healthgrades™

Convert More Patients Through Digital Marketing Optimization

Ochsner Health System drives continued success by connecting with engaged consumers online

KEY GOALS

- **Attract online consumers efficiently**
- **Convert "hand raisers"**
  (callers who haven't made an appointment)
- **Build patient loyalty**

KEY RESULTS

19K   New patients

11:1   ROI

60%   Average call-to-transfer rate[*]

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Summary

In 2013, Ochsner Health System invested heavily in its digital engagement capabilities by optimizing its website to attract online healthcare consumers. Ochsner viewed the highly-engaged consumers on healthgrades.com—where over 2 million consumers each year in New Orleans alone search for and compare physicians—as an opportunity to expand its digital growth efforts. Healthgrades Patient Direct Connect™ offered new channels to broaden Ochsner's online presence while Healthgrades Consumer Relationship Management (CRM) helped drive engaged consumers to the health system. Ochsner's strategic partnership with Healthgrades converted over **19,000 new patients** who were actively looking to appoint with a physician in the region. This patient-acquisition campaign achieved an **11:1 contribution margin ROI.**

" Why did we choose Healthgrades for patient acquisition? **It just works.**"

– Sharon O'Regan,
Marketing Project Leader,
Ochsner Health System

Ratio of total call center contacts transferred to physician's office for appointment

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Situation

Ochsner Health System is Louisiana's largest non-profit academic health system. It has served the New Orleans area for nearly 75 years, growing to 29 owned, managed, and affiliated hospitals and more than 60 neighborhood health centers. Its 1,000+ physicians serve more than 600,000 patients annually. Ochsner's rich history of innovation includes introducing the first multi-specialty clinic to the New Orleans medical community and opening the first intensive-care recovery room.

As part of its continuous efforts to reach out to the community it serves, Oschner wanted to enhance its digital engagement capabilities. The health system knew that it couldn't rely on its size or historical reputation alone to drive new growth and maximize its competitive advantage. In 2013, recognizing that consumers were increasingly shifting their healthcare decision-making online, Ochsner began to build its digital brand awareness within the greater New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Covington, Houma, Mississippi Gulf Coast, Raceland, and Slidell markets.

The health system pursued a three-prong strategy to 1) rebuild its website (www.ochsner.org) with a consumer-centric, self-service orientation; 2) promote its website through search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine marketing (SEM); and 3) purchase digital ad buys. These online marketing efforts attracted additional consumers, but website traffic and new patient conversions were not as high as the Ochsner team had hoped.

Ochsner had two challenges:

1. **Attract online consumers more efficiently** to optimize its investment of limited resources.

2. **Effectively convert "hand raisers"** – callers who had contacted Ochsner but had not made an appointment.

Ochsner Health System
Louisiana's largest non-profit academic health system

- 29 owned, managed, and affiliated hospitals
- More than 60 neighborhood health centers
- Over 1,000 physicians
- 90 medical specialties and subspecialties
- Serving more than 600,000 patients annually

Ochsner awards

- Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence™ 2018, 2016
- Best Hospitals, *U.S. News & World Report*, ranked in five specialties, 2017-2018
- 100 Top Hospitals, Truven Health Analytics 2017
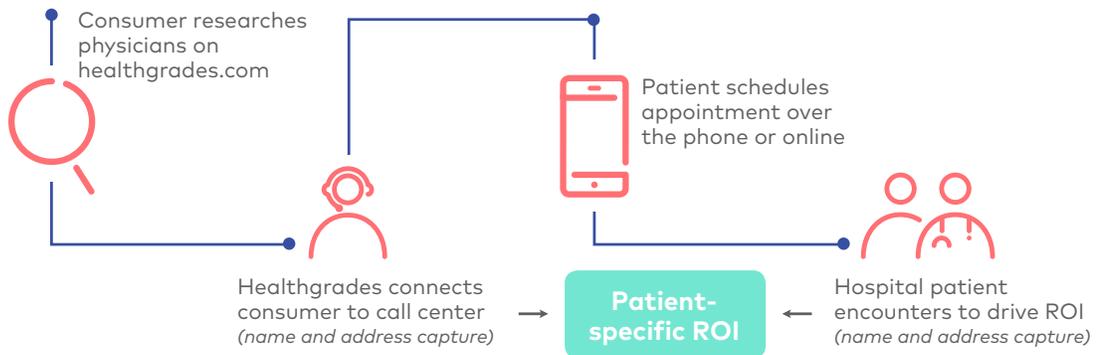
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Solution

How could Ochsner efficiently attract and retain high-value online consumers? As an existing Healthgrades Consumer Relationship Management customer, Ochsner took advantage of its annual Executive Summit with Healthgrades to explore expanded partnership opportunities within online patient acquisition. It chose to expand consumer access with the Patient Direct Connect™ marketplace on healthgrades.com – the largest third-party site for online physician search – in combination with associated CRM campaign management.

ATTRACT ONLINE CONSUMERS MORE EFFICIENTLY

While it had been successful in its own website development and optimization efforts, Ochsner recognized that realizing the full benefits of third-party physician search services involved more than simply going live with a webpage. It needed a scalable, measurable system to drive patients to its hospitals and physicians. Specifically, Ochsner wanted a partner with:

- A platform that reached a **significant new audience**—more than **1 million consumers** visit healthgrades.com every day.

- The **ability to convert consumers**, not merely drive awareness—95% of consumers who come to Healthgrades to make an appointment will do so within one week.

- **Demonstrated, measurable results**—Patient Direct Connect™ profiles receive **2.7x more** profile views than basic profiles on healthgrades.com, and consumers are **82% more likely to appoint** with a physician whose profile is comprehensive and personalized.

Healthgrades Patient Direct Connect™ process

Consumer researches physicians on healthgrades.com

Patient schedules appointment over the phone or online

Healthgrades connects consumer to call center
(name and address capture)

Patient-specific ROI

Hospital patient encounters to drive ROI
(name and address capture)

Ochsner also wanted a comprehensive partner to design, implement, optimize, and track the health system's online expansion. Healthgrades Patient Direct Connect™ taps the 78% of online consumers who use third-party websites to find, compare, and choose healthcare providers. This solution empowered Ochsner to **maximize the online visibility of its brand and value message** by enlarging its digital footprint. Patient Direct Connect™ also offered Ochsner cost-effective conversion of engaged patients with:

- **A 24/7 call center** to process consumer inquiries, connect consumers to their desired physician and deploy ongoing consumer engagement efforts

- Integrated **online appointment scheduling** capabilities

- Ability to **effectively track ROI** by following a consumer from phone call/online scheduling to encounter via a unique identifier matched to encounter data

- A team dedicated to **ongoing optimization and training** to ensure partnership success

EFFECTIVELY CONVERT "HAND RAISERS"

While Patient Direct Connect™ attracted the majority of online consumers that Ochsner couldn't reach on its website, the health system also needed to drive conversion among those consumers already considering its services.

Specifically, Ochsner wanted to continue to communicate with "hand raisers" who had called the health system as a result of its digital campaigns but had not yet made an appointment. The health system needed a cost-effective method to accelerate and scale its existing efforts with these engaged consumers, who were very likely to make an appointment.

Leveraging Healthgrades CRM campaign management enabled Ochsner to **convert engaged consumers** into patients. The health system opted to transfer management of its existing "hand raiser" direct mail campaign to Healthgrades and to have Healthgrades manage distribution of an Ochsner-designed welcome email to all new patients who had reached out through healthgrades.com.

Ochsner welcome email
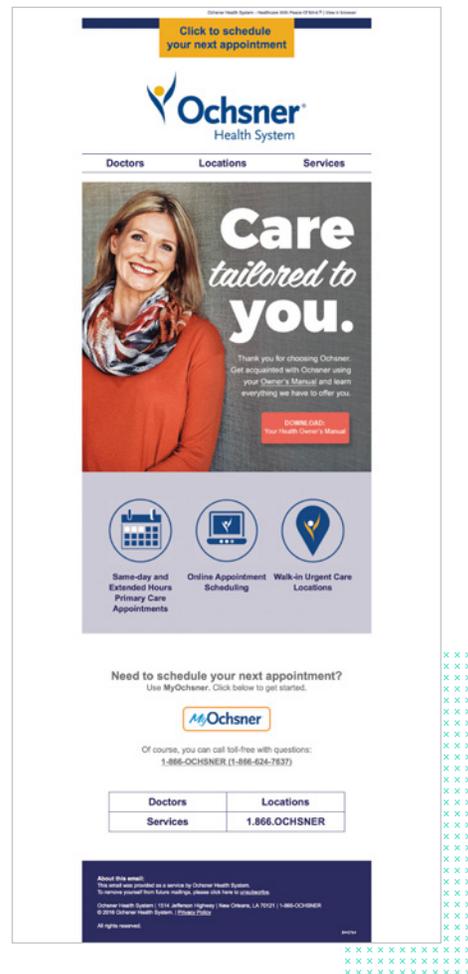
A history of innovation – *Ochsner care delivery firsts*

- First family waiting room
- First intensive-care recovery room
- First to discover link between cigarette smoking and lung cancer
- First surgery in the nation to separate conjoined twins

The Ochsner email and direct mail pieces developed consumer relationships, fostered conversations, and built loyalty. They described the health system's services, care quality, and benefits before reminding recipients to make an appointment using the hospital phone number or a link to the Ochsner find-a-doctor page. This two-step consumer engagement strategy of welcome emails with direct mail follow-up was designed to increase new patient volumes from its Healthgrades partnership.

Healthgrades CRM campaign management process

1 Assessment
2 Analytics & Insights
3 Strategy
4 Activation
5 Measurement & Optimization
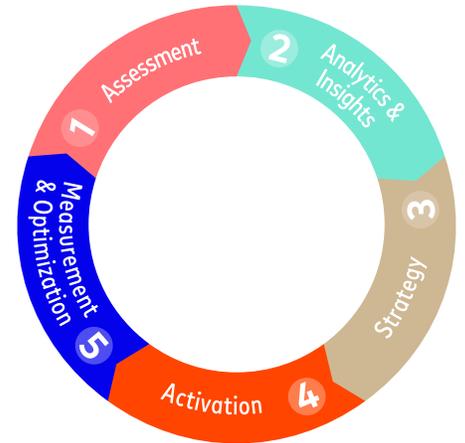
Insights

OCHSNER PURSUED SEVERAL INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES TO MAXIMIZE ITS RESULTS:

Attract more online consumers by meeting them where they are. Ochsner knew that the majority of online consumers use third-party sites to search for healthcare provider information (see sidebar), so it focused its expanded efforts around healthgrades.com, a high-volume, high-value consumer marketplace.

- Healthgrades.com receives **3X more traffic** than all competitors combined.

- **80%** of healthgrades.com consumers are commercially insured.

- **95%** of consumers who come to Healthgrades to make an appointment will do so within one week

Choose a partner with extensive customer support. Ochsner credits a great working relationship with its Healthgrades physician support representative and the entire solution implementation team for facilitating its success. It realizes that the best technology is worthless without the right customer support. Healthgrades delivers a top-notch customer experience by:

- *Implementing standard project management* protocols to launch the patient-acquisition solution

- *Employing solution implementation and call center teams* to ensure an effective marketing funnel

- *Supporting acquisition tracking and optimization*, including physician profile content, online appointment scheduling, and training

Monitor and adjust for ongoing program optimization. Ochsner invested significant time in initial physician and staff education regarding the benefits of its patient-acquisition solution. The health system also continues to schedule standing meetings to evaluate calls coming into the call center. This listening process allows for coaching, script changes, and any necessary process updates.

Accelerate a consumer-focused model of care. The patient-acquisition implementation project encouraged the Ochsner team to accelerate patient-facing process improvement. For example:

- *Create physician philosophy-of-care videos* to differentiate Ochsner physicians

- *Provide online forms for physician updates* to ensure contact information is up-to-date

- *Move toward a more consumer-focused model* for the entire care delivery network

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40 million healthcare consumers go online each month

Every month, **40 million consumers search online** for healthcare provider information, according to comScore research on web traffic trends.

- **78%** use third-party search sites *(for example, healthgrades.com receives >1 million visits per day)*

- **22%** turn to sites from health insurance companies, physicians and other providers, and hospitals and health systems

Average monthly search volume
(millions of consumers)

|	2014	2015	2016
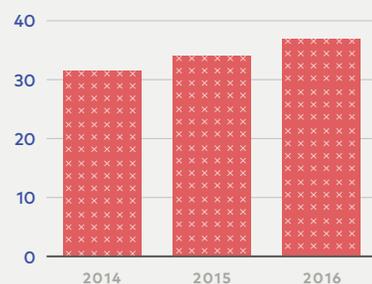
Enhance physician profiles to boost conversion

Before launching its patient-acquisition solution, Ochsner comprehensively enhanced its physician profiles. Why? Consumers on healthgrades.com are **more than twice as likely** to select a complete physician profile that—in addition to name, contact information, and insurance accepted—includes:

A photo	Conditions treated
Care philosophy	Physician video

(110% higher conversion from profile view to phone call)

Ochsner physician profile and video
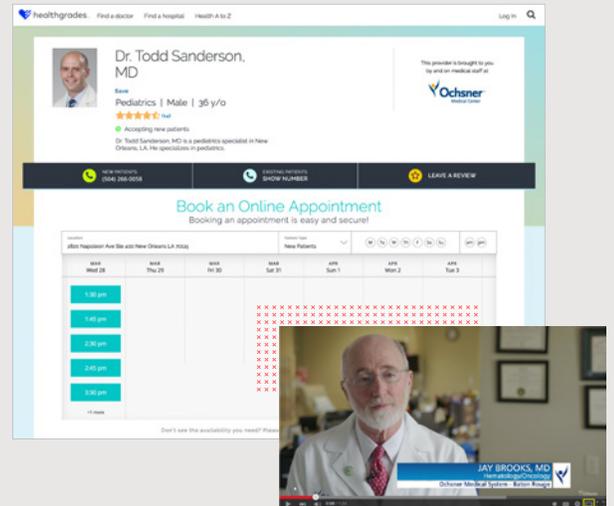
How healthcare consumers select the right doctor

Consumers searching for the right physician on healthgrades.com evaluate three critical types of criteria:

- **Doctor experience.** Consumers are **52% more likely to choose** doctors with clear, personalized healthgrades.com profiles.

- **Patient feedback.** Patient Direct Connect™ physician profiles with patient experience scores book **30% more appointments.**

- **Quality of care.** Consumers are **1.26X more likely to choose** a doctor with satisfaction, experience and quality information.

Charting a Path to Success

1. **Communicate benefits throughout the organization.**
   The Ochsner marketing team traveled to every facility and met with physicians, executives, and other stakeholders to explain the patient-acquisition program design, expected benefits, and guaranteed results. By investing significant time up front to communicate program value, the team sought to gain ongoing support and participation.

2. **Update and verify physician profiles.** Data integrity was critical to sustain buy-in from physicians and staff, but Ochsner discovered two issues common to many hospitals: it had no central repository for physician information, and hospital growth made it challenging to keep that data current. The marketing team manually updated and verified physician profiles to ensure the information that consumers found online was accurate.

3. **Stagger Physician Direct Connect™ launch.** To promote self-sustaining program success, Ochsner staggered the Patient Direct Connect™ implementation, with three launches over a nine-month period. It began with employed physicians and as those physicians watched their patient rosters grow, the health system expanded the program to affiliated and community physicians.

Communicate → Update → Launch
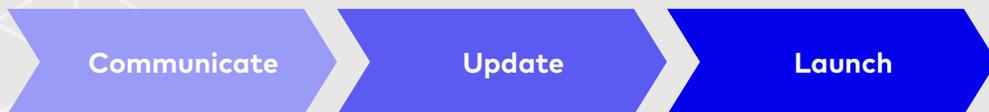
Results

Ochsner's online patient-acquisition program combining Healthgrades Patient Direct Connect™ and CRM solutions successfully connected them with engaged, high-value consumers.

ATTRACT ONLINE CONSUMERS

The program achieved results immediately. The Patient Direct Connect™ marketplace drove more than 150 calls in the first four days. By the fourth week, call volume reached **550 calls for the first-wave pool of 550 physicians**.

The **search-to-call ratio grew from 3% to 5%** within the first month, and the **call-to-transfer rate averaged 60%**, meaning callers were ready to make an appointment with an Ochsner physician.

Call/search and transfer/call rates
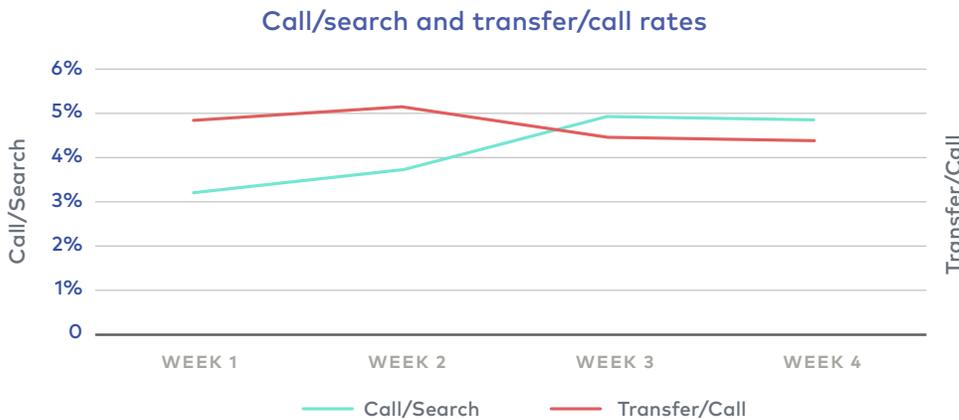
19K
new patients

CONVERT "HAND RAISERS"

Consumers responded well to the two-step engagement strategy of a welcome email plus direct mail "hand raiser" follow-up. Within a year, Ochsner generated **19,000 new patients** from its expanded online patient acquisition and its "hand raiser" conversion programs.

11:1
ROI

BUILD PATIENT LOYALTY

Patient Direct Connect™ captured identifying patient demographic information when consumers first contacted the call center and assigned each consumer a unique identifier. By matching the unique identifiers to encounter data, the health system could **track all downstream activity** from those consumers. In the first year, Ochsner realized a patient-acquisition program **ROI of 11:1**.

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Conclusion

Ochsner Health System continues to succeed by connecting with engaged consumers online and by pursuing ongoing marketing optimization. It has leveraged Healthgrades Patient Direct Connect™ and CRM patient-acquisition solutions to nurture loyalty with high-value patients and to promote consumer-focused care throughout the organization. In doing so, it has cost-effectively cemented its status as an innovative market leader. It is capitalizing on that leadership to achieve its vision of serving a greater share of the community.

As Ochsner continues to see benefits from its partnership with Healthgrades, it is enhancing its patient-acquisition program with online scheduling to expand consumer access.

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To learn more about how Healthgrades solutions can engage and align patients and physicians, call **855.665.9276** or visit **hospitals.healthgrades.com**.