

The New Rules for Successful Hospital Marketing

Author : Stewart Gandolf

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Marketing-savvy hospital administrators—and their tuned-in communications teams—are writing new rules for success in reaching, attracting and retaining patients.

As the nation's healthcare delivery system has become an ever-changing playing field, many of the “old rules” of **marketing** are less important—including more than a few that are now passé. Among the well-known influence factors that continue to drive change are the:

- **Affordable Care Act and the dynamics of health care reform**
- **Immediacy and availability of Internet information and its social influence**
- **Influence of increasingly empowered patients as informed consumers**

What's more, successful [hospital marketing](#), **branding**, and **advertising** faces the continuing challenge of being relevant and “engage consumers today for solutions they may need tomorrow.”

Given this backdrop of new and shifting sands, some of the new rules for successful hospital **marketing** are:

Be agile, nimble and quick: Organizational barriers, such as long-tail process cycles, undue internal influences, and committee decision systems, can handicap prompt and effective action. The baseline for contemporary communications is the near-immediacy of the Internet and **social** media. Lean organizations shape themselves to work in near real time.

The first screen is small: Smartphones and mobile devices have become a primary format for consumers. Desktops, laptops and other channels—including traditional print and broadcast—are still important planning considerations, but the small screen often leads the way.

Be a fierce competitor: Nearly all sectors of healthcare are contending with a shape-shifting competitive landscape. In many markets, the corporate world is now part of the competitive picture, with large-budget retail **marketing** campaigns in play.

Convincing and compelling content: Hospitals and healthcare facilities often have a unique opportunity to tell their story in emotional and authoritative ways that touch consumers.

Communicating the right message not only engages the audience, it can also extend awareness and enhance reputation.

Get ahead of the curve: Technology, social attitudes and consumer trends move more quickly than in the past. A key to success in **marketing** includes forward-thinking, and anticipating significant influences and trends. Invest time and effort in discovering what's next.

Talk to the individual: The marketing mindset recognizes that traditional "mass communications" has given way to precision-defined audience groups. A focus on one-to-one, personalized messaging is increasingly more practical to do and more effective.

Some of the new rules of marketing for hospitals and healthcare are playing to the strengths and advantages of **digital** and online communications. Traditional and wider range media play a role, but because technology has shrunk the computer to pocket size, for example, greater personalization is an option.

Let us know what you would add to this list. What are the new rules in your organization that have helped (or hurt) your ability to reach specific **marketing** goals?

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