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VALUE MARKETING AND CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT IN HEALTHCARE

Abstract:

The deregulation of the healthcare industry has led to the establishment of many for-profit healthcare organizations that offer medical solutions to patients. Companies must be fully engaged at the same time to provide a satisfactory return on invested funds to shareholders, by ensuring sustainable business development. Every company in the healthcare business is responsible to shareholders to ensure a competitive rate of return on the investment made, by ensuring profit in any segment and maximizing the wealth of the true owners. In healthcare, delivered value creates and integrates the healthcare system into a system based on quality, safety, patient centricity and cost management. These elements bring together the interests of patients, payers, providers, and suppliers.

Patient satisfaction must be the main goal of any healthcare organization and this requires a thorough knowledge of their needs and expectations. Providing a high-quality health service is based on meeting certain requirements for the service to reach the patient's desired level. To gain the trust of healthcare consumers, specialized staff must be more receptive to patients' wishes, suggestions, complaints, and at the same time, become more sensitive to their concerns. The effectiveness of this approach depends on how effective the communication of the medical organization with the patients is and it presents a correct picture of the health service and correctly delivers the promised service, and is a constant concern for continuous improvement of the service to exceed the expectations of patients. Since the behavior of consumers of health services is difficult to predict, the presence of the patient in the delivery process can be a source of great uncertainty.

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INTRODUCTION

Creating value in healthcare organizations is the task of managers. Value in healthcare and measured improvement in patient health outcomes is measured based on the costs incurred to achieve that improvement. The transformation of care in health care is based on values that should enable the health system to create more value for patients.

Value is created when a person's health outcomes are improved, providing value-based health care and reducing costs.

Value-based healthcare is often confused with quality, a concept that implies a myriad of virtues.

Value in healthcare often focuses on inputs and compliance with processes. Quality improvement efforts may not improve patient health outcomes.

Certainly clinicians should practice with the consistency demanded by scientific methods and follow evidence-based care guidelines. But results matter. The goal of value-based health care is better health outcomes.

Value and patient satisfaction are also commonly confused. While the patient satisfaction movement has brought a much-needed emphasis on treating people with dignity and respect, the essential purpose of health care is improving health. Value is about helping patients. Satisfaction surveys ask patients, "How were we?" Value-based care providers ask, "How are you?"

Healthcare marketing

Healthcare marketing is a strategic communications process designed to attract healthcare consumers, guide them through their healthcare journey and keep them engaged in the healthcare system (<https://www.mercuryhealthcare.com>, 2022).

Healthcare marketing refers to the process by which healthcare professionals use strategic communication to satisfy their customers – patients by guiding them into recovery and maintaining close contact with them. Health marketing aims to promote health by sharing relevant information and informing the public about beneficial healthcare interventions(<https://study.com> › lesson, 2022).

Marketing in healthcare is the process of creating, communicating and offering information about healthcare. Health marketing is a multidisciplinary practice that uses traditional marketing principles and science-based health prevention and promotion. Marketing is an indispensable part of modern healthcare. Healthcare marketing involves educating, informing and motivating people with health messages; demonstration of linkage between healthcare and people's needs; and harnessing the potential of technology to offer seamless healthcare. (<https://dhge.org> › blog › wha., 2020).

Working in healthcare is more than just a job. It is a call to help people lead to a better life. Healthcare professionals care for the patient, dedicating their professional career to helping others. With proper marketing, doctors can get patients and attention for their practice. Healthcare marketing differs from business marketing in that it is about meeting specific marketing needs.

Healthcare marketing encompasses marketing strategies designed for the healthcare sector. Healthcare marketing strategies are used by healthcare professionals, service providers, insurance funds and companies and suppliers. Healthcare marketing is completely targeted and segmented and uses different channels for promotion, patient engagement and communication. The goals of healthcare marketing are the same as for all marketing - to attract and retain customers, drive growth and revenue, improve reputation, and foster trust and loyalty. (<https://peertopeermarketing.co>, 2022)

Healthcare marketing involves meeting the implicit challenges of credibility, accessibility, and confidentiality, but also strict explicit regulations designed to protect consumer privacy and security. Healthcare marketing activities inspire consumer confidence, convey highly technical information in a way that consumers understand and can find in a way that gives the message emotional resonance for the target audience. Within healthcare marketing, there are many different areas where activities should be concentrated. Each marketing requires different emphasis, different content and different strategy to meet the needs of consumers. The main characteristics of marketing in the individual activities in healthcare would be(<https://wearecsg.com> › what-i., 2022):

- For healthcare providers – good and targeted marketing provides a complete picture of the achievements and differences of professionals, for patient reviews that significantly influence care decisions.
- For health systems – public health often depends on the preparation of the health message and the creation of materials to support it. Brand consistency, visibility and acceptance are important in healthcare. Whether promoting the excellence of their staff or communicating with the public, health systems use marketing and public relations every day to maintain their focus on accessible and reliable communication with health care organizations and institutions and the public.
- For medical device companies – To sell medical devices, healthcare companies must communicate their own company identity and values, develop messaging, anticipate objections, differentiate themselves from competitors, devise coherent

content strategies that include many sides of content and multiple levels of activity.

- For health insurance – marketing is needed to differentiate from competitors, drive site traffic, generate leads, convey the value of many more products, clear, concise educational messages and marketing content, position themselves as trusted advisors to people across demographic segments and find the right product to promote with the right audience.
- For Senior Healthcare Providers – Marketing for these institutions has the essential role of aligning customer emotions with the embodied values and services offered. Thoughtfully cultivated brand awareness and strategic communication allow these institutions to proactively mitigate concerns, showcase strengths and resident testimonials, create compelling content with emotional weight behind it, direct that content where it needs to go and finally that they inspire the elderly and their families to trust the institution.
- About Nonprofits, Associations, and Foundations - Health nonprofits often play a vital role in connecting people with health resources and support. These organizations rely on marketing principles for purposes ranging from strategy development, content exploitation, PR communications and sophisticated analytics to achieve public visibility and engagement.

MARKETING PROCESS IN HEALTHCARE

The health care marketing process aims to attract consumers to health care, guide them through their use of health care, and keep them engaged in the health care system. The procedures of the marketing process in healthcare include (George Washington University, 2021):

- Identifying potential patients to whom they should provide value by meeting their health needs;
- Increasing the strategic advantage and attracting patients in competitive implementation conditions;
- Keeping patients engaged with relevant, personalized and timely referrals to their health care;
- Long-term patient retention and improved loyalty in the healthcare community;
- Connecting with patients through multiple channels;
- Productivity assessment and strategy realignment with comprehensive health data analytics.

Effective marketing puts the right product in the right place, at the right price, and at the right time. In healthcare, that can mean putting the right services in place for patients, at a reasonable price to attract business - and in the right frame of mind. Effective healthcare marketing means applying a marketing mix, which is a set of controllable variables that a healthcare organization involved in marketing uses to influence a target market (Binji, 2020):

- The four “P’s” in healthcare are product (or service), placement, price and promotion:
 - ✓ Products are services that include healthcare products and services. These products or services are sold to consumers.
 - ✓ Price is an important element for health care providers, sponsors and consumers. High co-payments are not as attractive to patients, which may drive them away from one facility to another. Health care consumers can choose providers with lower co-pays;
 - ✓ Health care providers provide health chains that can create communications and help new members better appreciate health care coverage.
 - ✓ Medical institutions are usually associated with the place, that is, with the setting of providing health services.
- Healthcare providers are responsible for ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of healthcare services.
 - ✓ The delivery of health services depends on a growing group of professionals working together as diverse interdisciplinary teams. At the same time there are many forces shaping the delivery of health care.
 - ✓ Changes in health care are driven by markets; changes in concepts of health and leadership and well-being; technology and research and discovery. Through dynamic leadership, the professionals themselves will be in a position to make the transformations.
 - ✓ New technologies, drugs, and strategies have improved morbidity and mortality for many conditions while reducing dependence on acute care settings.
 - ✓ Prepaid models of health care delivery have pitted physician against physician and physician against hospital. Many integrated networks have collapsed, leaving doctors unpaid and sometimes unemployed. Administrative and regulatory burdens are increasingly heavy. And prepaid health care creates a wall between doctors and patients.

- ✓ Capitalized payment systems offer minimal rewards for individualized, compassionate patient care. For many doctors, medical practice has lost much of its meaning.

Patients now more than ever want to be in charge of their own health and to educate themselves about what they are doing and how they should be doing it. Healthcare marketing is a task that requires constant adaptation to laws and trends. A person's health and a healthcare organization's ability to care is at stake, requiring a different approach to customer interaction than other marketing (Tutorialspoint, 2023):

- Creating good marketing communication tools is the first step in creating health marketing campaigns. Marketing tools help healthcare organizations connect with new patients and improve patient care by creating an open line of communication with their patients. Healthcare marketing aims to provide patients with useful information and resources throughout the continuum of care using websites, media channels, sponsored content, SEO, online marketing, multimedia and many other methods.
- For healthcare, it is essential to design and implement marketing strategies that engage and educate consumers throughout their medical journeys using SEO, internet marketing, websites, content creation and other methods. Patient-centered healthcare marketing, or marketing that is focused on the patient and what is important to them in terms of knowledge, likeability and trust, has proven to be the most effective. As the healthcare industry is constantly changing, patient education and information is quickly taking a central role.
- A greater challenge for healthcare is to offer medical services in the highly competitive healthcare market as local competition grows and major hospital systems enter the scene. A healthcare organization can set itself apart from the competition on local social media and search and networking websites by using healthcare marketing. The ability of healthcare organizations to connect with potential customers and establish themselves as an authority in their industry by portraying themselves as a leader.

VALUES AND CONSUMER SATISFACTION IN HEALTHCARE

Customer questions are important to healthcare providers. Customer behavior toward healthcare providers and their services significantly affects the professional future of healthcare organizations. In healthcare organizations, all eyes are focused on the interests, behavior and sensitivities of the customers.

Based on the service on which the providers set their orientations and offer services, value is created for patients and they are provided with an adequate understanding of the quality of the service (Rahmani, 2017):

- Patients, as consumers, increasingly determine the quality of service. Using the concept of value in the healthcare sector is a relevant approach to drive patient satisfaction.
- Successful companies are those that create better value and satisfaction for their consumers, i.e. customers.
- Health and medical hospital and other organization should concentrate on quality as a strategic scale and tool to promote patient satisfaction. Creating value for customers is a major factor in the business success of healthcare organizations.
- Health and medical organizations are successful when they create value for their stakeholders in the health care process, such as patients and physicians. The value provided by health care is defined as the result of customer satisfaction with costs and services. For all healthcare and medical organizations, the primary goal must be to promote the creation of customer value.
- By strengthening the relationship between patients and health and non-health organizations and institutions, customer satisfaction naturally grows and the value of the relationship between both parties improves, as well as trust and loyalty.
- The health system ensures and promotes the health and well-being of people and societies, and their criterion for success is meeting the needs and demands of those in the field of health.
- In order to retain customers, healthcare service providers, ie healthcare organizations, need to create value for their customers. Healthcare providers should strive to create and maintain patient loyalty to increase their market share and promote health in society.

Value in healthcare is created by delivering high quality healthcare services. The ability to create value in healthcare from a provider perspective is facilitated through the development and implementation of customer-focused core competencies. These core competencies include(Beveridge, 2022):

- ✓ Customer relationship management;
- ✓ Payer/provider relationship management;
- ✓ Disease management;
- ✓ Results management;
- ✓ Financial/cost management; and
- ✓ Information management.

Customer relationship management is the basis on which all basic

knowledge and skills must be built in healthcare organizations, i.e. competencies. These competencies must focus on customer needs, both internal and external. Structuring all processes involved in core competencies from the customer's perspective ensures that value is created throughout the system.

Managing the relationship between health care payer institutions or individuals and service providers is a key pillar for health care providers.

As more vertical integration occurs among providers, managing the relationship between providers and payers becomes more important. Integration strategies include the integration of hospitals, physicians, and payers to form accountable health plans. Relationships must be organized to form win/win situations, where all parties are focused on a shared vision of value creation and neither party benefits at the expense of the others.

Disease management requires starting with an examination of the disease process. Not only must providers be able to provide high-quality acute and chronic care, but they must also begin to focus more strongly on prevention programs. Value is created throughout the system by reducing the prevalence and incidence of disease. Only by managing the full continuum of health will value be created across the entire health care delivery system.

Results Based Relationship Management (RBM) ensures that the results are of the highest quality at an affordable price. Results should not only be compared to best practices, but also to what is possible. Providers must constantly strive to improve the quality of services.

Financial/Cost Management ensures that care is cost effective and that a profit margin is maintained to enable continued investment in new technology and continuing medical education to improve quality of care and lifestyle for all stakeholders.

Information management is the binding element or key in providing value-centered care. By collecting, storing, transmitting, manipulating, sorting and reporting data, more effective decision-making can occur. An integrated information system enables the generation of information on the cost-effectiveness of treatment regimens, employee productivity, physician cost-effectiveness, supply utilization and clinical outcomes, as well as patient information that will be readily available throughout the health care system.

Customers are looking for value. Value is created by meeting the needs and demands of customers through the delivery of cost-effective, high-quality healthcare services that are easily accessible and create high patient satisfaction. Healthcare providers, i.e. healthcare organizations that can demonstrate their ability to provide services in this way create a competitive advantage in the market and are perceived as a value provider of choice by loyal customers..

Patient satisfaction is used as an important indicator for measuring quality in health care. Patient satisfaction with health care affects clinical

outcomes, patient retention. Patient satisfaction affects the timely, efficient and patient-centered delivery of quality health care. Patient satisfaction is an effective indicator for measuring the success of doctors and healthcare organizations and hospitals (Prakash, 2023):

- The word “consumer” is derived from the Latin word “consumere” which literally means one who acquires goods or services. Similarly, the word customer is also defined as “a person who purchases goods or services”. Today, the patient sees himself as a buyer, that is, a consumer of health services.
- Every hospital today has started hiring HR and management professionals. Institutions that pay for healthcare services have recognized that patient satisfaction is an important tool for the success of their organization and regularly monitor the level of patient satisfaction of their clients. Physician bonuses are tied to a patient’s assessment of their physician’s personal interaction with them. Greater patient satisfaction leads to benefits for the healthcare industry in a number of ways. Patient satisfaction leads to building customer (patient) loyalty. Increased staff morale with reduced staff turnover also leads to increased productivity.

RELATIONS IN HEALTHCARE

Doctors often think that the doctor-patient relationship is the key to effective health care. Although the doctor-patient relationship is very important, it is not the only relationship. There are numerous “touch points” in the healthcare system. They occur whenever someone interacts with a patient or acts on behalf of a patient. Good communication reduces patient anxiety, improves patient well-being, and reduces frustration and confusion (Selinger, 2013):

Doctor-Patient Communication - When patients get sick, doctors need to listen to them, educate them and treat their illness. Education and dialogue can reduce stress and promote healing.

Office Staff-Patient Communication - Patients have a responsibility to be open and honest about the reason for their visit, their history, lifestyle habits, and any concerns and questions they may have. In turn, it is the staff’s responsibility to communicate with empathy and confidentiality while gathering this vital information.

Doctor-Caregivers/Family Communication ***Many patients, it is critical to involve non-medical caregivers and family*** - Elderly patients with visual or hearing challenges need help managing their health care needs. Involving, educating, and responding to the needs of caregivers and family

can go a long way toward promoting health and well-being and avoiding or delaying hospital admissions, readmissions, and nursing home placements.

Doctor-to-Doctor Communication - When primary care physicians and other specialists share information with one another, they ultimately help the patient avoid duplicate medications and tests, drug interactions, and a whole host of other problems. Ideally, all patient information should be transmitted to the primary care physician and then made available in this “hub” to other specialists.

Physician-Allied Health Professional Communication - Nurses, therapists, counselors, pharmacists, medical assistants, and other allied health professionals are often the eyes and ears of physicians in the field. Successful patient care requires a team, and allied health professionals are an important part of that team.

Doctor-Hospital-Patient Communication - Effective transitions in care complete the cycle from health to illness and back to health again. When handled poorly, they can cause suffering, relapse and readmission, unnecessarily costing the system a lot of money annually.

Physicians and health care providers throughout the health care process understand the impact of a good relationship with patients on their ability to provide superior medical care. A good patient-healthcare provider relationship facilitates collaboration and provides greater opportunities to learn about the patient’s unique health care needs. Collaboration enables healthcare providers to better connect patients with treatments and resources to improve overall health: (Johnson, (2021),

The doctor–patient relationship is the foundation of clinical care. Doctor–patient relationships can have profound positive and negative implications for the clinical care. The main goal of the doctor–patient relationship is to improve the patients’ health outcomes and their medical care. Stronger doctor–patient relationships correlate with improved patient outcomes.

Effective doctor–patient communication is an integral part of clinical practice and serves as the basis of doctor–patient relationships. The approach physicians take to communicating information is just as important as the actual information communicated. This type of communication includes both verbal and non-verbal interactions between doctors and patients. Effective communication affects a wide range of outcomes, including:

- ✓ Emotional health;
- ✓ Resolving symptoms;
- ✓ Function;
- ✓ Pain control; and
- ✓ Physiological measures, such as blood pressure levels.

When miscommunication occurs, it can have serious negative

implications in clinical care, such as hindering patient understanding, treatment expectations, treatment planning, decreasing patient satisfaction with medical care, and decreasing patient confidence levels.

Trust is the fundamental characteristic of the doctor–patient relationship. Patients must trust that their doctors work in their best interest to achieve optimal health outcomes. Patients’ trust in their doctors appears to be more important than satisfaction with treatment in predicting patients’ adherence to recommendations and their overall satisfaction with care.

The term health care provider includes primary care physicians, medical specialists, nurses, physician assistants, and others who act to diagnose and treat diseases and disorders of patients in health care facilities. In the course of healthcare communication, patients may interact with many other practitioners, such as nurses and technicians, but it is the healthcare provider who most determines the course of the therapeutic relationship (Center for Health Ethics, 2023):

- Provider-patient relationships are largely considered “doctor-patient relationships” with multiple people acting as providers, including other roles such as nurses and physician assistants, although people in such roles typically work under the supervision or doctor’s guidance.
- Certain aspects of the relationship between providers and patients are generally accepted and relatively uncontroversial. The relationship between is considered fiduciary, meaning it is based on trust. The patient trusts the health care provider and the provider is expected to fulfill certain duties to the patient. Obligations to patients include:
 - ✓ Technical competence in the provider’s area of expertise,
 - ✓ Acting so as avoid harming the patient (non-maleficence),
 - ✓ Acting for the patient’s benefit (beneficence),
 - ✓ Keeping patient information confidential (under normal circumstances).
- A health care provider is considered a professional. The health care provider profession has standards and expectations that are established by methods of specialized training, possession of appropriate certification, mastery of necessary skills, possession of authoritative knowledge, expectations of appropriate behavior and judgment, high quality of performance, dedication to field or area of expertise and codes of ethical conduct.

CONCLUSION

To provide effective and efficient health care, health care needs to be organized around patient segments with a common set of health needs. Organizing patients' health care in this way allows clinical teams to anticipate consistent patient needs and efficiently provide frequently needed services, doing common things well. Efficiencies in patient care are made possible by structuring care around specific patient segments that frees physicians from trying to coordinate services that are needed routinely. Personalized services for individual patients is a key issue in providing health care to patients who have different needs.

Identifying the needs of a patient segment allows teams to design and deliver care that provides a comprehensive solution for patients or families. When the goal of health care shifts from treating to addressing patient needs, care teams can both meet patients' clinical needs and begin to address the nonclinical needs that, when unmet, undermine patients' health. For example, a clinic for patients with migraine headaches may provide not only drug therapy, but also psychological counseling, physical therapy, and relaxation training. Similarly, a cancer clinic can include transportation assistance as a service for those who have difficulty getting to their regular chemotherapy appointments. Expanding and integrating services delivered to patients achieves better outcomes by identifying and addressing gaps or barriers that undermine patient health outcomes.

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