

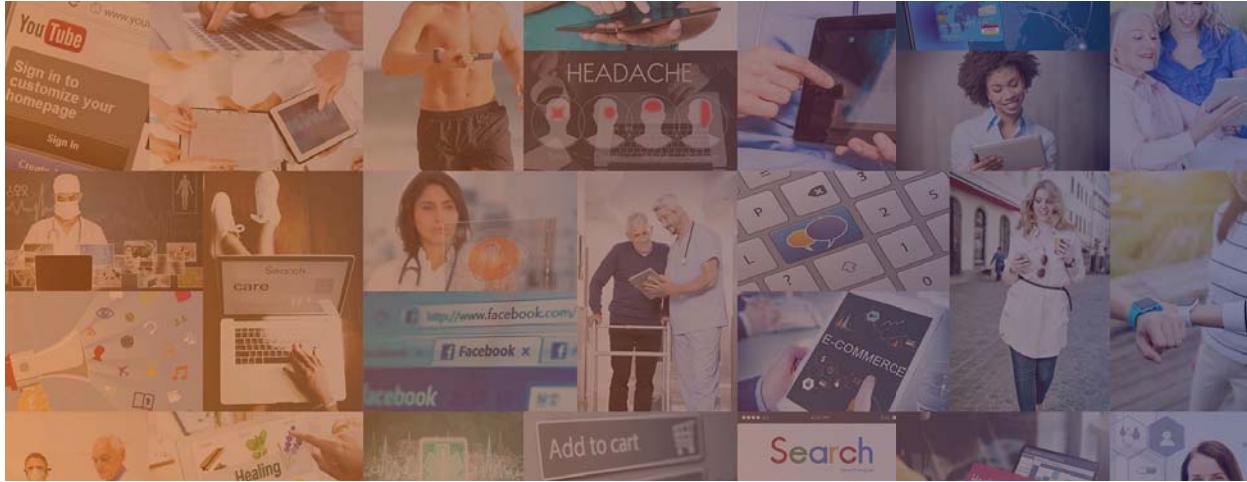


7 Trends in Healthcare Marketing

How to Build Your Brand through Advances in Digital Marketing

One in a Series of Marketing Guides

Whitehead
AGENCY GROUP
HEALTHCARE MARKETING THAT CLICKS



Overview

Until recently, healthcare brands relied heavily on word of mouth and tangible marketing strategies to attract new consumers and clients. Due to the surge in digital promotion, brands are being met with increased competition, and therefore need to find new ways to differentiate themselves.

Consumers need to be reached through multiple touch points, most of which involve the social media sphere. In order to stay on top of the health marketing game, brands must follow the trends that are currently being utilized to engage with consumers. The question now becomes – how many of these trends are you taking advantage of?

In this marketing guide, 7 Trends in Healthcare Marketing, we'll examine:

1. Optimizing Your Website for Mobile Devices
2. Connecting with Consumers through Social Media
3. Better Understanding Consumers through Data Collection
4. Building and Maintaining SEO Practices
5. Enticing Consumers with Video Content
6. Creating a Consistent, Multi-Dimensional Brand Experience through Integrated Marketing
7. Turning Prospects into Customers with Marketing Automation



1. Optimize Your Website for Mobile Devices

With more than 50% of all Internet activity currently taking place on phones and tablets, and the average consumer checking his or her mobile device approximately 150 times a day, having a website that is optimized for mobile has never been more important.

So, what exactly is mobile optimization? Mobile optimization has to do with the way your website appears on different screens, resolutions and browsers. The same website that displays beautifully on a 13-inch laptop screen doesn't have the same functionality on a 3-inch phone. Due to this fact, one of the current trends in marketing is to adapt to the mobile generation and adjust particular aspects of your website in order to maximize usability on smaller devices.

If your website isn't mobile friendly and is displaying exactly how it was built for computer screens, images and text will appear broken, stretched or shrunk on phones and tablets. Similarly, navigation built for traditional web is difficult to use on a mobile or touch screen, so adjustments must be implemented in order to facilitate the transition. In the end, mobile optimization ensures that consumers make it past your home screen while browsing on their mobile devices and free-standing apps, such as iPads and tablets.



2. Connect with Consumers through Social Media

Regardless of which industry segment your healthcare organization is in, social media offers a two-way communication platform to reach your audience. Choosing a few complementary social media outlets (such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) can elevate your web presence and reach potential sales with almost no added investment. Social media is giving users and businesses the opportunity to engage with one another and facilitate meaningful discussions on the issues important to consumers. With 82% of adults aged 27–50 using social media, your brand needs to be an influential participant in the discussion. In terms of healthcare marketing, 2015 has already seen social media users interacting with healthcare professionals and booking appointments through digital platforms.

In order to connect with consumers using social media, brands are becoming aware of the components to a successful social media strategy. These components include:

- Researching the various platforms and knowing how each one can bring significance to your brand.
- Being present and knowing the competition by understanding how they are presenting themselves on social media. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of other brands in healthcare marketing will allow for the ability to prepare the strategies that your brand will adopt online.

Garnering feedback from social media provides valuable insight into your target audience. Forty-one percent of people said that social media would affect their choice of a specific healthcare facility. As consumers are increasingly using social media for open discussion, specifically about healthcare, it is important that you actively listen and respond.

- Using branding so that consumers can identify your company's vision – your unique selling point. Users will appreciate reliability and knowledge in the content that is being presented across your social media platforms.



3. Better Understand Consumers through Data Collection

The healthcare industry is heavily reliant on data, and it's an enormous tool to leverage for marketing healthcare organizations. Consumers, too, are looking for data – more specifically, the information that can help them live happier, healthier lives. Regardless of the type of healthcare organization, data is fast becoming the fuel that powers the overarching marketing strategy.

In a sense, data analysis encompasses many of the previously mentioned marketing trends, in order to truly understand specific markets and the consumers that live within them. Through optimization, social media, predictive analytics and business intelligence, organizations are gaining insights to strengthen financial and budgetary performance, deepen consumer-centric relationships and improve the way healthcare is conceived and delivered for better outcomes across the entire network of health-related industries. Advanced analytics are delivering crucial insights needed to propel a business toward growth.

Beyond collecting data from consumer trends, data analysis is also evolving with the technology-focused times. In addition to marketing data derived from smartphones, the industry is seeing a steady stream of dedicated wearable fitness devices emerge. This emergence is allowing users to track their progress and upload data to be compiled alongside other users' content. The very near future could see this data being shared with healthcare practitioners who will use it as part of their diagnostic toolbox when consumers visit them with an ailment.



4. Build and Maintain SEO Practices

SEO, or search engine optimization, is the practice of building a website that ranks well with search engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo! when a user searches for a related term. There are two main reasons that make SEO so on trend and viable to your brand. On the one hand, you have sites such as Yellow Pages and Yelp whose out-of-date links and directory sites can bump you down the rankings of Google. You are no longer in control of your message. On the other hand, you have customers who don't yet know who you are, but are seeking out your product or service. In both scenarios, you need potential customers to be able to find your company in a search, and SEO is the fastest and most effective way to do that.

Google's algorithm uses over 200 factors in determining its search ranking: the loading speed of the page, number and quality of keywords, quantity and quality of inbound links and frequency of updates are all taken into consideration. A solid SEO strategy will take all of these factors into account when building the framework and content of a website that will give you the exposure you want and need.

In terms of healthcare marketing, Google's research found that 44 percent of web users who research healthcare organizations on a mobile device go on to schedule an appointment. The first and most important step is to research keywords, healthcare providers, and other related professionals that consumers are using to search for your services and create quality content that is helpful to your target audience. This process will help to move your website up the Google rankings for those keywords.



5. Entice Consumers with Video Content

Due to the fact that branded healthcare content can be long and time consuming to read, many brands will make their messages creative and concise by putting them into online videos. The popularity of online videos has been rising right along with mobile usage. According to ComScore data, this has resulted in 60 percent of U.S. digital media time now being spent on smartphones and tablets. To make digital content more mobile friendly, many marketers have been condensing their messages into easily viewable video content that can be watched on the go.

In 2016, online video users are expected to double to 1.5 billion (Cisco). With the increasing volume of video consumption, and the fact that YouTube is the second biggest search engine in the world, video ads will soon be necessary for healthcare providers to add to their marketing channels. Additionally, video will provide a huge opportunity for you to humanize your business and differentiate it in a meaningful way from the competition. A recent Pew Research Center study demonstrated that 47 percent of Internet users share videos and photos they find online. Behaviours are showing that video is fundamentally affecting how we think, how businesses will interact, how we consume content and how we live our lives.



6. Create a Consistent, Multi-Dimensional Brand Experience through Integrated Marketing

The main goal of integrated marketing is to create streamlined branding across all media platforms. This means that all branding efforts (television, Internet, radio, etc.) will be presented in a similar style that drives home the ultimate message of your brand. Like with the content in social media, consumers are drawn to companies that provide reliability and consistency in the presentation of the product or service that they offer.

It is important to remember that consistency does not equal boring or lacking in creativity. Healthcare marketers must work diligently to create an interesting voice for the brand – one that transitions across all aspects of the brand's identity.

Integrated marketing leverages the best of traditional (TV, print, radio, point-of-care) and innovative marketing channels (search, web, social, mobile) and identifies the appropriate marketing mix to best achieve your healthcare-related objectives.



7. Turn Prospects into Customers with Marketing Automation

Marketing automation takes place when a brand invests in software and tactics that allow them to nurture prospects and turn them into customers. Marketing automation is used to generate new business, which inevitably results in added revenue. One of the attractions of automated marketing is that it essentially takes the steering wheel for you. When you invest in these software products, you are investing in a system that will prioritize and execute your marketing tasks in a more streamlined and efficient way.

Without giving up your target audience or brand integrity, marketing automation software aids in saving you time and effort. It allows you to not only streamline and automate marketing tasks, but also determines what's working and what's not. The software allows you to segment your prospects into different groups to target them more effectively. Due to the fact that each specialty requires this product in a different context, you are able to tailor your communications accordingly.

Automation software also handles more complicated segmentation. It can consider factors like:

- Location
- Language spoken
- Whether your prospect has opened your emails
- Sections of your website prospects referred to

With marketing automation, you have the tools to guide your prospects down the path towards eventually becoming consumers of your product or service.



CONCLUSION

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It's evident that consumer-driven healthcare is the present reality and is what drives business. More consumers are utilizing mobile devices to obtain and research healthcare information, so optimizing your website to make it mobile-friendly is key. Utilizing best SEO practices is important in order for your brand to be ranked well in online searches so that consumers can easily find you. Lastly, employing a successful social media strategy will allow you to directly engage with consumers and prospective patients turning these interactions into inquiries and consultations, and driving the bottom line.

Now that you have read about the 7 trends in healthcare marketing, ask yourself how many of these strategies are beneficial to your brand and how many aren't you using? If you aren't utilizing these strategies, likely your competitors are. Don't get left behind. Taking advantage of these trends will only benefit your brand in the long run.

Whitehead Agency Group is a leading healthcare marketing agency with over 25 years of specialized health and wellness experience.

Contact us today at (416) 365-6884 or by emailing us at hello@waginc.ca to learn more about how your healthcare brand can start profiting from the new age of consumer-driven healthcare with marketing that clicks.