

The Pace of Change in Healthcare and Its Impact on Your Digital Marketing

“Change making happens when people fall in love with a different version of the future.”

– Seth Godin Blog, 3.8.16

Healthcare will never win awards for rapid decision-making. It's the nature of the beast. So what should you do when your market undergoes major change or you adopt a bold new strategy? That's the question facing many healthcare marketers as they draft strategic marketing plans, develop budgets and assess their human resources to get the work done.

Too often, budgets and staffing are based on last year's numbers. And next year's budgeting cycle begins as soon as the last one ends. How do you plan for new marketing technology or add new operations applications?

These challenges coincide with the reimbursement challenges facing providers. Marketers find themselves asking for resources when many organizations are cutting expenses. Many feel painted into a corner. But, with the right perspective, this situation can become an opportunity to build the brand and the right kind of volume. And it can be done economically through digital marketing.

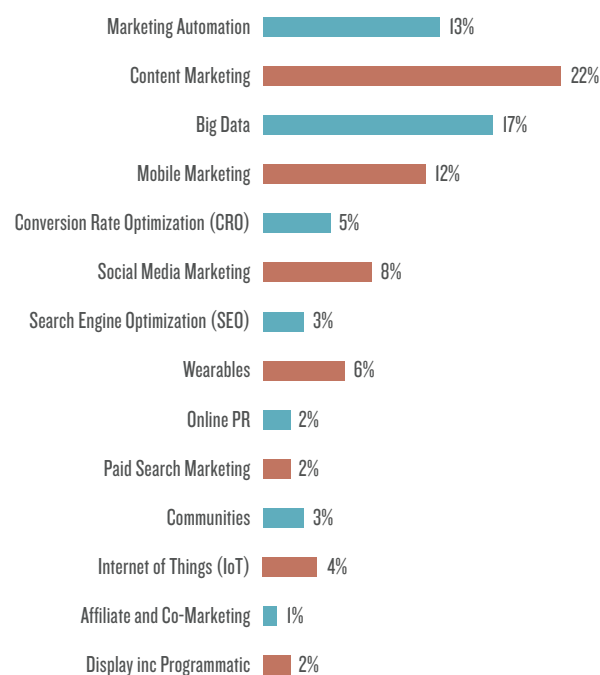
How? It takes leadership, vision and true alignment with your information systems and operations teams. It also requires an understanding of what digital marketing can (and cannot) do. Finally, developing strong partnerships

with industry-leading organizations that support your vision will help you to achieve your goals and plan for the future.

SOME TRENDS

Earlier this year, Smart Insights conducted a survey with 1,500 responses from marketers across all industries. They were asked to identify the single biggest trend in digital marketing. Here are their responses:

Digital marketing activities with the greatest commercial impact in 2016?



To expand on these results, here's the alphabetical breakdown of activities with full descriptions.

- Big Data (including market and customer insight and predictive analytics)
- Content marketing
- Communities (branded niche or vertical communities)
- Conversion rate optimization (CRO) / improving website experiences
- Display (banners on publishers, ad networks and social media including retargeting and programmatic)
- Marketing Automation (including CRM, behavioral email marketing and web personalization)
- Mobile marketing (mobile advertising, site development and apps)
- Paid search marketing— e.g., Google AdWords, pay-per-click and online PR (including influencer outreach)
- Partnerships including affiliate and co-marketing
- Search engine optimization (SEO)
- Social media marketing including social CRM and social customer care
- Wearables (e.g., Apple Watch, activity trackers, augmented reality)¹

If digital marketing is not a major portion of your marketing dollars, now is the time to create a vision for your organization and identify your needs.

WHERE TO BEGIN

In 2015, McKinsey and Company published *Debunking Common Myths about Healthcare Consumerism*.

Myth #1

Healthcare is different from other industries. Consumers don't bring the same expectations about customer experience to healthcare that they bring to retail or technology companies.

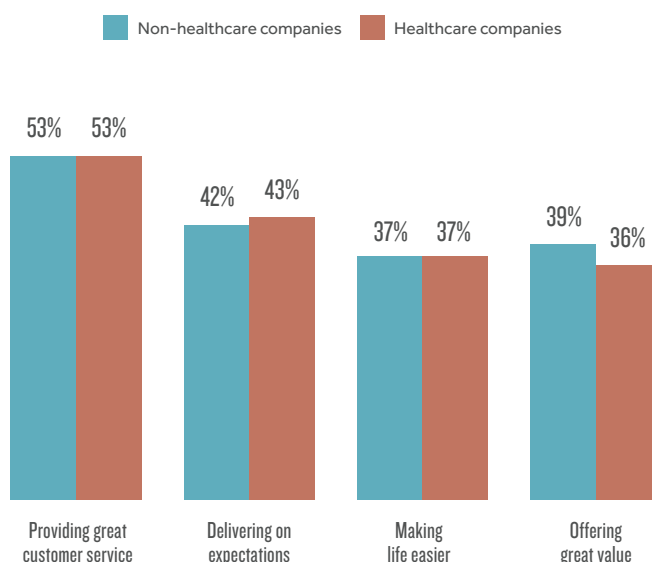
Truth

Our findings indicate that consumers want the same qualities in healthcare companies they value in non-healthcare settings. In this year's Consumer Health Insights (CHI) survey, we asked participants to identify the non-healthcare companies with the strongest consumer focus. Apple and Amazon led the list.

We then asked the participants to tell us what qualities gave such companies a strong customer focus, as well as what they valued in a consumer-focused healthcare company.²

The answers to the two questions were surprisingly similar (Exhibit 1). For example, more than half the participants cited great customer service as important for non-healthcare and healthcare companies alike. Other qualities the participants identified as important for both sets of companies were delivering on expectations, making life easier and offering great value.

Exhibit 1: Qualities Consumers Value in Companies³



Whether healthcare companies need to perform as well as Apple and Amazon on customer experience remains to be seen. However, the evidence suggests that just performing better than other current healthcare competitors won't be sufficient. Customer expectations are being set by non-healthcare industries, and meeting those expectations is likely to be critical to ensure satisfaction and loyalty.

That means that on top of internal pressures and market dynamics, you need to meet the expectations of consumers who expect a lot more from you than they used to.

If you haven't already assessed your marketing and communication function, do so now. Pay particular attention to your consumer access and acquisition strategies, such as your website, call center, centralized scheduling, new-movers programs and any applications you might be promoting.

¹ Smart Insights by Dave Chaffey, MD, February 8, 2016; ² Debunking Common Myths About Healthcare Consumerism, By Jenny Cordina, Rohit Kumar, and Christa Moss, Article December 2015; ³ Participants were offered 10 qualities and asked to select the 3 they thought mattered most. Source: McKinsey 2015 Consumer Health Insights survey.

After your assessment, articulate the vision you have for your organization and department from a MarCom perspective:

- Use your approved annual operating plan and strategic plan as your lens for analyzing your current performance.
- Look at mobile and online use rates, drive times, competitor moves and tactics, and online entertainment sites like Pandora in your market.
- Find out where all *your* data is located, who owns it and how you can access it. This is free data and you own it, so use it appropriately.
- Assess your current efforts, honestly—*honestly*—in terms of return on investment. You must be able to document ROI if you're going to have a conversation with your leadership team for additional resources.
- Talk to your colleagues across the nation who share your role. Healthcare colleagues tend to be generous and willing to share useful information. They're your best references for vendors.
- Research by service line and functional areas to understand where your organization is going. Use this as an opportunity to strengthen your relationship with your organizational leaders. By engaging them in the conversation, you can lay the groundwork for the larger resource conversation. What is the organization's vision?
 - o To double ambulatory assets?
 - o To be the leaders in cardiovascular care?
 - o To attract the best staff and physicians?
 - o To double the size of the medical group?

Whatever it is, you need to be prepared to outline how you'll support this vision through marketing and communication.

- If you have existing relationships with vendors in the digital marketing area, ask them what's on the horizon. What new products are in development?

CREATING THE MARKETING VISION

Once you have collected this data, create the marketing vision.

- Use your assessment to create a gap analysis between where you are and where you want to go.
- List the emerging needs of your organization and service line leaders and approximate implementation costs.

- List what you'll no longer do or will diminish because other tactics can provide better results.
- Add staff (in some cases) with different skills. Be smart about what you can outsource and what you need to have in-house.
- Determine what systems are still relevant and can be built upon to advance your digital marketing vision.

GET LEADERSHIP BUY-IN

Your leaders are just as aware of the rapid changes in the industry. Like you, they struggle to define the best path forward. If you can craft a multi-year plan that supports the organization's operating plan and vision, you'll be seen as a partner in the organization's success and worthy of investment. Not cost-cutting. You must be strategic. It sounds simple, but remember to follow these simple rules:

1. You can't (and shouldn't) do everything at once. Get a win under your belt and then move to your next tactic.
2. If you get it 85% right, you can fix the other 15% as long as your efforts point you in the right direction.
3. Don't fall in love with the "new and shiny penny."
4. Assess results continually and make course corrections as needed.

The world of digital marketing is fascinating and holds great promise. As marketers, you need to continually learn. Stay current and relevant. It's essential to fulfilling your organization's vision.

PARTNER WITH ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN DRIVE YOU FORWARD

In the 2016 book *We CAN Fix Healthcare*, Dr. Stephen Klasko, MD, MBA, and his fellow authors outline a new reality that is based on healthcare transformation, rather than reformation, and the use of technology to align the patient experience with consumer expectations of customer service, ease of use and quality "well-being" care. It is recognized that "an integrated system that can communicate across patient 'touch points' and allow for an intelligent, living, smart health timeline" is critical to achieve this goal.⁴ Looking to retail giants such as Apple and Amazon who have successfully created incredible access and personalized experience across the consumer journey, the healthcare industry can draw on their success and begin to transform the healthcare consumer journey.

⁴Klasko, Stephen K., Shea, Gregory P. & Hoad, Michael. (2016). *We CAN Fix Healthcare: The Future is NOW*. New Rochelle, NY: Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.

Dr. Klasko is doing just that. As the president of Thomas Jefferson University and the CEO of Jefferson Health, he is leading 11 hospitals, 25,000 employees and 10,000 students through transformation. "We look to support our teams with technology and people who have demonstrated success using the internet and all its assets to connect and engage consumers to create and strengthen brand relationships," shares Dr. Klasko. "Innovative approaches and companies are out there to support you. Companies like Healthgrades have the vision, people and capabilities. You just have to be willing to challenge your own assumptions of the marketplace."

It is important to find a partner who can meet your needs where you are along your transformation journey and who propel you to reach your goals. Whether you are focusing on the transition from volume-focused to value-based care, are

looking to expand your digital footprint, or simply want to better organize your data to drive strategic decisions, the partner you select should have the resources, experience and vision that align with your goals. With any great partnership, the engagement must be bidirectional. Your partner should push you to employ best practices and consider new ideas and technologies and should also be open to you pushing them to innovate and deliver in new and interesting ways. They should provide a support system as an extension of your organization to help you aggregate and mine data for key insights, develop strategies out of those insights and report on ROI across all of your efforts. Your partner should also be willing and help to coordinate and connect you with colleagues in similar markets to encourage knowledge sharing and best practices across the industry. A win-win partnership results in strong, lasting relationships where the sum is greater than the parts. [IP](#)

Contributors

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HITCHCOCK MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS is a marketing and communications consultancy for healthcare only. Our team is comprised of experienced professionals in brand management, system growth and marketing strategies, including digital strategies, corporate and physician communications, issues and corporate reputation strategies.

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HEALTHGRADES Healthgrades is the number one-online resource for consumers searching for information about physicians. Healthgrades makes healthcare easier for the more than 30 million consumers visiting healthgrades.com each month to research, compare and connect with physicians and hospitals, providing consumers with the information they need to make more informed decisions. Health Systems rely upon Healthgrades as well, using our Provider Solutions to build their brand, to target and increase engagement with consumers and patients, and to measure the results of engagement initiatives.

Healthgrades combines consumer and patient-to-physician connectivity with relationship management and engagement solutions at scale to provide a fully integrated approach.

The value of this combination results in the unique ability to fully enable the consumer, physician, health system and patient both digitally and traditionally.

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Partnering With Healthgrades

Healthgrades pulls from over 20 years of unmatched healthcare marketing experience to bring our client partners best practices across the healthcare consumer engagement journey, both online and offline, to create a seamless, relevant experience for consumers wherever they may be looking for information. By ingesting your data and enhancing it with second- and third-party data, Healthgrades builds you the most robust 360-degree view of patients and consumers in your market. Predictive models are then applied to assist with population analysis based on clinical need or risk, actual consumer behavior and psychographic indicators. Populations may be analyzed to determine opportunity, provide insight into business issues or develop target audiences for marketing communications. Each marketing campaign is tracked and measured so you understand the true impact of your marketing efforts and the ROI for which you can take credit. Deep insights into campaign performance show you how each channel performed, as well as specific metrics within each channel so you can continue to strategically hone your strategy for optimization.

The easy-to-use Healthgrades interface provides you with online access to your data and reports 24/7 on any device. Like many healthcare marketers, you may not have the capacity to take this on yourself, as executing and monitoring a CRM strategy can get very complex very quickly. The Healthgrades team of over 800 talented employees is here to help from technical support to full campaign development, execution and reporting. As part of your Healthgrades partnership, you will be assigned a full team including account management, marketing strategy and analytics, as well as a full digital and creative team to work as an extension of your marketing department should you need it. Your account manager, strategist and analyst will work hand-in-hand to bring you unique insights from your database and recommendations based on best practices so you can get the most out of your investment.



For more information, visit healthgrades.com/crm or call 855.665.9276.