

# INTERNET MARKETING AND AREAS IN HEALTH CARE WHERE IT IS REGULARLY APPLIED, AND PRACTICED WITH ENHANCEMENT: A BASIC VIEW

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**Abstract:** Health marketing is a new approach to public health that applies traditional marketing principles and theories alongside science-based strategies to prevention, health promotion and health protection. Health marketing is one of the ways through which advancements in medicine and in health-protecting services like pharmaceuticals, insurance are made widely known. A good example is the current drive in Ghana where many health centres do public health campaigns and outreach programs to create awareness. Health marketing is a term rarely used in public health and related disciplines. Social marketing or integrated marketing communication is more commonly used in public health and other disciplines to refer to marketing-based planning frameworks for public health communication. No matter how it is, the most important role is for institutions to abreast themselves with the new trend of technological advancement in health that allows providers to trade and show case their output to the world. This article elaborates on health market and how we can move with global advancement.

**Key Words:** Evaluation, marketing, industry, health care, global technology.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION:

Internet marketing is the use of the Internet to sell products or services, as well as to manage their accounting, distribution, production, advertising, customer service, personal sales, internal communication to employees, and external communication to outside stakeholders. It's a new and rapidly developing platform for products and services showcasing.

## 2.0 DISCUSSIONS:

Internet marketing uses a marketing tool called a website. Internet or Electronic marketing has five (5) main benefits or objectives and is denoted the 5S (Smith and Chaffey: 2001; Smith and Taylor: 2002).

Below are the main 5s and their meaning;

- (a) SELL: Selling goods and services to potential global market
- (b) SERVE: Using the website as a way of providing additional customer service or stream lining customer support
- (c) SAVE: Saving money on overheads
- (d) SPEAK: Using websites to conduct a one-to-one dialogue with customers, which is critical for customer relationship management
- (e) SIZZLE: A well-designed website for marketing should be able to create lively emotions

There are many opportunities that internet marketing can present to the health sector and below are some points.

1. Reinforces company image ; no matter how small your company or health facility is, the internet can highlight it to the world for prospective clients to access it. This enables an organisation to sell out its services to the public without any hindrance and fatigue.

2. Disseminates Information; health care should be accessible and reliable but this becomes difficult for one to locate a particular service or specialised service a health facility provides. Internet marketing spreads information

on various facilities very quickly and this make it easy for prospective clients to seek the necessary information on any specialised service they want.

It allows one to easily compare and contrast specialised services been offered by different health care providers on the same platform

3. Complements Printed Brochures and Literature; manual and hard copy advertisement in the form of printing readers, magazines etc are costive and it becomes a burden to any health care provider to supply a larger population about the kind of services they provide. This allows only the affluent to get these facts to augment their health care. Due to globalisation, internet marketing has complemented to this cost. It's less costive to use the internet to advertise any service and care given.

4. Is used for Public Relation Purpose ; internet marketing has now cut down the cost of hiring public relation officers in many health care facilities, it creates a platform for interviewing, comments, ideas sharing and gathering data or information for reviews.

Internet marketing brings an easier communication channel through live and on line interaction irrespective of where the person is from.

5. Used as a Sales Promotion and Direct Selling; through the internet, hospitals and clinics can sell of their services to potential customers and clients. Items, equipments and services could be displaced on the internet and downloaded by viewers for easier, quicker and cost effective charts. Many facilities have blocks for credit card transactions that allow clients to easily purchase or patronise any range of services available.

6. May Help Cultivating Relationships with Consumers and Stakeholders; Internet marketing bridges the big gap in communication between customers, stakeholders and service providers. Prospective clients are able to channel their crisis or intuition to service providers and this helps solve situations like cognitive dissonance. Through the internet, service providers are also able to channel their products and services to customers very fast and reports analysed and documented.

### **3.0 ANALYSIS:**

#### ***3.1 Over-view of Health Care Marketing as an Autonomous Tool***

A marketing plan is not a list of marketing ideas from which you randomly select different concepts to test or combine for trial-and-error experimentation. That is just random, episodic, spaghetti-on-the-wall marketing activity – which is almost always a high-risk prescription for disappointment, frustration and failure.

3.2 Critical Elements of a Marketing Plan; this is an essential part in building a fundamental, solid and successful health care. Below are points few points to practice in order to enhance your health care marketing plan.

Target Marketing – Establishing Target Customers, Competition Analysis, SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), SMART Goals -S=specific, significant, systematic, synergistic, M=measurable, meaningful, motivational, A=achievable, agreed-upon, action-based, accountable, R=relevant, realistic, responsible, results-oriented, rewarding, T=tangible, time-based, thoughtful, Strategies and Tactics, Marketing Budgets, Marketing System.

Health care marketing strategy would follow the traditional 4 Ps of marketing in order to prevent practitioners and providers from deviation and time wasting.

These are:

- a. The product in question in this case the surgical procedure.
- b. The place which refers to the access to this procedure.
- c. A promotion refers to creating awareness and hence demands.
- d. Price refers to the cost of the procedure e.g. money, time, reputation etc.

Health Marketing involves creating, communicating, and delivering health information and interventions using customer-centered and science-based strategies to protect and promote the health of diverse populations (CDC, 2005).

Health Marketing is:

1. A multidisciplinary practice that promotes the use of marketing research to educate, motivate and inform the public on health messages
2. An integration of the traditional marketing field with public health research, theory and practice
3. A complex framework that provides guidance for designing health interventions, campaigns, communications, and research projects
4. A broad range of strategies and techniques that can be used to create synergy among public health research, communication messages and health behaviors.

Health Care Marketing is a new approach to public health that applies traditional marketing principles and theories alongside science-based strategies to prevention, health promotion and health protection. Health care marketing is one of the ways through which advancements in medicine and in health-protecting services like insurance are made widely known. Healthcare marketing also requires an in-depth understanding of your target market (your ideal clients/patients), and how to best communicate with them.

All of these factors make up healthcare marketing, and if you are not considering these factors, your practice, clinic, pharmacy, hospital etc. is certainly not going to rule the market (American Marketing Association).

#### 4.0 FINDINGS:

Health care marketing now is an indispensable tool in regenerative and holistic health care. There are numerous areas in health that needs marketing strategies to be applied but below are a few of the regularly marketing practiced areas;

**4.1 Pharmacies and Pharmaceutical companies;** A pharmacy is a place where drugs and chemicals of all kind are produced, stored and sold to clients under the supervision of a pharmacist or chemist. This is an area that needs the best marketing strategies since there are a lot of competitors in the market. Clients have many other sources to contact in case of any uncomfortable experience. It also needs a lot of health care advertisement since there may be many products in the company and as each day goes by, there is also a new product emerging to the market front.

**4.2 Clinics/Hospitals;** these are certified places where the sick or injured is cured for till recovery and it is mined by highly trained professionals from different aspects of health science; doctors, pharmacists, biomedical scientist, nurses etc. Due to the proliferation of clinics, one has to apply a good and sound marketing practice to outwit his/her competitors. Health care marketing really is needed to help clinics rebrand and re package their services.

The idea of applying marketing can bring specializations into clinics and clients with special health problems. Also marketing strategies can bring ideas of sign/ bill boards' afar and closer to direct prospective clients to the hospital and this can outweigh competitors.

**4.3. Health Insurers;** Health insurers are legally acclaimed organisations that warranty and guarantee the health risk of clients at any stage of their lives. Health care marketing is regularly practiced and applied in this sector because there are a lot of insurance companies in the market that are giving unlimited packages and if you don't repackage your ideas, you will be left out. Health insurers are always on the market looking for prospective clients and with marketing one can make his package be attainable, reliable and quick to attract more clients since the traditional insurance companies take longer time to pay remittances and mutual benefits.

**4.4. Diagnostic and Laboratory services;** now due to technology advancement, a lot of private laboratories have emerged and this has brought about effective health care marketing.

The traditional hospital laboratory is routine and this has paved way for the private diagnostic centres to bring many different equipment and services. These services are expensive to access and one needs a comprehensive health marketing approach to overtake other competitors that provide same good services.

**4.5. Radiology Centres ;** Radiology centres are centres that use medical imaging techniques to examine and take films of prescribed areas of medical practitioners. They use highly expensive and delicate machines like the magnetic resonance imaging, the computered tomography scans, x ray machines, ultrasonography scans etc. these are all very expensive machines that many of the government hospitals and clinics do not have but many private centres have.

Health care marketing is rapidly applied in this centres because it is expensive to access and clients need to be persuaded and educated on this kind of service. Moreover one can purge his/her price at an angle below other competitors and also employ more marketing advertisement and signage for easy accessibility and location.

## 5. RECOMMENDATION :

Health marketing plan is a strategic document that is designed to facilitate the achievement of specific business goals and objectives over a specific time period.

Would you consider hiring contractors to build out your new hospital, office or clinic without first developing and approving the architectural blueprints? Well, that's essentially what you are doing when you engage in random, reactionary marketing activities without first developing a well thought out marketing plan.

Most marketing plans are conceived to extend no longer than one year before the plan is reassessed for modifications, additions, subtractions or entire reinvention depending on constantly evolving business goals and circumstances.

In fact, a properly implemented marketing plan is constantly being assessed by accurate and consistent tracking systems to evaluate the plan's performance against expectations. This continual evaluation is performed so that ongoing adjustments can be made to improve the plan's yield.

A good marketing plan allows you to anticipate, assess, prepare, build a road map to follow, cover-your-bases, construct necessary support systems, protect yourself and dramatically improve your chances for marketing success. A plan is an essential business tool for hospitals, medical groups or provider practices

## 6. CONCLUSSION :

Health care marketing has evolved technologically, locally, globally, creating enough peacefully health space, field and atmosphere for competitors to ply their skilled labour and trade. This advancement has improved the old age sytem of monopoly syndromes on the field where even though if treatement and services of an agency, health centre or organisation is poor, bad, de -humanising. One has no option or choice than to still patronise their service and this lack of will but no choice often killed the soul, derrain the human mind and its adverse effect been felt on the human body. The writers call this the LANQUARISM THEOREM.

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