

The Top 5 Challenges Companies Face in Marketing to Healthcare Professionals

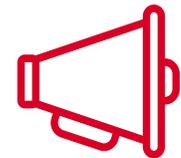


By Adria Schmedthorst

All marketing is not the same and the number one rule of marketing is “Know Your Prospect”. This can be especially difficult for companies whose sales targets are in the healthcare industry. Here are the top 5 challenges faced by companies who market to healthcare professionals.

Challenge #1 - Cutting through the Noise

Healthcare professionals have to wear many different hats - caregiver, staff manager, business owner, along with many more. Doctors and hospital administrators are increasingly overloaded with responsibilities. To make things even more complicated, they must also walk the line every day to balance patient care with profitability. Because of this, these healthcare professionals are overwhelmed with the amount of materials they are responsible for reviewing and for which decisions must be made. For companies that market to this group of professionals, their message must be direct, engaging, and show immediate benefits both to the patient to the bottom line. If the prospect can't determine in less than 10 seconds if there is a benefit that speaks directly to them, the marketing will fail.



Challenge #2 - Specialization, Even in Marketing

Any marketing effort that targets healthcare professionals must be just as specialized as the doctors themselves. A marketing campaign that is wildly successful for targeting a neurosurgeon is not the same campaign that will prompt a plastic surgeon to act. The differences in practice type, philosophy, and type of patient seen all play a role in determining the best practices for marketing to a specific physician.



Challenge #3 - Standing Out

Healthcare providers are flooded with marketing messages from pharmaceuticals and devices to practice management software and financial services. Because of their influence over patients, a single doctor can impact several million dollars worth of healthcare purchases each year. And, the amount of marketing communications they receive reflects that power. Marcom materials must stand out from the crowd with a message that speaks directly to the heart and mind of the healthcare professionals, a message that triggers their core desires or offers a solution to their current problems and fears.



Challenge #4 - Rising Operation Costs

Higher rents, increasing staff costs, more denied claims, and sky-rocketing malpractice insurance premiums mean that the cost of running a practice is rising annually. In fact, more than 84% of physicians in the 2014 Medical Economics Physician Practice Survey said that their practice is doing the same or worse financially than a year ago. Companies marketing to these physicians must position their product or service as a way to alleviate these financial concerns while offering their company as a valuable team member, with an honest investment in the physician's success.



Challenge #5 - Payers Influencing Healthcare

Physicians face a range of challenges in getting paid, from Meaningful Use to other programs. Between audits and prior authorizations, healthcare providers have to take into account how each service they perform will affect claim turnarounds, payments, and denials. This means that marketers must show these providers in what way their product or service will help streamline the process of claim payments, decrease denials, and take the guess-work out of billing. In short, companies must demonstrate how they will help the doctor or hospital get paid more, on time, and with less hassle.



Challenges faced by healthcare professionals translate into challenges faced in marketing to those prospects. But, they can also represent a huge opportunity to companies who can laser target their marketing message specifically to the core desires, needs, and problems of these providers. Companies that ignore the issues inherent in selling products and services to healthcare professionals and the day to day problems they face are setting themselves up for failure. However, a targeted marketing message, one that is as specialized as the providers themselves, can address and overcome these challenges while presenting the benefits of the product or service in a clear, concise way that shows the provider how it will help them both improve patient care and their bottom line.

About the Author:

Adria Schmedthorst is a writer focusing on the medical device, technology, software, and healthcare industries. Adria is the founder of AMS Copy and a healthcare professional herself with more than 10 years in practice. She now uses her knowledge of the industry to help companies achieve their goals of writing content that speaks to the hearts and minds of medical professionals. She has been featured in blogs, written articles, and other publications for the industry, and ghostwritten books for doctors in both the United States and Australia.

