



# PILLARS OF HEALTHCARE MARKETING

**Ensuring a path to success**



T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

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As healthcare consumer demands and expectations grow and change, staying ahead of the marketing curve is critical. There has been a steady rise in retail competitors disrupting the healthcare space, growth in health consumerism, and an increasingly proactive self-advocacy among today's health consumers.

**RETAIL COMPETITORS** like Target, CVS, Walgreens, and Amazon have expanded their healthcare services in the rapid, fast-paced manner that customers/patients have become accustomed to in other segments of the economy.



“Traditional healthcare providers shouldn't discount the importance of retailers as disruptors entering the healthcare space. Retailers are experienced at analyzing consumer data to understand purchase and brand motivation.”

– REGINA LOHR,  
Advisory Board managing  
director, pharmacy and diagnostics.<sup>1</sup>



**7<sup>in</sup> 10**

**PREFER  
PHARMACIES  
FOR  
HEALTHCARE  
NEEDS**

due to convenient  
locations with  
evening and  
weekend hours.<sup>2</sup>




## INCREASED HEALTHCARE CONSUMERISM AND SELF-ADVOCACY

present myriad opportunities for providers to make deeper connections with prospective and current patients.

Demand for wearable health devices from smart watches and fitness trackers to biosensors and ECG monitors has exploded, and the market is forecasted to reach **\$84.4 billion** by 2028.<sup>3</sup> As devices play a greater role in empowering individuals to actively monitor their health, they are likely to become even more integral to personalized healthcare management.

**86%**  
**of patients**  
**say wearable**  
**healthcare**  
**devices**  
**improve**  
**health**  
**outcomes.**<sup>3</sup>



Self-advocacy needs are focused on finding relevant, helpful health information and having trusting, collaborative partnerships with healthcare providers.



These trends illustrate a few reasons why developing successful digital marketing strategies to reach healthcare consumers and physician referral sources is more important than ever.



While individual practice distinctions, service area population and other nuances will impact the specifics of planning a successful marketing strategy, let's consider four key pillars supporting thoughtful marketing tactics that help healthcare organizations thrive in today's competitive landscape.

The Pillars: **Build, Reinforce, Engage** and **Measure** are interconnected, each playing a pivotal role in your healthcare organization's marketing strategy.



At Advance Healthcare, we tie each action to stated performance indicators, ensuring that marketing tactics serve your business goals. To do this, we must leverage data as the source of truth. Before we delve further into the aspects of each pillar, let's first recognize the critical role of data throughout the lifecycle of any marketing strategy.



## LEVERAGING DATA & INSIGHTS

Across the healthcare industry, big data presents organizations the ability to manage costs, improve patient outcomes and refine marketing efforts. Data-driven decisions should be the basis for all marketing strategies, from helping you craft the perfect marketing message to matching your message to the ideal patient, caregiver or HCP audience. Using your HIPPA-compliant data along with other reliable data sources such as patient surveys, website analytics, and CRM systems, provides valuable insights into patient demographics, preferences, and behavior. This can be a shortcut to new patient acquisition by helping you effectively target the right audiences and optimize budget allocations.

Advance Healthcare supports and supplements your foundational data and strategy by layering our first-party data with diagnostic and procedure-based healthcare marketing data from trusted healthcare sources. Delivering your advertising to a large audience is great, but true value is derived from leveraging data to precisely deliver the perfect message to your ideal audience.



### Leveraging Data

**DATA INFORMS  
A WELL-PLANNED  
MULTI-CHANNEL  
STRATEGY INCLUDING  
DIGITAL DISPLAY,  
SOCIAL, SEARCH,  
VIDEO & CONTENT.**

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As you move through this text, we will demonstrate how data weaves through each pillar, enabling informed decisions, personalized experiences, and continuous optimization. It's the thread that binds your marketing efforts, ensuring consistency, resilience, and adaptability in a dynamic landscape.

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# PILLAR 1: BUILD

At the core of healthcare marketing lies a framework of the essential elements that will guide your marketing efforts and provide a solid base for decision-making and campaign planning. Defining your company mission, building your brand identity, and developing your online presence are essential elements in your marketing blueprint. The foundation of your marketing strategy must be strong before tactical marketing can be maximized.

## Brand Identity

Healthcare branding transcends crafting mere logos and taglines. It's developing a distinct identity and influencing how patients and community perceive your organization. It's about fostering trust and delivering exceptional experiences. Your brand represents a deep connection between your organization's mission, values, and patients. In the Build phase, your organization will home in on your value propositions, practice standards and where your organization sits in the competitive landscape. The tenets of building your brand may include:

- ➔ **Clear Identity:** Cultivate a unique brand identity that resonates with patients, embodying the purpose and values of your organization.
- ➔ **Trust and Compassion:** Foster trust through high-quality care and compassionate interactions.
- ➔ **Patient-Centric Approach:** Place patient well-being, quality care, and community engagement at the forefront.
- ➔ **Innovation:** Demonstrate relevance by adapting to new techniques and advances, and addressing the ever-changing needs of patients.

**78%**  
of healthcare  
marketers  
prioritize brand  
building.<sup>5</sup>

Awareness of  
brand promise  
is crucial to  
building patient  
trust.



## Practice Differentiators

Consumers are savvier and more empowered when it comes to researching healthcare options and self-referring. This is particularly relevant when it comes to elective procedures that are growth areas and profit centers for many practices. Effective healthcare marketing relies on identifying and promoting unique practice differentiators.

What sets your healthcare organization apart from competitors? Whether it's specialized treatment options, advanced technology, exceptional patient care, or a particular medical specialty, understanding and communicating these strengths is integral to attracting patients. Recognizing and highlighting practice differentiators **demonstrates experience, establishes credibility, builds trust,** and helps brand your organization as the go-to healthcare provider in your area of expertise.





## Visibility: Website

Healthcare organizations must consider their online presence a priority. Whether your website is a first or last stop along the patient journey, its importance cannot be understated. More than a calling card, your website is a vital source of information for current and prospective patients: **provides round-the-clock accessibility, builds credibility and trust, and enhances patient experience and engagement.**

A HIPAA-compliant website will follow best practices related to forms, payment options, telemedicine and more to maintain security and privacy controls around patient data. Additional hallmarks of an effective healthcare website include:

- ➔ Easy-to-navigate
- ➔ Responsive and mobile friendly
- ➔ Helpful content about your practice and services
- ➔ Appointment scheduling
- ➔ Testimonials and patient reviews

**50%**  
of patients say a bad digital experience ruins the entire experience with that provider.<sup>6</sup>

**65%**  
of patients will switch providers for a better digital patient experience.<sup>7</sup>

## Goal Setting

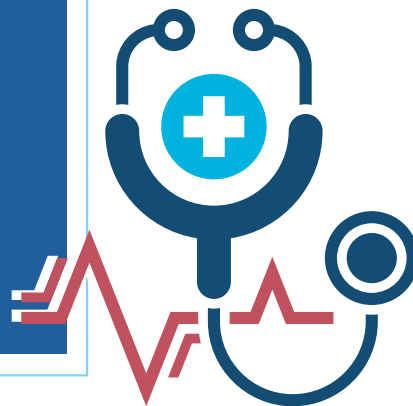
Setting effective marketing goals requires careful consideration of factors such as:

- ➔ **Business Objectives:** Whether the goal is to increase referrals, expand market share, build brand awareness, or promote a new specialty, marketing goals should support the overall mission and vision of your organization.
- ➔ **Target Audience:** Consider demographics, psychographics, behaviors, and preferences of your target audiences to tailor messaging that resonates with them and drives desired actions.
- ➔ **Measurability:** Define your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track progress of your campaigns.
- ➔ **Resource Allocation:** Consider budget, personnel, technology, and time to ensure goals are feasible with the right internal or external support needed for goal attainment.



### Leveraging Data

Understanding industry trends, competitive landscape, your customer CRM insights and more informs the feasibility and direction of your marketing goals. Data contributes to setting brand positioning, identifying customer segments, and guiding strategic decisions.





# PILLAR 2: REINFORCE

After establishing the foundation for your marketing strategy [mission, brand, HIPAA-compliant website], strengthen what you've set in motion. This involves executing on your brand promise, elevating your online presence through organic and paid search, and deploying targeted display and social campaigns.

## Brand Reputation & Execution

Naturally, providing excellent care while developing positive relationships with patients is the primary factor in reinforcing a strong brand reputation. But, your brand extends beyond the doors of your business, so it's also important to build relationships within the communities you serve. Engaging the public via social media and community events help you stay relevant and part of the conversation.

**73%**  
of patients consider online reviews when selecting a healthcare provider underscoring the importance of reputation and credibility.<sup>3</sup>

- ➔ Can your entire staff articulate your corporate mission and values?
- ➔ Is every phone call answered consistently across shifts and locations?
- ➔ Does your website effectively reflect your brand, and serve as an extension of your staff?

Consistency of brand execution across all facets of your organization including staff, office appearance, website, organic social and marketing is critical to emphasize your brand value regardless how patients, vendors and potential referring physicians interact with your brand. Maintaining your positive brand image and reputation are also important for attracting top talent to your team, and reminding current staff why they are in the right place.



## PILLAR 2: REINFORCE

# Visibility: Search

### ORGANIC SEARCH [SEO]

A commitment to strategic, comprehensive search engine optimization [SEO] will improve your website's visibility and attract organic traffic. SEO will build equity for your site over time. If your content educates, solves problems, and addresses patient pain points, your efforts are already working to position your brand as an expert in the field. Amplify organic search results by structuring this content to support those looking for it. By incorporating relevant keywords and producing high-quality, shareable content, your website can rank higher within organic search engine results pages. This ensures that your practice is being found easily and consistently by healthcare consumers in your service area.

### PAID SEARCH [SEM/PPC]

In contrast to organic search, which builds equity for your website over time, Search Engine Marketing or Pay Per Click [SEM/PPC] is like renting a position on a search results page. Through careful budgeting, monitoring, and optimization of a paid search campaign, you can improve your rank position in a more direct way. Bidding on keywords to appear in the right search engine results will drive new site traffic immediately. If your practice's website is not easily found online when a potential patient is searching for your services, they are likely finding your competitors.

Advance Healthcare's certified search specialists take a hands-on approach to elevating your brand when consumers need you. As Google Premier partners, Advance Healthcare utilizes best-in-class technology to manage keyword bids, drive conversions and optimize for cost-effective results.



### Leveraging Data

Analyzing data from customer reviews and ratings provides insights into how your brand is perceived so you can take action. Protect or enhance your reputation by improving products or services and address any issues. Keyword research helps identify optimal terms and phrases your target audience is using, while website audits and performance metrics help identify technical issues that can impact organic search visibility, such as site speed or mobile friendliness.

**77%** of patients rely on search engines to research healthcare providers.<sup>9</sup>

**70K** healthcare searches are performed every minute.<sup>10</sup>

# PILLAR 3: ENGAGE

Engagement is the heart of any successful marketing strategy and campaign. It is vital for building meaningful connections with your target audience. Yet, engagement goes deeper than a click on an ad. Actively engaging with your audience through various modes and channels such as targeted display ads, organic and paid social media, video, email or your website, means creating opportunities to educate, listen, and respond.

By connecting with your optimal audiences—those most likely to resonate with your brand values and services—you can foster deeper relationships, driving higher conversion rates and long-term patient satisfaction.

## **BENEFITS OF ONGOING ENGAGEMENT:**

- 1. Empowerment & Education**
- 2. Positive Reputation & Referrals**
- 3. Enhanced Patient Satisfaction**

Focusing on engagement is key to building a thriving brand presence and driving sustainable growth in today's dynamic healthcare marketplace.



# Content Marketing & Thought Leadership

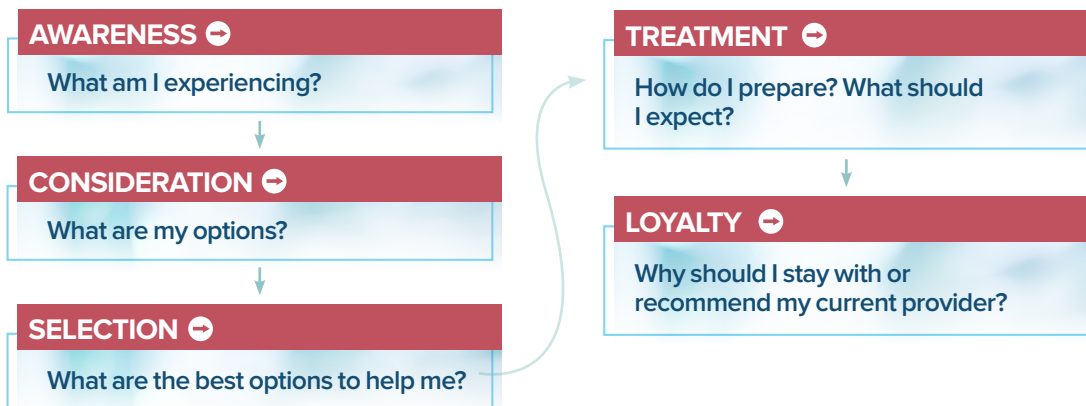
Content that provides real value, such as articles, videos, and webinars, engages patients, prospects, and peers, while demonstrating expertise, and bolstering credibility and trust.

The most compelling thought leadership content is built to address common and pressing questions or concerns among patients, caregivers, and decision makers. It isn't self-promotion, as much as it is informative, educational, entertaining, or insightful in answering the question of the moment for your patients and referrers. A comprehensive content/thought leadership strategy will connect with your ideal audiences across video, boosted social media, blogs optimized for organic search, digital display and sponsor content channels.

**92%**  
of marketers say content is a valuable business asset for driving long-term ROI.<sup>11</sup>

## CONSIDER HOW CONTENT MARKETING CAN INFLUENCE THE PATIENT JOURNEY...

the path they may take when considering who to choose for care, before and after treatment.





## PILLAR 3: ENGAGE

Your thoughtfully crafted content will resonate with healthcare consumers as they seek useful answers in each stage of their patient journey, whether they are Google or Bing searching online, visiting your website, scrolling videos or digesting social media. But, what makes your content relevant and relatable? Consider some of these content types that can help you home in on the right messaging for your desired audiences.

### Toolkit: Content Focus

<b>Human Dimension</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Humanize your marketing message</li><li>→ Present your team and brand as caring, compassionate, connected</li></ul>	<b>Patient Stories</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Engaging storytelling and emotional connections</li><li>→ Demonstrate local relevance and community connections</li></ul>	<b>Physician Thought Leadership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Position your team as regional authorities in your specialization</li><li>→ Focus on advances in treatment options, regional statistics or breakthroughs</li></ul>
<b>Referral Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Provide physicians in key referring specialties useful information</li><li>→ Strengthen ties with current referrers, establish rapport with potential referrers</li></ul>	<b>Practice Differentiation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Accentuate competitive advantages</li><li>→ Own your distinctions and amplify to targeted audiences</li></ul>	<b>Online Reputation &amp; Physician Profiles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Review and update bios, services offered, photos, patient reviews, etc.</li><li>→ Consider reference directory websites such as Healthgrades, Vitals and even Google Business Profiles</li></ul>

## PILLAR 3: ENGAGE

Now, let's consider some specific content topics and how they can fit into an overall content roadmap of the patient journey.



### Toolkit: Content Roadmap

SAMPLE CONTENT TOPIC	PATIENT JOURNEY	FOCUS
Pediatrician surprises moms with pre-Mother's Day gifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CONSIDERATION</li> <li>• LOYALTY</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HUMAN DIMENSION</li> </ul>
Breast cancer survivor shares her story: Inspiring video explains how support, determination and a sense of humor can make a big difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AWARENESS</li> <li>• CONSIDERATION</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HUMAN DIMENSION</li> <li>• PATIENT STORIES</li> </ul>
100 former high school students diagnosed with rare cancers. Practice radiation oncologist provides insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AWARENESS</li> <li>• CONSIDERATION</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THOUGHT LEADERSHIP</li> </ul>
Why does this orthopedic practice have 8 doctors featured in the Top Doctor's list?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CONSIDERATION</li> <li>• SELECTION</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHYSICIAN PROFILES</li> <li>• DIFFERENTIATION</li> <li>• REFERRAL SOURCES</li> </ul>
Don't let snoring disrupt your sleep and your life: Dr. Smith of Main ENT explains common causes and latest treatment options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AWARENESS</li> <li>• CONSIDERATION</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THOUGHT LEADERSHIP</li> <li>• HUMAN DIMENSION</li> <li>• PHYSICIAN PROFILES</li> </ul>

Advance Healthcare's ability to develop and disseminate content across channels and engage custom audiences with relevant and actionable messaging is a distinct advantage that presents the greatest potential for success for our healthcare clients.



## Physician Referral Marketing

Engaging with other healthcare professionals through traditional “boots on the ground” referral marketing tactics such as networking, partnerships, and educational initiatives certainly have their place. Utilizing a data-driven digital referral marketing strategy supercharges your efforts.

Working in tandem with your patient advertising and outreach, your B2B communication to healthcare providers and specialists is equally important. Targeting referring physicians with the right mix of thought leadership content via social, display and industry media placements helps educate your potential referral network about your expertise and differentiators. It also establishes your practice and doctors as preferred referral choices. This strategy also demonstrates to your current referral network that your practice and doctors continue to expand expertise, hence remaining worthy of their support.



### Leveraging Data

**Data analytics tools** provide insights into which types of content resonate most with your audience, so you can create more engaging and relevant content.

**Monitoring data trends** can help identify topics and themes that are gaining traction in your industry, enabling you to create timely and relevant content that attracts organic search traffic.

**79%**

**of patients referred had a specialist visit.<sup>12</sup>**

Through data and partnerships, Advance Healthcare can target specific National Provider Identifiers [NPIs] with highly targeted messaging to build your referrals and aid recruitment efforts.



# PILLAR 4: MEASURE

Once a strategically planned marketing program has been launched, it's important to have KPIs and conversion tracking in place to ensure it's working. Implement tools such as Google Analytics or CRM systems to monitor website traffic, lead generation, and patient acquisition metrics. This data allows you to make informed decisions, identify areas for improvement, and optimize your marketing campaigns. Accurate conversion tracking provides insights into which strategies are most effective and helps you allocate resources accordingly.

While HIPAA privacy restrictions can be a limiting factor for conversion tracking, there are HIPAA-compliant tracking tools available in the market. Advance Healthcare provides program metrics, reporting and additional consulting services to help our clients track program success and ROI.

## Tracking Conversions

Conversion tracking is typically accomplished through the implementation of tracking pixels or tags on websites, or UTM codes embedded in digital ads. These pixels and codes help monitor user actions such as purchases, form submissions, phone calls or other desired actions, enabling marketers to attribute conversions to specific campaigns or channels.





## PILLAR 4: MEASURE

### Analysis

Data gathered from using tracking codes and CRM systems allow you to analyze campaign effectiveness. Did the campaign deliver your desired goal, or KPI? Which messaging, tactic or channels yielded the greatest results? Which audience segments or service lines show the most promise? These are just some of the ways the data can help order the next step or phase of your marketing strategy.

### Optimization

Using the data-informed decisions following analysis of your campaign, optimization will fine-tune aspects of your strategy based on improving audience targeting, messaging and intelligently adjusting budget allocations or other resources. Ultimately, your goal from optimization may be to generate higher conversion rates, improve brand awareness, or increase efficiency and achieve the better ROI.

Advance Healthcare will never set it and forget it. As part of your marketing team, our digital experts are keenly focused on driving the best results for your campaigns. They monitor the results of each metric and KPI and harness those insights to optimize for stronger results, greater budget efficiency and increased return on advertising spend [ROAS].



#### Leveraging Data

##### IT'S ALL ABOUT THE DATA.

Don't gut-check your results. Use your data to evaluate ROI, identify areas for improvement, and optimize resource allocation. Leveraging data ensures that marketing decisions align with your operational needs. Without data, measuring success is like navigating without a compass.



# SUMMARY

Navigating the complexities of healthcare marketing requires a strategic approach that aligns with the evolving needs and expectations of consumers.

Embracing the Pillars: Build, Reinforce, Engage, and Measure... healthcare organizations can establish a robust foundation and pathway for success. From defining brand identity and differentiators to engaging patients through compelling content and targeted outreach, each step is essential in fostering meaningful connections and driving sustainable growth.

Leveraging data and analytics as the guiding force behind decision-making ensures adaptability and optimization in an ever-changing landscape. With these principles, healthcare providers can not only thrive in today's competitive environment but also deliver exceptional experiences that prioritize patient well-being and drive long-term success.

At Advance Healthcare Marketing, we specialize in partnering with healthcare organizations to craft bespoke marketing plans tailored to their unique needs and objectives. Our dedicated team is committed to developing compelling creative solutions and messaging that resonates with your target audience. Moreover, our proven track record underscores our ability to deliver tangible, measurable results, ensuring that your marketing endeavors yield the desired outcomes.

..... **Contact us Today.** .....



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