



SMITH  JONES

**2020 HEALTHCARE
MARKETING TRENDS**

10
BIG
mitsakes
to AVOID

Welcome to our 6th Annual Healthcare Marketing Trends Report

Each year, we are dedicated to uncovering and succinctly explaining the top issues that will impact your life as a healthcare marketing leader. With digital marketing changing so rapidly, there may be mistakes you don't even know you're making that are keeping your results from being the best they can be. That's why this year we are giving you 10 mistakes to AVOID for a more successful 2020.

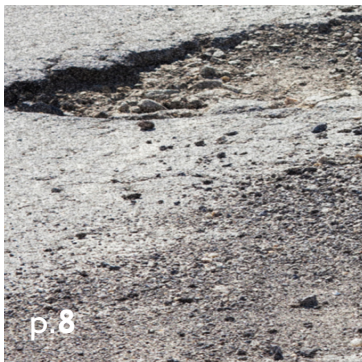
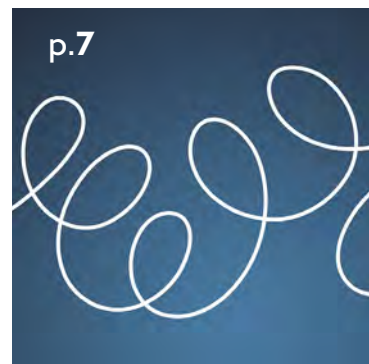
Cheers!

- THE SMITH & JONES TEAM





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» Becoming too transactionally focused

We live in a fast-paced world. Everyone is looking for a quick fix or a quick buck. But as CEOs and marketers alike know, rushing to the urgent at the expense of the important is rarely better. Your marketing department might be focused on bringing patients in the door right now, but will they be motivated to stay beyond their immediate need?

Instead of focusing on selling one “product” at a time, marketers should instead focus on building a long-term relationship with patients that will build value – both for the company and the patient. If someone continues to have good experiences with your brand, they will keep coming back, and you’ll see their value as a customer increase over time.

Compounding this problem is the continuous reorganization of healthcare entities. Mergers, acquisitions and consolidations of health networks, hospitals and practices are muddying the unique identities of individual brands. “Healthcare” becomes a commodity, an undifferentiated product offered by a slew of providers under increasingly complicated mega-brands.

Savvy marketers are finding ways to retain a relevant brand promise when bridging multiple organizations, diverse philosophies and business models. And more importantly, they’re making healthcare experience simple for patients to understand and navigate.



A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE:

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The cost of healthcare is your biggest brand opportunity »



» Not prioritizing meaningful interactions

New Facebook algorithms are rewarding posts that earn “meaningful interactions,” otherwise known as shares, reactions (previously called “likes”) and comments. Healthcare brands that are using social media effectively – by being more genuine and less sales-focused, showing a sense of humor or posting unique and entertaining content – are getting more traction from their social spend. There’s also a growing opportunity for social marketing that is actually helpful; by addressing negative reviews, providing customer service, or promoting customer-centric capabilities such as online scheduling, telemedicine access, and apps for health-tracking or managing health records. As the rules of engagement in social platforms evolve, smart marketers are adapting to get a bigger bang for their buck.

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» Ignoring consumer distrust

It's not just millennials who feel alienated by the healthcare system. Difficulty in navigating complex organizations, uncertainty about costs and even minor obstacles to receiving care are sowing distrust of the healthcare system as a whole. The result is people putting off care – or even looking for ways to self-treat their conditions. Patients with money and good insurance have the luxury to go wherever they want, and they'll give their money to whichever health provider they trust.

How can marketers rebuild trust and reengage these audiences? By simplifying the experience, communicating a real brand promise and promoting helpful, time- or cost-saving solutions.



GO DEEPER:

Read the article
**Rethinking
healthcare
marketing for
millennials »**



» Maintaining your digital status quo

So you've perfected your digital marketing strategy in 2019. Great! Now get ready to change it.

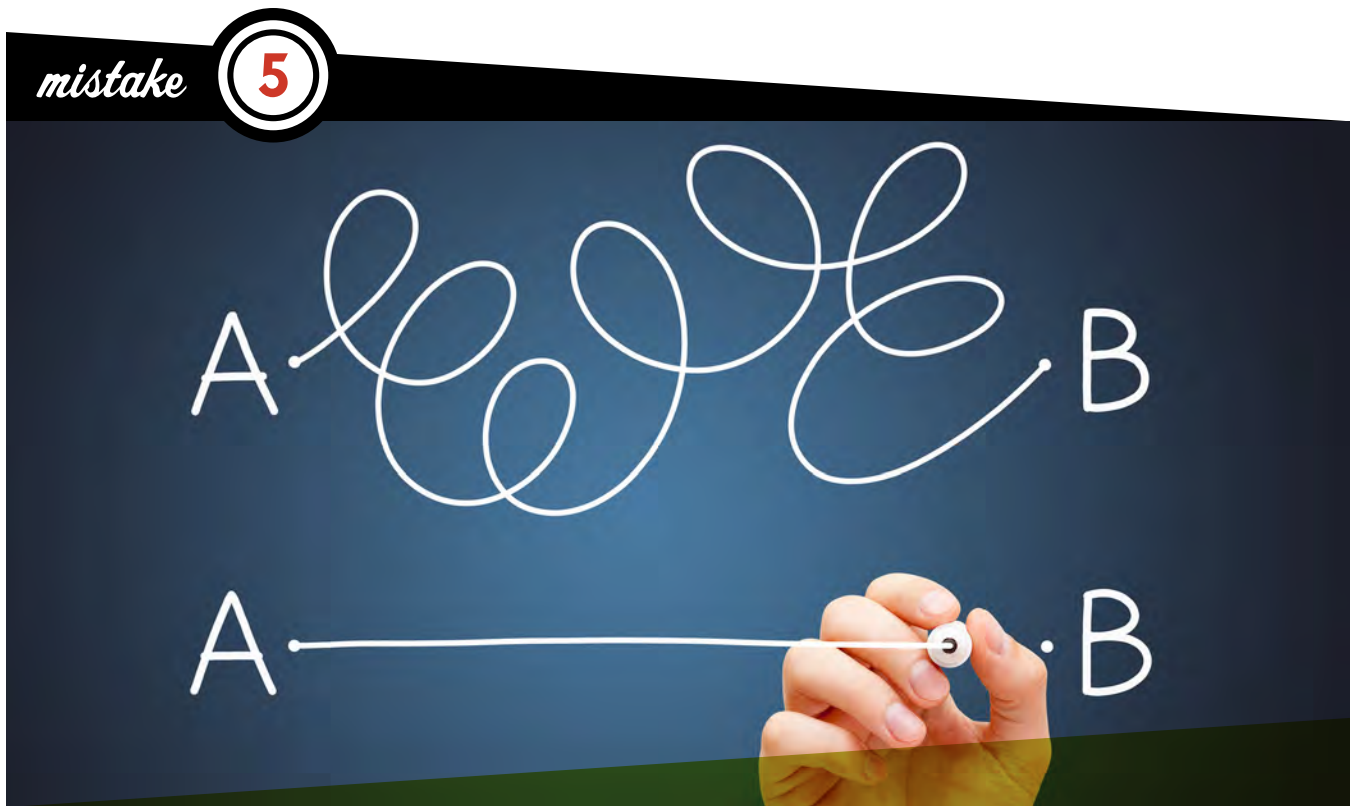
Digital marketing continues to evolve as consumer behaviors change and marketers are forced to update their best practices for display retargeting and paid search marketing. Engagement and click-through-rates (CTR) are up for paid search, but have continued to decline for digital display advertising over the same period. The cost-per-click (CPC) for paid search has continued to rise too, and as engagement grows, marketers need to plan that media will cost more than it did a year ago. Have you been spending the same amount on Google quarter after quarter? It's time to reassess that number.



FAST FACT

The average conversion rate for the healthcare industry is 4.24% for search and 0.8% for display. How do your clicks measure up?

SOURCE: **Smart Insights**



» Taking too long to get to the point

Five, four, three, two, one, SKIP. In an on-demand world where more content is just a click away, marketers' biggest challenge is keeping their ads in front of the audience. When was the last time you saw a pre-roll ad that actually stopped you from hitting the "skip" button at the first possible millisecond? Smart healthcare marketers have learned how to win the battle for short attention spans by retooling their messages and buying media that connects at the appropriate stage of the buying decision. Better yet, evaluate each ad for the appropriate medium (a 6-second pre-roll video should be very different than a 30-second broadcast commercial, not simply a shorter version).



SOME INSPIRATION:

You can't skip this Geico ad »

SOURCE: **Forbes**



» Putting off alignment issues

In Jim Collins and Jerry Porras' book, *Built to Last*, they say "Building a visionary company requires one percent vision and 99 percent alignment." Considering the mergers, acquisitions, name changes and restructuring of healthcare brands, this rings especially true. You can have a wonderful vision for how all of these moving parts will come together, but if frontline staff doesn't understand how they fit into the big picture, no one will believe in it. You can't just slap a logo on an office building and expect people to understand your brand or distinguish it

from any other. What is the single brand promise that all entities within your organization can live up to?

Brands like Starbucks and Apple still have loyal customers and brand advocates, even after suffering bad press and criticisms of their management policies. Clearly, a strong brand's staff alignment can help deliver consistent brand experiences through good times and bad.

If a patient has consistently good experiences with your brand across multiple locations, they'll be more likely to continue to seek you out, even if you make

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a mistake or are not the most convenient location. Most patients would rather drive further for quality they know they'll receive, than risk going to whatever provider happens to be close by. If they go to multiple locations and the quality differs drastically, suddenly they don't know how to feel about the whole system.



» Placing brand on the back burner

The numbers are in: Healthcare executives are putting a higher value on data related to their brands and reputations, according to a recent survey of healthcare and pharma CEOs. Brand data ranked right up there with financial performance and customer preferences as the data they value most, yet only 28% felt they received comprehensive data on the topic.

This confirms what marketers have always known - that brand matters. The downside? Branding is also hard, and takes time, money and commitment. And it might not show a return for months or even years. However, ignoring brand issues will do far more damage to your organization than the good that would be done with an SEM campaign or a TV spot for one specific service (see mistakes #1 and #6). Branding is not about bringing money in the door as quickly as possible, it's about delivering consistently on one brand promise so your patients will build loyalty and advocacy for your brand.



GO DEEPER:

**See the full
survey results »**

SOURCE: PwC



» Underestimating the influencers

Social media influencers and YouTube celebrities have become aspirational heroes and trusted resources for millions of followers and fans. Is there a place for influencers in the serious, life-and-death business of medicine? Instead of paying a pop-culture icon (like a musician or fashion model) to create a post about your organization, you could use someone from within (like a doctor or nurse) who is charismatic and knowledgeable on a certain topic you want to promote. This will save you money and build credibility for your brand. You could also reach out to others in the community who are invested in health and wellness, such as healthcare administrators, nutritionists or fitness experts. Develop a clear mission statement and content strategy, and invest in developing and promoting content to build a social presence and online audience. Choose the right influencers, and you could see a much bigger lift than with a traditional advertisement, which typically doesn't do much to build trust.

Invest in developing and promoting content to build a social presence and online audience.



» Forgetting to follow the money

As care providers come to terms with new payor models and reimbursement plans, one thing remains clear: high-value individuals and those with top-shelf insurance coverage represent the most profitable patient population. So, when money's no object, and those people can seek treatment anywhere they choose, what will distinguish the care centers they turn to? In most cases it's reputation, either for expertise in a certain service area, or simply for a better experience. And in either case, the decision usually comes down to brand preference. Does your brand have the best reputation in your area? In your service line? Do you truly deliver a superior customer experience? If you're not sure, your most lucrative prospects are likely going somewhere else.



SOME INSPIRATION:

Check out this
related hospital
branding campaign »



» Saying you're close to home

Try this test: Google the phrase "Quality Care Close to Home." It's likely that at least eight different healthcare systems will appear on the first page. When doing research for one client that was about to undergo a rebrand and name change, we found 24 examples of rival health providers that used some variation of "Quality Care Close to Home" as their tagline.

Many community hospitals and health systems like to emphasize that they're "close to home," leaving people to assume that means better care. But we know this isn't always the case, and some patients (especially the ones with premium insurance,

see mistake #9) will often choose to drive an hour or more to get "quality care."

Proximity is not a valid differentiator, as there is always a provider who could open a location closer to your patients. What about telehealth, which isn't tied down to a physical location? "Close" is also a state of mind, subjective to your patients. "Close" could mean a 5 minute walk, a 10 minute drive, or an hour by public transit. And even if your location is physically close to someone, it could be perceived as being further away if this area is high traffic, in a bad part of town, or simply more difficult to get to. Physical

closeness doesn't necessarily mean more convenience.

So move past the "close to home" message. To stand out in your service area, you need to identify a true brand promise that no one else in the area can make, that every single entity can live up to every day.



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Ring, ring, ring,
ring, ring, ring, ring,
banana phone!

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