

2022 Healthcare Marketing Trends:

# Getting Back to Getting Better



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# It's not over.

As we write this, a new COVID variant is spreading into communities and across the country. Patients still feel uneasy visiting healthcare settings and rebooking missed appointments. Collectively, we've learned to move forward while holding our breath, afraid to look back.

Today, we are stronger—in many ways, not despite COVID, but because of it.

Through COVID, we saw what had long been broken, and turned hardship into an opportunity for innovation. We created programs that reached out to patients when they couldn't come to us. We responded to cries for equality with real action toward making better policies. We invested in new ways of doing business when it was clear the old ways simply weren't good enough.

As we move into a new phase, new challenges will arise. Hospitals and healthcare systems nationwide will face an increase in competition as they simultaneously face a shortage in the workforce. New healthcare models will be created and voraciously adopted as consumers drive change in how decisions are made. They will push us to adopt new ways of communicating with a fearful patient. More than ever, it's essential for organizations to find their point of difference and establish TRUST if they want consumers to choose them over the competition.

**Inside this report, you'll find the seven marketing strategies, tactics, and innovations vital to the growth of your healthcare organization in 2022.** These topics can help hospitals and health systems create stronger brands, more innovative strategies, engaging content, and uncommon results.

We hope you will rely on this report to inform the decisions you'll face in the coming months.

Here's to a future of getting back to getting better.

— Smith & Jones

# Getting Back to Getting Better

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# Addressing Burnout Head On

For nearly two years, brand campaigns have heralded healthcare workers as heroes for keeping our communities safe amid a global pandemic. At the same time, they were asked to isolate themselves from family and support systems, walking into the fire of COVID without the proper tools or resources.

Yes, healthcare workers are **heroes**. They were also **martyrs**.

We must address the systematic failures that have left healthcare workers feeling mentally, emotionally and physically burnt out. Not only to retain staff but to make sure it never happens again.

## 1 in 4

Research shows women—particularly those with no family or mothers with young children—may be more susceptible to burnout. Know the signs to better support team members.

Arming staff with the self-care strategies they need to recover and to feel more in control is a start, but we can't ignore the root of the problem.

“Too many bureaucratic tasks” is the reason often cited for burnout. This includes the everyday frustrations that take your team away from the work that matters to, instead, re-input data into competing internal systems, battle archaic patient intake systems and struggle with technology that simply can't keep up.



## Bring Yourself to Work

Design supports to help employees heal from the trauma of the past year by bringing their whole selves to work. We used video storytelling to [help Ellis Medicine boost company culture and alignment efforts](#), creating a safe space to discuss difficult times.

Engage staff to hear their daily frustrations to work toward real solutions. A technology audit can help replace what's broken with new systems intended for a more digital environment. You'll not only improve morale by reducing daily headaches, but you'll also improve efficiency and streamline patient care.





# The Morality of Inequality

COVID thrust social and racial inequity to the forefront of public health. It was impossible to look away as specific racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups were affected by COVID at more severe rates.

The public has had enough. We understand more than ever that health disparities are a moral wrong that needs to be addressed on an organizational level—and that it is us who must be accountable.

Do underserved communities know you? Build **trust** with these groups by adopting programs that recognize their needs and make healthcare more accessible to all.

## Diversify Community Relationships & Partnerships:

The past year has been a lesson in reaching out and reaching further. Mobile health clinics addressed inequity by bringing COVID-19 vaccines to communities of color or where residents were homebound—even going door-to-door. This framework should be expanded (not abandoned) to provide another way to deliver health and wellness services to underserved communities. It's not just an opportunity. It's an obligation.

## Recruitment and Retention:

Develop vital outreach programs to attract diverse candidates to healthcare careers—at every level. Create practices to build an inclusive environment and reduce social isolation. This includes creating new positions responsible for ensuring diversity and inclusion, conducting necessary training and evaluating leaders based on their ability to promote and lead diverse workplaces.





# The Glow Up of Telehealth

Last year we talked about personalizing the virtual health experience with more full-service line triaging, relationship building and automation. Now, with telehealth widely adopted (and preferred by many), we must focus on using that momentum to expand our offerings and education. Expect patients to continue to seek out virtual care with COVID variants spreading into communities.

Let's start with getting the tech right. The freezes, pauses, and dropped sessions aren't going to cut it going in 2022. By this point, patients expect you to have your tech together. Invest in the tools and technologies you need for a seamless virtual health experience. A better Zoom background and some decent lighting wouldn't hurt either.

Patients still need education. They may know they can sign on if they have a cold, but what other providers and specialists can they access virtually? Can appointments for medication management and chronic health conditions be made via telehealth? Nutritional coaching? The average patient doesn't understand when to use what health channel. Help connect them to the most appropriate place to get care where, when and how they need it.

We're better at it, but it's still new. Make sure people know telehealth is part of your full continuum of care. Use your website, social media, email communications, and targeted ads to promote your telehealth options, so patients know what's available and how to find it. Once they engage, don't leave them hanging.



## Bring it All Online

Online appointment scheduling. Easily accessible medical records. Online lab results. These are all ways to increase the virtual patient experience.

Healthcare organizations should use email marketing to recap appointments, share care notes and relevant information.





# The Rise of Health Consumerism

Competition for healthcare consumers is building—and not just from the new hospital across town. Whether it is the low-cost retail clinics popping up on Main Street, the private, on-demand telehealth companies wooing patients with convenience or global goliaths like Amazon Care gearing up for a play, expect a more challenging time bringing in and retaining patients.



What are you to do? Beat nonlocal competitors where they don't have a chance—by establishing your authority and localness with digital content.

You need content that does more than talk about your services, and lays the bait for a meatier relationship. Consumers are typing in their systems long before they are calling. They want answers to help them decide what they're dealing with and what to do next. Structure your content so they find you, and it's your content that helps them, educates them, and puts them on the path to making an appointment.



## Convert Them with Email

Blogs are great. Email is better. Created timed email marketing series allows you to create content in advance and arrive when a patient is naturally looking for it. Work smarter.

Designing consumer-centric, data-driven content and email marketing strategies help you build brand relationships in a way that directly supports revenue growth. When I'm a loyal reader of your women's health newsletter, who do you think I'm calling when a medical issue arises? Our relationship is pre-formed. That pop-up Urgent Care won't compete with that.



# The Fear Factor

Let's be honest. Even before the pandemic, consumers were showing a preference for avoiding the hospital. Now, after nearly two years of seeing hospitals as scary, overly-crowded places where people die on ventilators, how the heck are we going to get them to come back?

It's time to make hospitals feel safe again. Do it by getting ahead of patients' concerns.

## Show all Your Precautions

We know you're taking them. Patients (kind of) know you're taking them. But, emotionally, they need to see and hear about it. Calm patient fears simply by talking about all the things you're doing to keep them safe. Advertise your deep cleans, the airflow improvements and your new check-in process that allows me to wait in the safety of my car until you're ready to see me. If you want me to visit, show me how safe it is before I get there.



## Give patients back control:

Hospitals are hated for telling us what to do. Go here. Sit there. Wait forever. Put this on. Where can you ease up? Will you allow a nervous patient to bring a support person into the exam room? Can a mom bring her child, so she doesn't have to find childcare or reschedule? Maybe I never, ever have to put that awful gown on. Your patients spent the past year feeling out of control and out of options. Give them some back.

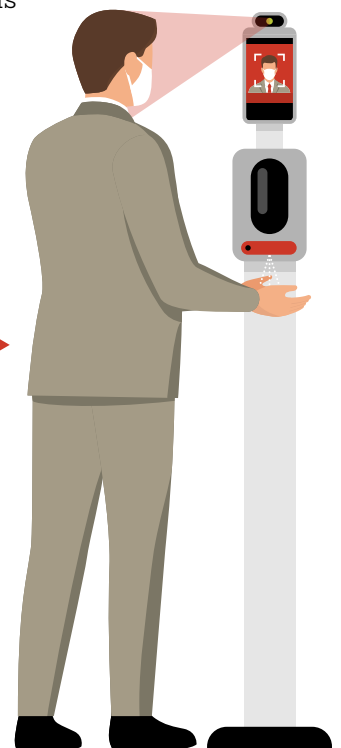


## Feel Accessible

See how we untangled Frederick Health's brand to unite the hospital system under one name and one brand promise.

## Uncomplicating the Process:

What is complicated is overwhelming, and that certainly applies to healthcare. Simplify it by giving me clear instructions and using straightforward language that lets me know what to expect.







# Creating First-Party Data

Birds of a feather flock together, and the digital marketing landscape is looking at some significant changes. Google is ending third-party cookie usage on its platform. Apple is limiting the data it provides back to advertisers. Most affected by these changes will be our ability to build retargeting audiences and lookalike audiences—shaking up the preferred advertising methods of many.

The short of it? The only data you have to rely on is your own. You better start collecting it.

## How can you start?

- + Require consumers to register for free on your website before granting them access to high-traffic or topical content.
- + Create a rewards or loyalty program that allows you to gather more information about a consumer in exchange for something of value. This may be a community health program that unlocks discounts to exercise classes, health food locations or other benefits.
- + Add lead generation forms to your website to capture information about your audience. Then, use progressive profiling to gather even more data slowly, over time, vs. asking them for their life story on your first encounter.

## What is First-Party Data?

Data you collect on your audience based on their behaviors directly on your website and/or app.

Once you have it, you can use first-party data to create custom audiences tailored to growth areas or marketing segments.

Last year, we worked with a boutique women's center to build out more personalized content and patient experiences by understanding what matters to them throughout the pregnancy process. Focus group research (another form of first-party data) combined with other digital channels allowed us to see how women interacted with their brand and how they wanted to interact. We used this to build new content assets, automated campaigns, and even a whole new web presence!





# It's (Still) a Matter of Trust

We'll end this report echoing what we said at the beginning—it's not over. As we head into 2022, COVID variants will continue to make patients nervous, while new tech and new opportunities forever alter how we deliver care. This is a good time to double-down on developing trust.

How can we build trust in a fearful economy?

## Create Community:

Our patients will face increased hardship this year; extending care beyond the hospital bed shows that you're invested in more than just increasing your bottom line but improving the wellness of your community. Back up empathetic messaging with action. How can you support the community beyond virus control? Identify resources—virtual and in-person—for families and at-risk populations.

## Get Social:

Look to social media to give patients a peek behind those cold hospital walls. Highlight patient stories, staff members going above and beyond, and use these real-time channels as a way to keep people informed and connected.

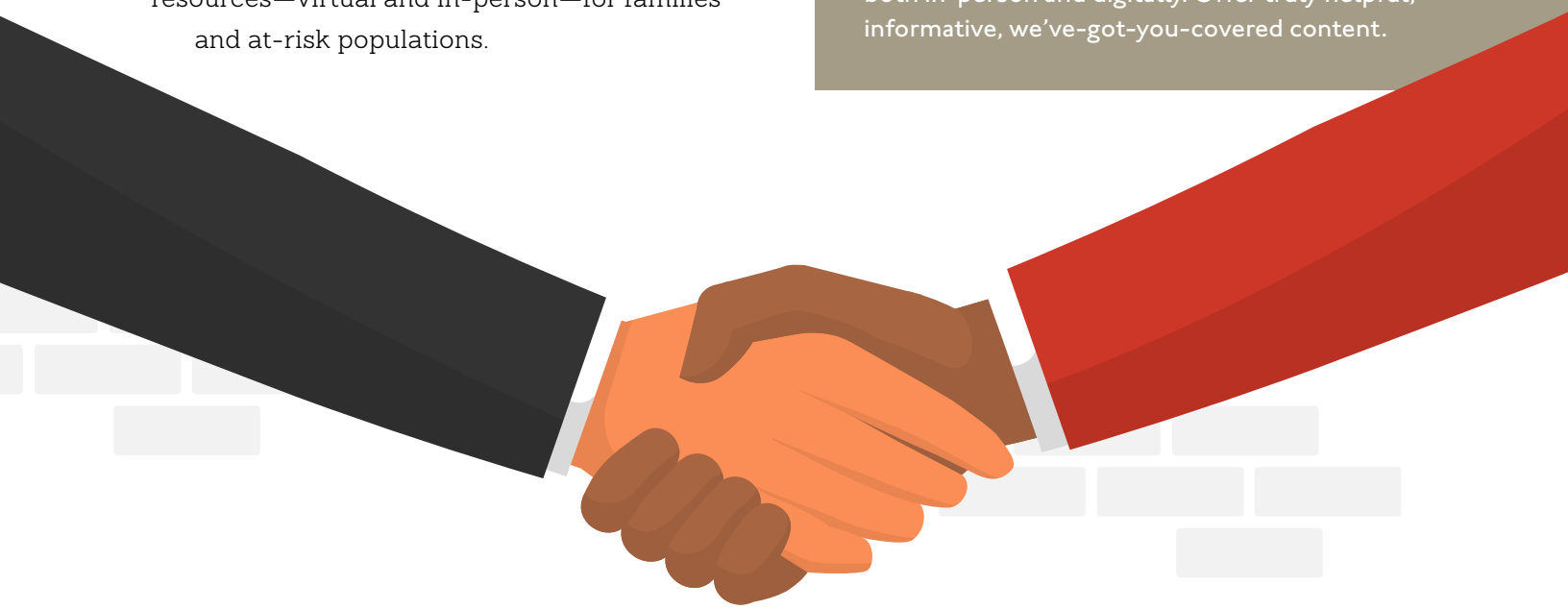
## Be Visible:

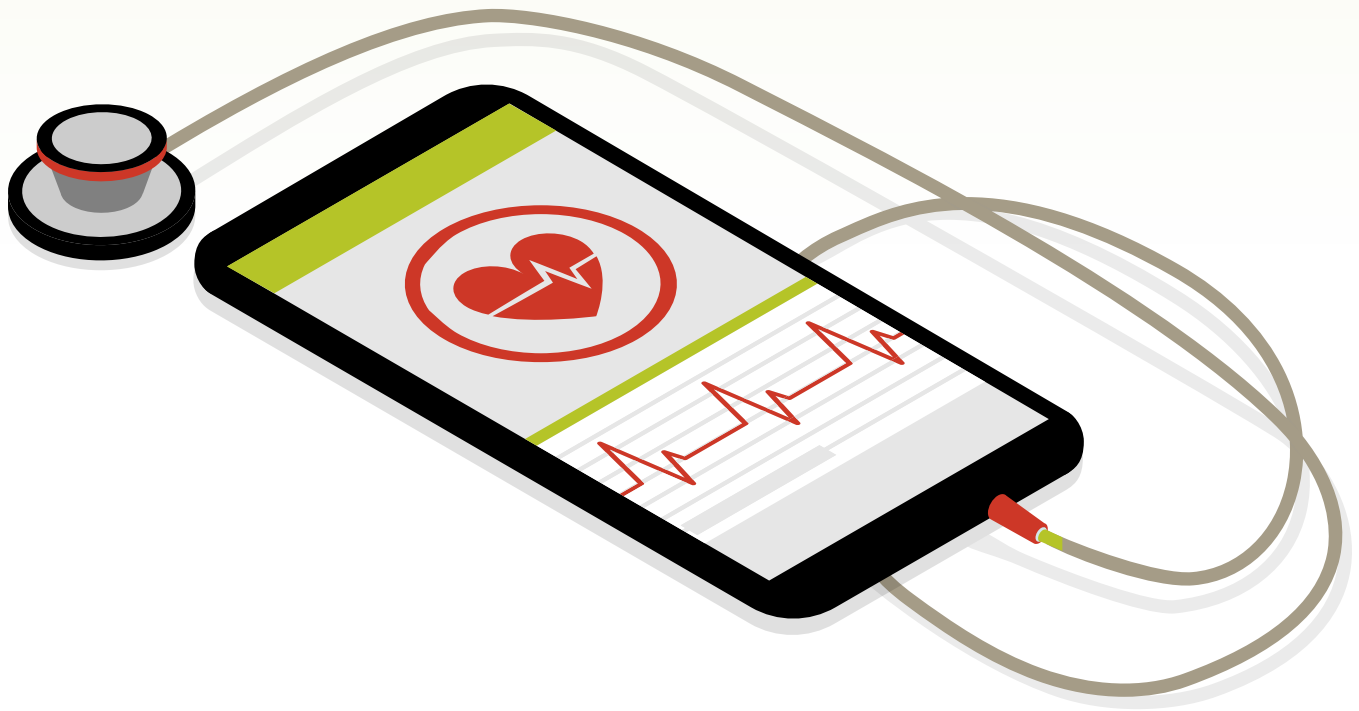
This was our recommendation last year and it holds. Patients must continue to see and hear from you. That means keeping essential service lines top of mind with fresh, COVID-appropriate ad campaigns, as well as investing in brand campaigns that show people not just what you do, but why you do it.



## Lead With Empathetic Content

Email marketing. Social updates. Blogs. Develop content-rich ways to lead with care and empathy both in-person and digitally. Offer truly helpful, informative, we've-got-you-covered content.





Need help meeting consumers  
at their new normal?

Or, putting together the right plan  
for the fastest recovery?

Let us help.

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