

Healthcare marketer - Is your audience engaged online?

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As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant global lockdowns, many healthcare companies have doubled or even tripled their digital marketing communication. Whilst connecting with your brand's stakeholders online is now imperative, it's equally important to ensure your stakeholders are engaged with your brand's online content. Cingulate Marketing & Advertising shares three steps to achieve rewarding online engagement.



The key lies in consistent relationship building: Having an ongoing conversation with consumers, patients and healthcare professionals (HCPs); striving to understand their changing needs and challenges; and, showing that your brand is listening and attempting to resolve their pain points. In short: **support**, **profile** and **sustain**.

1. Support your HCPs

It's **vital** to understand the challenges your brand's HCPs are facing, and to provide them with relevant online support and value.

- HCPs may not have time to participate in formal research. So, email them a link to a **quick online survey** to get insight into their needs and pain points. Helping them address these challenges builds trust in your brand, and lays the foundation for a lasting relationship.
- As a result of Covid-19, literally overnight, HCPs have had to change the way they operate their practices. They've had to implement **online consultation** with patients, all whilst coping with the demands of the pandemic. Reach out to your HCPs, and offer them tutoring in the latest electronic tools to optimally manage their practices.
- The amount of medical information on the Internet is empowering patients. Patients now often challenge their doctor's diagnosis and demand more information. Assist your HCPs in addressing these patient needs by providing them with access to patient resources i.e. **short, educational videos** and/or electronic leaflets related to the disease, and treatment options.
- Promote HCP engagement with your brand by sponsoring an online webinar presented by a leading medical authority.
- Develop an e-Learning portal for HCPs to undertake their Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

2. Put a face to consumers and patients

Before your brand embarks on its digital journey, develop a **profile** of your consumer. Understand who they are, both from a **demographic** (age, sex, location, marital status, income group) and **psychographic** (interests, needs, aspirations, social media usage) perspective.

Engage a professional research company to undertake one-on-one qualitative research with your customers. Find out their expectations, brand perceptions, view of your current marketing communication, the nature of their preferred online content or social media pages, and the preferred format of this content, such as articles, podcasts or videos. Incentivise your customer to participate in the research, provided it complies with the Marketing Code.

Once you have this research, develop an Avatar – a profile of your typical consumer. Give your Avatar a name and write the profile as though you're describing a real person, providing details such as their age, where they live, their typical symptoms and healthcare needs and social media habits. Literally, try and get into your customer's "head".

- Continually keeping your brand's Avatar top of mind optimises your ability to post personalised brand content.
- Developing a **holistic picture** of your consumer and their healthcare expectations allows you to correctly **position** your product in the marketplace, and develop an appealing brand personality.
- Understanding your consumer may help you to **segment** your **online communication**, appealing both to consumers who are seeking to prevent or manage illness, or chronic conditions. Think a dedicated Facebook page or portal where chronic disease patients can exchange experiences and helpful care suggestions.

3. Nurture hard-won relationships

Over time your stakeholder's needs will change, so align your online content to those changing needs:

- **Stay in touch** with your HCPs, as human interaction shows that you value them and provides an opportunity for you to hear their feedback.
- **Check in** with your consumers and patients, employing social media listening tools to track their latest online healthcare related posts and their views of both your brand and the opposition.

As with any relationship, you need to nurture the one with your stakeholders. Consistently sharing content stakeholders find valuable, cements a strong relationship with them.

Contact us today via www.cingulate.co.za and we will help you create meaningful online engagement with all your healthcare brand's audiences.

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