a search engine result.
- Referral is when someone clicks on a link that leads to the site.

Keeping these in mind, it's also possible to evaluate how most people are getting to the site (traffic sources), the number of indexed pages on the site (pages that show up in organic search), and keyword performance and ranking (which search keywords are bringing up the site in organic searches).

Lastly, inbound links are a big indicator of SEO and the website's ability to be found. Inbound links can be found in online news releases, related sites, directories, external blogs, local media, social media activity, and emails. The more inbound links that point to the hospital's website, the better.

#### Measurement Tools for Leading Indicators of Website Activity:

- Google Analytics, Bing Webmaster Tools, and Clicky analyze website activity
- Piwik provides insights on website visitors and campaigns
- Mint identifies what and who is generating the most interest on the site

### Lagging Indicators

Just like online advertising, the most important lagging indicator to analyze is the conversion rate. To gain more perspective on how and why people convert, some tools provide insight on how the majority of conversions are arriving on the site, what page they convert on, the average number of actions taken on the site, the average time spent, and visitor demographics. If a pattern develops, it's possible to adjust the marketing to create a more favorable environment for conversions.

#### Measurement Tools for Lagging Indicators of Website Activity:

- Google Analytics, Bing Webmaster Tools, and Clicky track conversions and the website activity leading to them

## BLOGGING

Blogging may seem like an impossible effort to measure, but engagement can be used to gauge its effectiveness. This information shows which blog topics and formats are the most popular to keep blog traffic up.

### Leading Indicators

With the right software, it's possible to track the amount of traffic to a hospital's blog and where it's coming from, the amount of individual post views to see which are the most popular, and the number of followers and subscribers to the blog and RSS feed.

#### Measurement Tools for Leading Indicators of Blogging:

- Google Analytics, Bing Webmaster Tools and Open Web Analytics track blog activity and popularity

### Lagging Indicators

Engagement can be measured by the number of comments and shares on each blog post. However, it's possible to take it a step further by providing a call to action in certain blog posts, such as a form or a video. The lagging indicator would then be how many readers performed the call to action or completed the goal.

#### Measurement Tools for Lagging Indicators of Blogging:

- Disqus is a blogging comment platform that manages comments and other reader activity
- Delicious, Stumble Upon, and Reddit are social bookmarking sites that track the number of times individual blog posts are shared
- AddThis, ShareThis, and Po.st allow people to easily share content, and track the number of shares

## EMAIL MARKETING

Email marketing also offers richer behavioral data than traditional marketing. It's possible to monitor email success through comprehensive analytics reports similar to online advertising, website activity, and SEO. An inbound management system allows access to reports of the effectiveness of each email, providing insights for adjustment of content or style to mimic the most popular emails.

### Leading Indicators

Email marketing software provides: the delivery rate (the number of emails that were delivered), soft v. hard bounce rate (the number of emails that were not successfully delivered), CTR, the number of email subscribers, and the number of emails that were shared or forwarded to a friend or colleague. Not all metrics are reliable, though, including the open rate and unsubscribe rate (see sidebar).

Other great leading indicators are the ability to create and track landing page activity, do A/B testing and compare their results, and some of the most sophisticated software tracks individual visitors to the site and records each action they take on the landing page or website, and each time they come back and why, until they convert.

### Two email metrics you can't always count on

**Open rates** can be unreliable for a few reasons:

- Highlighting an email to delete it can register as an open, even if the person didn't read it.
- Opening an email with image-blocking enabled won't count because images didn't load.
- Lastly, someone may open an email, but find the content inside irrelevant and not spend much time with it.

**Unsubscribe rates** can be unreliable because many people don't take the time to unsubscribe from an email list and instead continue to delete emails as soon as they come through.

### Measurement Tools for Leading Indicators of Email Marketing:

- Constant Contact and MailChimp manage email marketing campaigns
- Litmus tests and tracks emails
- Act-On and Genius do both

### Lagging Indicators

The first lagging indicator in email marketing is the CTR to a landing page or website. After that, the determining lagging indicator is the conversion rate for the desired action, be it inquiries, registration for an event, or making an appointment. The conversion rate not only indicates which email content was of most interest to subscribers, but also the best days and times to send out emails, which could help cultivate more conversions.

Some software has the ability to set up behavioral scoring for individual email subscribers and visitors to the site. These are based on different values for different pages of the site (some are more relevant to converting than others), filling out specific forms, downloading content, and clicking through multiple emails. It can also create negative scores for individuals who are not exhibiting patient behavior, such as visiting the career page.

### Measurement Tools for Lagging Indicators of Email Marketing:

- Google Analytics, Bing Webmaster Tools, Act-On and Genius track website activity from sent emails
- Salesforce, SugarCRM, and Zoho provide CRM support



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Historically, people have made a big deal about “likes” and follows, but those numbers are somewhat meaningless for big picture goals. Social media marketing is measured by engagement, which can be quantified, but the numbers alone are not concrete. To truly measure social media engagement, it’s important to listen to the conversations and feedback about the hospital brand to see if they are generally positive, neutral, or negative, and what buzz surrounds its content.

While it’s difficult to measure social media’s direct influence on hospital business goals (marketshare, patient volumes), assigning measurable goals and metrics can demonstrate the impact of social activity.

### Leading Indicators

The first metric to look at is the number of people listening to the hospital’s accounts on social media. This can be measured by the number of “likes” or followers on the Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Google+ pages, LinkedIn group members, blog subscribers, and YouTube channel subscribers. This shows the number of people who may be interested in seeing your information.

The second leading indicator is the amount of social media creation. This includes the number of posts, tweets and pins produced daily, weekly, and monthly. It’s important to have active accounts to keep consumer interest up.

Be careful of changes happening on Facebook that limit the audience of posts, even if they are subscribed to the hospital’s page. Facebook is trying to monetize business pages by forcing them to promote posts to their followers. That is why these numbers can only be considered leading indicators.

#### Measurement Tools for Leading Indicators of Social Media:

- HootSuite, Viralheat, Spredfast, and Sprout Social manage social media content and activity
- Twitter Ads and Facebook Ads can help build a social audience by increasing consumer awareness of accounts

### Lagging Indicators

The next level of social media measurement is engagement, which demonstrates if listeners are interacting with the information shared. This can be measured through retweets and @ replies or mentions on the Twitter account, shares, likes, and comments on social media posts, views and embeds of videos, content reposts on social bookmarking sites, downloads of content, and quality of conversation surrounding the brand.

#### Measurement Tools for Lagging Indicators of Social Media:

- Radian 6, Social Mention, Sysomos, UberVU, and Google Alerts listen to conversations about the hospital brand and its competitors
- Twitalyzer and Klout track Twitter impact, engagement, and influence
- Google Analytics measure website traffic from social media efforts

## HEALTHY MARKETING AND ANALYTICS

Measurement is a necessary step at the beginning and end of each healthcare marketing campaign to plan strategically and justify campaign costs. Every type of marketing is measurable, from advertising, to social media, to email newsletters. Each type has its own tools to track successes and failures. What it all boils down to is setting reasonable, measurable goals and identifying the relevant metrics that will be used to determine campaign success or failure at the beginning of the process. This is the only way to truly know what your marketing ROI is and how you can continue to improve upon it.

However, be careful to not over measure. Just because the metric exists doesn't mean it applies to the goals or tactics set out in the beginning of the campaign. It's best to pick one or two metrics that will represent the campaign goals, and analyze those for insights. ■

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