

blu20

2340 S Range Line Rd
Joplin, Mo 64804
888-919-1914

info@blu20.com

Author

Andrew Rice



2016 Healthcare Marketing Trends

Digital marketing trends
that are here to stay

Issue 3 03.14.16

blu20.com



OVERVIEW

In 2016, medical facilities will essentially need to be everywhere, whenever a consumer is searching for them, in such a way that it feels like that piece of content was written exclusively for him or her. That type of efficiency and relevance is what will drive patients and prospective patients to convert.

Healthcare digital marketing requires a special set of rules and oversight that does not necessarily apply to our other clients. We must make sure that all copywriting complies with HIPAA and FDA rules. We have to ask questions like: Are we avoiding the use of patient names in all writing, unless expressly permitted? Are we letting people know our advice is not meant to substitute a trip to the doctor's for professional medical counsel? Are we including enough information? Are all claims completely accurate?

We have a whole other set of concerns when we look at B2B healthcare companies and healthcare technology firms. Are we explaining the features and benefits in a digestible way? In a competitive market, how can we present these particular products or services as unique and desirable? How do we make it easier for healthcare organizations to adopt new technology and give it a try?

Despite these hurdles, healthcare marketing cannot be overlooked. Pew Research found 72% of patients used the internet to search for information on hospitals, doctors and medical treatments. Given the demand and usefulness of digital marketing for healthcare markets, isn't it time you investigated the latest trends that meets your needs?

FACT: You've got 15 seconds to capture a web user's attention.

A Responsive Website

Since a third of your customers will be using their mobile devices to research medical information and facilities, as well as book appointments, you'll need a website that is designed with small mobile screens in mind. Rather than build a separate mobile site, you can have responsiveness for different devices built into your main website to eliminate any confusion. Visitors should be able to find the most essential information quickly and easily, access special mobile features (like click-to-call), and see a version of the site that is instantly reformatted to fit their screens. Without a responsive website that functions quickly and seamlessly, all other marketing endeavors are pointless. You only have one chance to make a first impression before these easily-distracted internet users are moving onto the next healthcare website.

Show Me the Numbers

Healthcare CMOs are under a lot of pressure to prove the ROI of marketing efforts. While this isn't necessarily new, it has driven many healthcare organizations to spend a larger percentage of their marketing budget on digital because it's more easily measured, ex. clicks, engagement, conversions. However, 2016 will be the year that the healthcare industry refines their digital marketing further by utilizing data and marketing automation.

Instead of broad digital campaigns, healthcare organizations will run mini campaigns targeted to niche audiences. These campaigns will nurture leads by collecting data and sending prospective patients personalized messages to drive conversions. The healthcare industry has had the technology to collect data about its patients, but 2016 is the year that it will no longer have a choice on whether to manage and make use of that data to fuel marketing campaigns.

Content Marketing

Fresh content is the best way to help your website reach patient eyes and develop real leads. Well-crafted content improves search engine positioning, informs consumers, builds trust, and invites readers to visit your practice. The best content includes Search

FACT: Healthcare companies who blog see 55% increase in website traffic.

Engine Optimization techniques that help connect searchers with your website.

To have an effective content marketing strategy, healthcare companies must have a comprehensive, written plan for success. Another guideline to keep in mind is that context is more important than the content itself. This means that you must create specific content for each social platform. Think of the mindset of your audience on each social platform. For example, patients are on Facebook to catch up with friends and family members, they're on Tumblr to laugh at GIFs, they're on Pinterest to find things they aspire to have or accomplish, and they're on Instagram to see pretty pictures. Tailor your content to the context and psychology of each social channel.

Return on Community (ROC)

A common theme in 2015 marketing was campaigns that speak to larger, social issues. Some popular examples are The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, Always "Like a Girl" and Coke's label-less cans campaign to fight prejudice. While these cultural issues are more universal, hospital brands can use their marketing to address issues specific to healthcare and their communities.

For example, healthcare brands can address the issue of obesity or childhood vaccinations in attempt to educate its community on preventive medicine, reduce the number of expensive ED admissions, and improve population health. This is called a return on community, or ROC, and in turn, can help improve a hospital's ROI. Consumers respond well to messages of positivity that demonstrates an organization's culture over its specific products or services. Healthcare organizations can take this trend to the local level in 2016.

Social Media Presence

You don't have to be on every social media site, but having some regularly maintained presence is considered a prerequisite for doing business by most consumer standards. Many businesses also feel most comfortable networking with modern companies who have an online presence as well.

FACT: 41% of patients said social media influenced their selection of a healthcare provider.

If you're a B2B healthcare company, social media can help you get in touch with prospects, inform decision makers about your offerings, stay ahead of the competition, and monitor relevant conversations where people have problems that you can solve.

User-generated content, influencer marketing and Snapchat have become very popular over the past year with lifestyle brands. In 2016, hospitals and healthcare organizations will find effective and creative ways to leverage these consumer channels to market specific programs and service lines with great success. While these may not be a perfect fit for all service lines, it could be a great fit for maternity, pediatrics, and general wellness or population health because the target audience is similar to those of lifestyle brands.

CONCLUSION

It's always interesting to watch marketing trends develop over the course of a year, especially when national trends make their way down to the local healthcare level. There are translations that take place, of course, such as "click-to-buy" changing to "click-to-schedule" and brand reputation becoming more personal with return on community. However, there is one thing that remains the same: consumers expect convenience. This means they are looking for the ability to complete things online (on a clean, responsive site), easily find high-quality content, and quickly learn the main points before the end of their lunch break. In 2016, aim to make patients' lives easier, and they'll reward you for it.