

service, as well as individuals at risk of developing chronic disease.

Additionally, healthcare organizations should ensure their vendor has the right amount of in-house healthcare marketing expertise to help them understand how to utilize the predictive analytics data to develop strategic campaigns. Successful campaigns must ensure that patients are receiving the right message, at the right time, to elicit the

desired response. Vendors that can tightly integrate their solutions with multiple outreach technologies – call center, digital variable print, interactive voice response, mobile, portal – are ideal.

Looking ahead, provider organizations will increasingly find that predictive analytics is no longer a nice-to-have but a must-have technology investment. In a tough and changing marketplace, going with

your gut can be bad news and can bring serious consequences. In simple terms, using predictive analytics means using quantitative methods to derive insights from data and then drawing on those insights to shape investments and, ultimately, improve business performance. Instead of looking backward to analyze “What happened?” predictive analytics can help healthcare marketers understand “What’s next?” and “What should we do about it?” **eh**

Consumer Engagement Via Online Physician Videos – Going Way Beyond the Mundane



by Dan Dunlop

In 2010 several hospitals and health systems made news by pioneering

“speed-dating” events, where prospective patients could meet physicians in five-minute intervals in the hope that this brief introduction might spark a future relationship. This development created a furor among some healthcare professionals who felt that these speed-dating events were beneath the medical profession. However, this trend pointed out the clear desire on the part of consumers to have a better feel for a physician before they make a selection. Even in a five-minute exchange, a consumer can get a sense of the physician’s character and approach to patient care. This option had to be an improvement over the prevailing method for reviewing physicians online – the hospital’s physician finder.

The vast majority of online physician finders offer healthcare consumers a less than fulfilling experience. A physician profile typically consists of a head-and-shoulders photo of the

doctor and a few bullet points that summarize the physician’s education, training, and language proficiency. Within the industry, it is uncommon to find professional profiles that address the physician’s philosophy of care or personality. There is very little in the typical online profile to help the prospective patient make a personal connection. That begs the question: How can organizations develop physician profiles that engage prospective patients on a more human and emotional level?

A new breed of physician finder

Healthcare organizations such as Meriter Health Services in Madison, WI, are sprucing up their physician finder services by adding compelling nontraditional videos. According to Sarah Roth, Internet and communications specialist for Meriter, well-crafted videos of physicians boost patient engagement. Whereas the typical physician video focuses on professional background, procedures, and treatment, a Meriter physician video profiles the physician as an individual. “By viewing a physician’s video, patients can get a sense of a physician’s personality and medical philosophy, which are two key factors patients look at when choosing their physician,” Roth says.

Visitors to Meriter’s website are given a unique introduction to the organization’s doctors. As the visitor views the seemingly static physician’s profile, a video image of the physician literally walks out onto the Web page and talks to the prospective patient.

Roth says Meriter didn’t want to leave anything to chance as potential patients scanned the physician profile. “It would be easy for a patient to skip the link to watch a video, which is why we see the value and benefit of having our physicians walk out on the Web page without having the viewer click or navigate away from the physician’s profile. This creative strategy will then grab our viewers’ attention before they leave the Web page,” she says.

The health system uses WebOuts, a service that takes a physician video and transforms it into a Flash-based multimedia file that can be easily embedded into an existing website. The physician appears in silhouette, as if filmed against a green screen, with the Web page serving as the background.

Meriter has been encouraged by patient and physician response to the



videos. Patients have reported selecting their physician based on what the physician said in the video on www.meriter.com. The organization plans to continue with the production of physician videos and will gradually grow its online library. Says Roth, “We look at physician videos as a long-term investment instead of a short-term expense.”

Beyond the physician finder

Like Meriter, the marketing team at Signature Healthcare in Brocton, MA, has recognized the limitations of the static online physician finder and the power of online video. According to Marie Gross, Signature Healthcare’s vice president of business development, the use of memorable physician videos allows prospective patients to learn more about the person who will ultimately care for them. “Through the use of physician videos, patients are able to assess the likelihood they will relate well to the physician, be comfortable sharing their life stories, and work together to improve their health. At the end of the day, if the patient and physician are comfortable with one another, they will be a stronger team and create a healthier patient,” Gross says.

For Signature Healthcare, it wasn’t enough to supplement its physician finder with videos of their employed physicians. The organization made the decision to develop an entire marketing program to promote its physicians, anchored by a dedicated microsite at www.mysignaturephysician.com. “We see the development of the physician video microsite as the future of the Find a Provider page,” Gross says. Physician videos are leveraged across a number of platforms in addition to the microsite and system website, including Google+, YouTube, and Facebook. Traffic to Signature Healthcare’s physician microsite is driven by print

advertising, bus placards, online banner ads, and poster displays within the hospital and at all off-campus office locations.

Signature Healthcare recognizes that creating videos of every employed physician will take time and require ongoing attention. “The video platform is far more effective in capturing the attention of patients seeking a new provider and, we believe, it will pay dividends and drive market share,” says Gross.

The videos are crafted to humanize the organization’s physicians, drawing on their personal and professional revelations to help prospective patients relate to the doctors. The doctors speak about their motivations for becoming a physician and what they find rewarding within the practice of medicine. They also reveal personal details that one does not typically find in physician profiles. In one video, Dr. Jeffrey Good relates becoming a doctor to a book that he received when he was 5 years old. Dr. Michael Dern discusses his concern related to the depersonalization of healthcare, noting, “I’m trying to take what was once our noble profession and help slow down what’s starting to become a depersonalized industry.” In another video, Dr. Robert Weinstein describes what makes a good day in the practice of medicine. “After a while, writing a prescription for blood pressure pills can get a little bit stale,” he says. “But having a connection with [patients] through a life crisis, and being able to help them through that and make it a little easier for them and their families – then I know I’ve had a great day.”

The initial results are encouraging. In the month following the Labor Day launch in 2012, MySignaturePhysician.com had 1,681 total visits. As a comparison,

during the same time frame the previous year, the “Find a Provider” portion of Signature Healthcare’s website received only 370 visits. Additionally, in the month following launch, Signature has seen 1,297 unique visitors, 4,293 page views, and an average of 2.65 pages per visit. A secondary benefit has been the positive reaction by the medical staff. “Our hope was to create an esprit de corps within our medical staff and a reputation for being a premier, quality group,” says Gross. “Our chiefs of family practice and OB/GYN have both shared positive comments from the medical staff.”

Technologies and services arise to meet the need

Historically, many hospitals and health systems have been intimidated by the logistical and creative challenges involved in the production of a large number of videos. Reasonably so. The thought of producing hundreds of high-quality physician videos can be daunting. But today services and technologies are being developed to simplify professional-level video production and make video more accessible to marketers.

Companies such as VideoLink and On-Site Studios specialize in building state-of-the-art video production studios within facilities. According to A.J. Melaragno, co-founder of On-Site Studios, the company is working to take the hassle and much of the cost out of high-quality video production. Its suites are complete turnkey production rooms built on location within a client facility. Professional production lighting, high-quality audio capture, high-definition video and teleconferencing, and automated green screen functionality are all combined into a simple “one touch” recording solution. “When you are ready to record, you simply walk into the studio at your hospital. The production lighting automatically activates, and you are ready to



go. By simply pressing a single 'Make a Video' button on the remote, you can begin capturing your message. Hit stop when you are done and walk out of the suite," Melaragno explains. When finished, the high-definition content is automatically uploaded to On-Site Studios where it is edited. A final version of the video can be made available to the client in as little as 24 hours.

Early adopters of On-Site Studios' production services include Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York and Bellin Health in Green Bay, WI.

Changing consumer appetite

Whether it's through the innovative

use of physician videos like those employed by Meriter Health Services, or the nontraditional use of video to provide insights into a physician's personality, there exists a clear opportunity within the healthcare industry to more effectively engage consumers online. As Marie Gross of Signature Healthcare points out, the move to well-crafted physician videos is a necessary reaction to the changing appetite of consumers, who want to know more about their healthcare providers. "We believe that the physician videos we're producing help us to capture and retain the consumers' interest while responding to their need for a greater depth of information about their potential healthcare

provider," Gross says. Recognizing this opportunity, production companies such as WebOuts and On-Site Studios are developing solutions that make it easier for marketers to produce professional-quality videos at a reasonable cost. The convergence of these factors will undoubtedly lead to more experimentation with video as a physician marketing tool.

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