

A Study on Healthcare Products and Services - An Overview

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Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research**ABSTRACT**

Marketing healthcare services and products presents unique challenges compared to other consumer goods and services, because it deals with health behaviours as opposed to just purchasing behaviours. Health marketing includes awareness and education but also behaviour adoption or change, which are difficult and can take time. Healthcare marketing is also influenced by a changing population and related problems, advances in research and other external factors. Population changes influence not just how you market healthcare goods and services, but depending on where you work, what gets marketed. For example, as people live longer, companies may choose to create products and services tailored to an aging population or to their adult children serving as caregivers. There may also be different health concerns among different ethnic groups. Since different groups age, ethnic, income level respond to different marketing messages or venues, health care marketers must take care to develop marketing strategies customized for different populations.

KEY WORDS: Healthcare, customer behaviour, marketing.

1. INTRODUCTION

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. 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 on-going adjustments can be made to improve the plan's yield.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Edward K. Strong Jr, in the invaluable book, *The Psychology of Selling Life Insurance*”, illustrate the psychological principles underlying selling in as non-technical manner as possible, which are directly applied to selling.

John Alford Stevenson in his invaluable book, “Selling Life Insurance” presents a systematic approach to the process of selling insurance in a lucid style. The comprehensive process of buying, starting from the customer to closing sales inclusive of the basic salesmanship qualities, and customer interview techniques, is illustrated.

Patki, V.V. in his article “Rural Marketing”, discusses the problems of selling life insurance in the rural areas and gives many suggestions to penetrate the rural market. The suggestions are participation village fairs, using audio visual methods, and explaining the merits of the life insurance to the villagers, etc.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To Know the Education and Prevention of healthcare products and services.
- To raise awareness of medical services.
- To identifying the new patients.

4. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Medical Product scope refers to the number of different items your company offers for sale. Your business goals usually determine the scope of products you carry. You may run a successful business based on a single product strategy or offer a much deeper line of products to serve a wider range of customers. Your product scope determines your future marketing strategies, profit goals and territory saturation. Marketing strategy has costs you must evaluate in terms of how effectively you spend your money. An e-mail campaign may be relatively cheap, but it could waste your marketing message by getting lost in your customers’ spam filters. Magazine advertising, on the other hand, may cost more than you can afford. Direct mail can be cheaper than print ads, but your product or service may not be well-suited to this kind of campaign, so you could be wasting your money. You must constantly weigh costs vs. benefits for any marketing strategy, so that you use your marketing dollars wisely.

5. METHODOLOGY

Choosing the technique and understand the method of analysis.

When formulating questions, you may wish to measure how people react to the relative importance of certain product features, or feelings about price points. A technique known as conjoint analysis can help to predict the acceptance and probability of purchase based on which of several different options are presented. Or you might want to know how your brand compares to those of your competitors and what factors most influence those perceptions. Here, use brand equity research, where each feature of a brand can be ranked or rated to identify what matters most in its overall preference.

MARKET SEGMENTATION FOR HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Thoughtfully listing the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of your situation should be done at least once a year even better, twice a year. It’s a “big picture” exercise that challenges

you to compile, analyse and evaluate the significant influences that work for or against your strategic objectives. A SWOT analysis is useful for hospitals, medical groups, and individuals in private practice—it helps focus your marketing in areas that harbour the strongest benefits. Here are a few ideas to maximize the value and generate effective strategies from this exercise.

SAMPLING DESIGN

Sufficient number of patient has been taken to select the sample of respondents. Considering the massive patients strength of the hospitals, the sample covers only the patients covered under the 04 hospitals. For this purpose, random sampling was used to select the respondents. The present study relied on primary data collected through the administration of structured questionnaire.

Table 1: Awareness of Healthcare Services

Services	No.of Patients				Total	
	Aware		Not Aware		No	%
	No	%	No	%		
Strength based	94	100	06	6	100	100
Weakness based	86	86	14	14	100	100
Opportunities based	76	76	24	24	100	100
Threats based	65	65	35	35	100	100

As per the above table all patients are aware of the services provided by hospitals like strengthen awareness, weakness awareness, Opportunities awareness and threats awareness. About strength awareness 94 per cent are aware, 86 per cent are aware of weakness, 76 per cent are aware Opportunities based and 65 per cent are aware of threats based’. It is established that all patients in hospitals.

Table 2: Sources of Information

Sources	No. of Patients	
	No.	%
hospitals	04	4
Employees	76	76
Colleagues/Friends	20	20
Total	100	100

An attempt is made here to ascertain the sources of information such as Brochures/Circulars, Hospitals, Employers, Colleagues/Friends and Internet. It is found that 76 per cent workers are getting information from interpersonal communication, 04 per cent are getting information from the employer and 20 per cent are getting from the colleagues and friends. Majority of workers are getting information from interpersonal communication. Internet is the least sought source of information.

6. FINDINGS FOR THE STUDY

➤ Information technology is becoming increasingly important in improving the quality and lowering the costs of health care; attempts to protect patient privacy must therefore centre on finding ways to protect sensitive electronic health information in a computerized environment rather than on opposing the use of information technology in health care organizations.

➤ Health care organizations need to take a more aggressive approach to improving the security of health information systems in order to better protect electronic health information.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STUDY

All organizations that handle patient-identifiable health care information regardless of size should adopt the set of technical and organizational policies, practices, and procedures described below to protect such information. Government and the health care industry should take action to create the infrastructure necessary to support the privacy and security of electronic health information. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should establish a standing health information security standards subcommittee within the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics to develop and update privacy and security standards for all users of health information. Membership should be drawn from existing organizations that represent the broad spectrum of users and subjects of health information.

7. CONCLUSION

The Internet can support a wide range of applications in consumer health, clinical care, health care financial and administrative transactions, public health, professional education, and biomedical research. The networking capabilities needed to support these applications are not unique, but they do reflect distinctive characteristics of the health environment. Security and availability are critical technical needs for health applications of the Internet and are not adequately met by today's Internet. Quality of service needed by a number of high-end health applications will not necessarily be deployed soon across the Internet in a form that meets the needs of the health industry.

8. REFERENCES

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