

Healthcare Marketing Strategies and Patient Decision-Making in Choosing a Hospital in India

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Abstract: *The operation of the healthcare sector now depends heavily on the marketing of services. With more competition, the dominance of service providers in the healthcare sector is giving way to the preferences of service seekers. Every customer wants to be catered to in the modern era by their particular and individual needs. Customer relationship management, or CRM, is crucial for keeping customers and ensuring that word-of-mouth advertising is sustained over time. Bolstered by the corporatization of healthcare, the promotion of India as a coveted medical tourism destination and threatened by a proliferation of new hospitals, hospitals today find it difficult to rely solely on word of mouth to attract patients. Internal marketing practices allow hospitals to “market fit” before initiating external marketing. In the future, more and more corporate healthcare facilities will approach the market aggressively to survive in the face of intense competition. Emphasize the importance of better understanding your customer base by tracking data on transactions and communication interactions. Areas that need serious attention are Patient Relationship Management (PRM) and Patient Experience Management (PEM). With more competitors, healthcare marketing is changing from being dominated by service providers to being favoured by service seekers. So, this study will identify the elements affecting patients' decision-making when it comes to selecting a hospital in India.*

Keywords: Healthcare, Marketing, Patient, Services

1. Introduction

In terms of revenue and employment, the Indian healthcare industry has emerged as one of the country's largest service sectors, and it is growing quickly. Between 2000 and 2009, the industry experienced a growth of 9.3%, which is comparable to the sectoral growth rate of other growing economies like China, Brazil, and Mexico. According to a recent press release from the Confederation of Indian Industry, the healthcare sector in India will reach US\$ 275 billion by 2020 if it continues to develop at the current rate (CII). The industry's rapid expansion is mostly fueled by domestic factors, some of which include:

- Both India's population growth and the rise of the middle class at a more accessible price.
- There is a growing need for specialist treatment as the illness landscape in India shifts from communicable diseases to the increasing frequency of non-communicable and lifestyle-related disorders.
- Since spending on diseases linked to a sedentary lifestyle has increased significantly, hospital in-patient revenues have climbed.
- An increase in insured people and a worsening supply-demand mismatch.
- Better facilities are also being pushed for the nation's ageing population. Other increasingly common terms in healthcare are wellness programmes, fitness programmes, health management, and preventative medicine.

Healthcare Marketing Strategies

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The following are the essential components of marketing healthcare services:

a) Knowledge administration

Every customer wants to be catered to in the modern era by their particular and individual needs. Businesses have also geared up to offer specialized solutions, adjusting their services and goods to reflect the actual tastes of customers rather than making broad generalizations. Because they recognize the value of the information contained in these vast databases for gaining a competitive edge and supporting various organizational choices, all firms are taking advantage of information systems and technology to gather enormous amounts of customer data. To extract the information of the customers from these enormous databases and subsequently use this knowledge for various crucial decisions, particularly marketing ones, there is a major demand for a well-defined, simple but integrated solution.

b) Management of customer relationships

Customer relationship management, or CRM, is crucial for keeping customers and ensuring that word-of-mouth advertising is sustained over time. A CRM would have methods for keeping in touch with customers frequently.

c) Building a Brand Image

Bolstered by the corporatization of healthcare, the promotion of India as a coveted medical tourism destination and threatened by a proliferation of new hospitals, hospitals today find it difficult to rely solely on word of mouth to attract patients. Researchers feel Hospital leaders are making a special effort to create a brand image for their hospitals and improve their visibility. Hospitals cannot do difficult marketing. For this reason, the hospital's brand is further built through word of mouth, buzz marketing, media exposure and testimonials from beneficiaries.

d) Internal Marketing

Internal marketing practices allow hospitals to “market

fit" before initiating external marketing. Like any marketing, the concept being sold must have some value in the prospective customer's mind. So, the first step is to create a "value proposition". No one buys a worthless concept or product. Therefore, the key questions for hospitals are: what is it for you? Had hospital management been able to provide a sufficiently valuable answer to this question, the idea would have been for sale.

Hospital Marketing Strategies

In the future, more and more corporate healthcare facilities will approach the market aggressively to survive in the face of intense competition. Some experts believe that an aggressive market is needed to sustain today's competitive environment, while others disagree and will not attract more patients, so the healthcare sector says no aggressive marketing is needed. A patient's decision to choose a hospital is based on factors such as the hospital's available facilities, the expertise of its doctors and staff, and the surrounding area. Therefore, all professionally operated medical institutions should develop a systematic approach to marketing with specific strategies and action plans. Research-based innovations, including standard service upgrades, modern infrastructure and facility developments, and performance, enable institutions today to withstand the tsunami of the latest trends. In this big-money business, a haunting mantra applies. Happy consumers bring in thousands of new consumers.

Tom Duncan and Sandra Moriarty present a five-step "customer retention" framework that helps conceptualize the hospital's relationship with current and potential customers. These five levels are identified as follows:

- a) Awareness: If the customer's options menu includes hospital branding.
- b) Identity: A place where customers can identify with your brand and present it proudly.
- c) Connected: Where customers communicate with your company between purchases.
- d) Community: A place where customers perceive themselves as a community of users and communicate with each other.
- e) Statement of interest: Where customers endorse brands and add them to the community.

Emphasize the importance of better understanding your customer base by tracking data on transactions and communication interactions. Areas that need serious attention are Patient Relationship Management (PRM) and Patient Experience Management (PEM). Another important recommendation is to regularly remind your clients of the benefits they will get from the relationship. This will not only help you win new customers but also keep old ones.

Recognizing the importance of hospital marketing, many experts advocate setting up marketing departments in hospitals. Today, you can find a functioning marketing department in almost every private hospital. The marketing department is seen as the hospital's voice through which brands are created and communicated internally and to the public. The connections between internal departments, organizational management, external agencies, and medical

management brethren are the strength of the modern healthcare facility marketing department. Other hospital marketing strategies that have evolved in recent years include:

Mergers and acquisitions enable healthcare providers to gain immediate brand recognition and aggressively expand into new geographies. Mergers and acquisitions have introduced new standards of care by major corporate hospitals. The merger of small hospitals and Nursing homes with extensive medical facilities is improving the delivery of medical services.

International Accreditation as medical travel abroad becomes more popular, many people in the United States are concerned about the quality of medical care they can receive abroad and how medical travellers can ensure that the providers they choose abroad are reputable. Concerns have been expressed. The largest and most recognized of the many accreditation bodies in the United States is the Joint Commission. Joint Commission International (JCI) also provides international accreditation for healthcare providers. This is one of the most rigorous accreditation procedures for hospitals, with ratings based on 1033 measurable parameters. Hospitals can work towards obtaining the JCI seal. This allows us to obtain international accreditation and attract patients from abroad. A fully-fledged International Patient Services section of the hospital will help promote medical tourism. Some of the facilities we can provide include airport transfers, language translators, dedicated international wards, culinary selections that require doctor approval, and partnerships with hospitality majors for a relaxing holiday.

Strategic alliances with corporate travel and figure operators such as major insurance companies, medical tourism organizations, International SOS, and Blue Cross Blue Shield. Event organization for both indoor and outreach programs play an important role in marketing a healthcare facility. CMEs, public awareness events, free health screening camps, organizing health day events, conducting expert interviews on visual media, and printing and providing various emergency or appointment numbers are the most common marketing tool.

Traditional marketing, both inside and outside the healthcare industry, must adapt to the new era of e-health. Hospitals must take advantage of the advent of the Internet to develop new forms of media to advertise the services they offer. Electronic elaboration, such as video conferencing, and the use of email and related technologies to facilitate two-way communication are very useful. A hospital website also serves as a source of information and interaction for outpatients.

2. Conclusion

Within the next ten years, it is anticipated that India's market for healthcare delivery would more than treble. In India, new hospitals are being erected at a rate that has never been seen before. These hospitals are undergoing some fascinating problems as they are being put into service. The issue of selling oneself is one of the difficult tasks that any hospital,

whether new or old, small or large, is currently confronting. With more competitors, healthcare marketing is changing from being dominated by service providers to being favoured by service seekers. So, this study will identify the elements affecting patients' decision-making when it comes to selecting a hospital.

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