



Mommy Blog Promotes Strategic Initiatives

Marianne Aiello, for HealthLeaders Media, June 30, 2010



During a recent strategy session for two newly affiliated hospitals, marketing department leaders were chatting about the challenges of being working mothers. It's hard enough deciding what to feed your children for dinner, they commiserated, let alone decide on a healthcare provider. Then the proverbial light bulb ignited.

"We're always trying to tell people about our services, but we wondered if there is something that could bring more than just healthcare decisions to moms," says Michelle Davis, director of marketing operations & community development for Lowell (MA) General Hospital. "When you don't have a lot of time, searching the Web to find what you're looking for isn't really practical."

To solve this problem, Lowell General marketers developed a mommy blog that they hope will be a one-stop Web site for a mom's every need. Although the "Merrimack Valley Moms" blog will include children's health information, the content will largely be driven by four mommy bloggers from the community who will be free to write about any child-related topic they'd like.

The pediatric health content will be provided by experts and physicians from Lowell General and Tufts Medical Center, a Boston-based organization that recently aligned its Floating Hospital for Children with Lowell General, which is located about 35 miles away in the suburbs . The blog includes both Lowell General and Tufts branding.

To select the four mommy bloggers from the Lowell community, the 217-bed hospital is holding a three-week long contest during which local moms can submit text or video blogs explaining why they would be a great resource for area mothers. The four winners will each receive a \$250 prize and the opportunity to blog once a month.

After the first week of the contest, two moms had applied, mommy blog visits increased by 30%, and Lowell General's Facebook page gained 20 more fans and an increase in posts and comments, which marketers view as improved engagement. Once the four mommy bloggers are in place, marketers expect local moms to get even more involved.

"We want to find mommy bloggers that people would want to listen to and trust," Davis says. "We felt that it really shouldn't be us—it should be our community talking to each other, and at times we can provide the healthcare expertise that we bring to the table. We're really looking for the community to make the content."