

Healthcare Marketing White Paper



## 2016 Healthcare Marketing Trends

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# 2016

## HEALTHCARE MARKETING TRENDS



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#### **Speed And Personalization Of Content Are Popular Themes In 2016**

In 2016, hospitals will essentially need to be everywhere, whenever a consumer is searching for them, in such a way that it feels like that piece of content was written exclusively for him or her. That type of efficiency and relevance is what will drive patients and prospective patients to convert. If your healthcare organization aims to help make patients' lives easier through its content and digital marketing, it will see a lot of success in the coming year.

In this white paper, we'll discuss our predictions for healthcare marketing in 2016.



### **Raising the bar on content quality**

Content marketing is here to stay, but if your hospital wants to play, it needs to up its game. In 2016, it's no longer enough to publish good, relevant content. There are so many articles, blogs and white papers published on a daily basis that in order to stand out, your organization must publish content that is consistently better, i.e. higher quality, more relevant, than all other online medical content. This may seem intimidating, but it means that your hospital can spend more time on a few high-quality pieces of content, rather than creating a mass of 'okay' content.

Another guideline to keep in mind is that context is more important than the content itself. This means that your hospital must create specific content for each social platform. Think of the mindset of your audience on each social platform. For example, patients are on Facebook to catch up with friends and family members, they're on Tumblr to laugh at GIFs, they're on Pinterest to find things they aspire to have or accomplish, and they're on Instagram to see pretty pictures. Tailor your content to the context and psychology of each social channel.



### **On-demand everything**

Consumers are used to doing things on their own time, from mobile banking to online shopping to renewing their title and registration on the DMV website. With 24/7 customer service lines, online and mobile platforms, consumers no longer expect to be restricted to normal business hours to complete their to-do list. The same goes for healthcare. Hospitals and physician practices can catch up with online appointment scheduling and email or app communication with physicians.

Today's healthcare consumers value convenience. For this same reason, retail clinics, such as Walgreens and CVS, and free-standing urgent care centers, are growing in popularity. Sometimes health emergencies happen over the weekend, and sometimes work schedules require healthcare to wait until the evening. The extended hours that these clinics provide are unbeatable. Consumers also have the option of getting diagnosed, filling a prescription, and grabbing dinner for their family all under one roof. If your hospital or practice can't compete with these offerings, join them. Offer to staff the clinics with your physicians and nurses, or partner with the pharmacies for community health fairs.



### **Click-to-schedule**

First, Amazon introduced 1-click buying to expedite the online shopping process. Then, Instagram and Pinterest rolled out advertising that featured click-to-buy buttons. The reason this works is because consumers spend a lot more time researching before making a purchase decision. During this time, they consume articles, videos and reviews. When they interact with your hospital's advertising or more traditional marketing, it's because they're ready to buy. They don't need to do anymore research. They want to be brought right to the purchase point.

As a result, we're going to see less dedicated campaign landing pages or ads asking consumers to 'learn more.' If consumers want to learn more, they know how to find the information. Instead, ads will bring consumers right to the POS. In healthcare, this POS would be a physician finder, an appointment scheduler or a seminar sign up.



### **Web user experience reigns supreme**

In 2015, hospitals and healthcare organizations were encouraged to build responsive websites for mobile users. In mid 2015, Google issued an algorithm change that stated it would penalize non-responsive sites. In 2016, there's no excuse for a cluttered or non-mobile-friendly website.

Healthcare consumers want websites that are responsive, clean and easily navigable. They want to find a new primary care doctor, schedule an appointment, and find directions to the practice, all while standing in their kitchen on their mobile phone and blending a breakfast smoothie with their free hand. If your hospital can't deliver this experience, a competitor will. Hospitals can take it a step further with a dedicated app that allows patients to schedule appointments, communicate with physicians and request prescription refills.



### **TL;DR**

How many times have you clicked on a headline that intrigued you, started reading it, but got bored because it took too long to get to the point? This act of abandoning an article mid-paragraph is known as "TL;DR" (too long, didn't read). Consumers today are more likely to do little bits of research during breaks in their day, rather than sit down with a block of time to conduct extensive research. Help your prospective patients conduct bite-sized chunks of research with executive summaries of main points.

Keep in mind that old saying for speeches and essays: tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them. Adopt that practice with all online content, from blog posts to videos to emails. This will allow patients to determine if a piece of content is worth their time to consume it in entirety. If it is, they can click through to the full article/video or continue reading/watching for more details.



### **Show me the numbers**

Hospital CMOs are under a lot of pressure to prove the ROI of marketing efforts. While this isn't necessarily new, it has driven many healthcare organizations to spend a larger percentage of their marketing budget on digital because it's more easily measured, ex. clicks, engagement, conversions. However, 2016 will be the year that hospitals refine their digital marketing further by utilizing data and marketing automation.

Instead of broad digital campaigns, healthcare organizations will run mini campaigns targeted to niche audiences. These campaigns will nurture leads by collecting data and sending prospective patients personalized messages to drive conversions. The healthcare industry has had the technology to collect data about its patients, but 2016 is the year that it will no longer have a choice on whether to manage and make use of that data to fuel marketing campaigns.



### **Return on community (ROC)**

A common theme in 2015 marketing was campaigns that speak to larger, social issues. Some popular examples are The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, Always "Like a Girl" and Coke's label-less cans campaign to fight prejudice. While these cultural issues are more universal, hospital brands can use their marketing to address issues specific to healthcare and their communities.

For example, healthcare brands can address the issue of obesity or childhood vaccinations in attempt to educate its community on preventive medicine, reduce the number of expensive ED admissions, and improve population health. This is called a return on community, or ROC, and in turn, can help improve a hospital's ROI. Consumers respond well to messages of positivity that demonstrates an organization's culture over its specific products or services. Healthcare organizations can take this trend to the local level in 2016.



### **Fringe social networks**

User-generated content, influencer marketing and Snapchat have become very popular over the past year with lifestyle brands. In 2016, hospitals and healthcare organizations will find effective and creative ways to leverage these consumer channels to market specific programs and service lines with great success. While these may not be a perfect fit for all service lines, it could be a great fit for maternity, pediatrics, and general wellness or population health because the target audience is similar to those of lifestyle brands.



### **Marketing in micro-moments**

Google recently released literature on “micro-moments” in marketing, which refer to different purchase decision scenarios on mobile devices. The first is “I-want-to-know moments,” when consumers search for information. In healthcare, this could be anything from Googling symptoms to looking up the causes of heart disease. Hospitals can show up in these moments by publishing quality content online that drive consumers to convert.

The second is “I-want-to-go moments,” characterized by consumers searching for places “near me.” This type of search has doubled in the past year. Healthcare organizations can market themselves in this moment with search ads for its find a doc service, urgent care and hospital locations geo-targeted to specific zip codes.

The third type of moment is “I-want-to-do,” which is often searched for on YouTube. Consumers are looking for instructional how-to videos, and hospitals can capitalize on this with video content related to healthy recipes or at-home exercises.

The last micro-moment is “I-want-to-buy,” which translated to healthcare would probably mean “I-want-to-schedule.” Use search ads to direct prospective patients to your hospital’s online appointment scheduler.



### **Brand introspection**

With the rise of mergers and acquisitions in the healthcare space, more hospitals and health systems will put marketing dollars towards internal alignment. The first step to effective healthcare marketing is organizational culture. Unless physicians, nurses and staff are aligned to the brand promise, it will be difficult to deliver a consistent, positive patient experience that will generate word of mouth referrals. When the external marketing messages aren’t consistent with the reality of care, there is an expectation gap that no amount of external marketing can repair. Fix issues internally by establishing core values and eliminating employees who don’t adhere to this organizational culture.

## **CONVENIENCE WILL DRIVE HEALTHCARE IN 2016**

It’s always interesting to watch marketing trends develop over the course of a year, especially when national trends make their way down to the local healthcare level. There are translations that take place, of course, such as “click-to-buy” changing to “click-to-schedule” and brand reputation becoming more personal with return on community. However, there is one thing that remains the same: consumers expect convenience. This means they are looking for the ability to complete things online (on a clean, responsive site), easily find high-quality content, and quickly learn the main points before the end of their lunch break. In 2016, aim to make patients lives easier, and they’ll reward you for it. 🍷

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