

BIGBUZZ

www.bigbuzzinc.com

FLOURISH!

The Method Used by Medical Organizations
for Ultimate Marketing Results

By Wendy O'Donovan Philips

PART FOUR

ONLINE PROMOTION

Online promotion is all the rage. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google, Bing, Yahoo! – they are fun to say, they are hot and a lot of medical organizations are all over them.

Why?

We are a gadget-obsessed culture, and there is no greater gadget than the World Wide Web. The web is the only form of media that gives us so much individual control. You can become a published blogger overnight. Order that new book online right now and start reading it on your tablet immediately. Amazon Prime Air will soon deliver wares in 30 minutes or less, like a pizza, via drone rather than driver. Hired a new employee? No problem. Just log onto the website and upload her photo and bio. Instant gratification never felt so right.

Plus, there is a lingering belief that online promotion is far less expensive than traditional media. In the early days, online promotion was commonly thought of as free. Just jump online, post your information and get instant exposure in front of prospects.

If only it were that easy.

A Balanced Marketing Formula includes online promotion among other strategies. It can be easy to get carried away with the online craze by overinvesting. There are so many online promotion options available that it's easy to bite off too much. A marketing strategy keeps things on track and on budget.

Be sure that the marketing budget allots an appropriate percentage to online promotions. Not too high, not too low. Refer to target market research to be sure of the right investment. Go back to the data to understand which online promotions to focus on. What do people like about the website, and what needs improvement? Are prospects searching online for their needs? Are potential clients frequenting Facebook, or do they prefer Instagram?

Part Four shows how to get the most out of online promotions, including website, social media, search exposure and reputation management.

DISCIPLINED WEBSITE DESIGN

Suppose the surveys indicated your organization's website needs a makeover.

Keep it simple. A 15-page website is adequate for a small to mid-sized medical organization, even one with multiple locations or product lines. One of those pages can be dedicated to the blog, which will fill in with entries over time and enhance the content of the website. Similarly to marketing on the whole, the website is a living organism. Rich, relevant content and frequent updates are what make a website visible on search engines. But beware of content overdose. Quality trumps quantity.

If you bristled at the word "blog" thinking it is a huge undertaking, fear not. Think of the blog as nothing more than an online journal. Excerpts of published medical articles, conversations with other medical industry professionals, and musings on your team's care or product case studies, all make interesting and easy-to-formulate fodder. Don't carry the weight alone. Some of the entries can come from your own team's writings. Then pick up other sources to round it out. Search online for expert material that can be reposted (and be sure it's properly credited). Have staff write guest blog entries about what it's like to work there. Invite a client to describe what it's like to use your product or service, transcribing the story to post to the blog. (Be sure to get a HIPAA compliant release.) Post once a week, and the blog will grow over time.

Be sure the website provides an "action opportunity" on every page. "Fill out a form to learn more... Follow us on Facebook... Enter an email address and get a free guide." Each person who arrives at the website will have different preferences, so provide a number of options. The more options, the more likely web visitors are to act and thereby stay engaged.

The website should be designed to whet the appetite and encourage action. Be sure that the web text and look matches your brand messaging and brand standards and is promotional rather than informational.

Stick to the three A's of websites that drive results: affability, ability, availability.

A powerful website makes the organization look affable, or likeable. Visitors should see warm and inviting photos of the organization or product, team or clients, with HIPAA compliant releases completed where needed. Visitors should get the feeling, "I might like this product or service. They could earn my trust."

A great website makes it readily evident that the service or product is highly able. Any of the team, service or product awards and accolades and any compelling stories of client happiness and success should be evident in the first few seconds of looking at the home page. Visitors should get the feeling, "They seem capable. I would be in good hands."

A terrific website articulates the ready availability of the service or product. Clear contact information and calls to action should appear on every page. This conveys the feeling, "It would be easy for me to at least take the next step."

Website development is a lot like building a home: it's a big process and a huge investment; it opens up high probability of scope, time budget creep; and, the finished product is a public reflection of you, which means it has to be just right.

Use eight proven milestones to guide your provider to completion:

1. **Budget.** Share with the web developer the budget you have allocated, and execute a written agreement stipulating those terms.
2. **Sitemap.** This is the blueprint for the website. The web developer should outline in text the navigation of the site, demonstrate the page flow and show the titles of all pages. Be sure that your team and theirs fully agree on the sitemap before proceeding. After the blueprint is approved, construction begins. Adding a room on a house later (or adding a webpage) can drive up costs and compromise the integrity of the original design.
3. **Web Text.** Request that your provider write, edit and proofread all text to appear on the website. Share your Message and Design Equation to eliminate the guesswork and streamline the process. Be sure to lock in the web text before going to the next step. Just as a bathroom with one sink has a different configuration than a bathroom with two, webpages too shift with more or less text.
4. **Wireframe.** Ask for a basic layout of the functionality of the website. Will there be a large "slider" of compelling images on the home page? Where will images appear, and where will text appear? Where will action opportunities appear? Be sure to see a wireframe for the home page and at least one other page. This part of the process is like the newly framed home. You and your team will begin to see what it will be like when it's finished. Refine and sign off on the wireframe to go to the most exciting part: the actual build-out.
5. **Homepage Design.** Focus on the homepage first. This way, you can see the heart of the house nearly finished before the other rooms are designed. As with everything else, be sure the homepage design correlates with your organization's brand messaging and brand standards. Approving this will set the rest of the build out in motion.
6. **Website Development.** The rest of the webpages should be developed from the foundation set in steps 2 through 5. A great deal of sophisticated computer coding may be required. This may be a good step to outsource to an expert if you haven't already used an outside agency in the previous steps. The foundation locks in the direction for the rest of the design, making the development process much faster and more exciting. Rather than build a separate mobile site, which was a popular solution in the early 2010s, have your provider build the website to be "responsive." This means the website will automatically resize to various screen sizes (phone, tablet, laptop, desktop). The content will be responsive regardless of where it appears.
7. **Testing.** Prior to launch, be sure functionality is tested across all browsers and devices to ensure quality display regardless of where it is being viewed.
8. **Launch!**

The website is a billboard in the middle of the ocean until you make the effort to attract visitors with tactics like social media, search engine optimization (SEO) and online advertising. These are the tactics that transform the website into an efficient machine that attracts visitors to your site and inquiries to your door while your team focuses on what they do best. That's the FLOURISH! method for you.

DEMYSTIFYING SOCIAL MEDIA

“We don’t have a choice on whether we do social media,” warns Erik Qualman, author of Socialnomics. “The question is how well we do it.”

In his YouTube video of the same title, he points out:

- 90% of buying decisions are influenced by social media
- By 2018, video will account for two-thirds of mobile usage
- 1 in 3 marriages start online
- Every second, 2 people join LinkedIn
- The fastest growing demographic on Twitter is grandparents

While Qualman makes a good point that social media can’t be ignored, it’s not that scary. In fact, social media is nothing more than an open house. It’s just happening online.

Here are several guidelines from the book *Social Media is a Cocktail Party*, by Jim Tobin and Lisa Braziel:

- **“The event goes on with or without you.”** Whether or not you are participating, people are talking about your organization online. Why not join the conversation?
- **“Listen and mingle before you talk.”** You wouldn’t want to monopolize the conversation offline, so be careful not to do so online either.
- **“Different settings have different rules of etiquette.”** Just as you would behave differently at a children’s birthday party than you would at a business networking lunch, Facebook requires a different decorum than LinkedIn. If Facebook is like an open house, then LinkedIn is the gathering of collaborating medical professionals.
- **“You can ask for a little help from your friends.”** Once you build a base of followers who love your organization, they will write stellar reviews and refer more often. After all, anything for a friend.
- **“Share information that doesn’t benefit you.”** Apply the 80/20 rule. Be promotional 20% of the time, and talk about other things of interest to your following the rest of the time.
- **“Make it about them, not about you.”** People love to talk about themselves. Let them. When it’s your turn, they will be all ears.

Let’s dive deeper into best practices for Facebook. Post at least two to three times a week to stay visible. Anytime your organization’s page gets a comment on a post, have someone on staff comment back as soon as possible to keep the conversation going.

Make it possible for others to post on your organization’s page. (Adjust this on the privacy settings.) Inviting others to post on your page opens the door to your open house and invites others to be part of it.

Finally, invite people to like your page. Include a “Like Us on Facebook” link in team email signatures, on the website – everywhere. Run a Facebook ad to get even more likes. Facebook ads are explored in the next section.

Run a Facebook ad to get even more likes. Facebook ads are explored in the next section.

Now for LinkedIn best practices. First, be sure everyone on your team has an updated profile page. Prospects and referrers will likely look for you and your teammates online before calling or committing, so complete and relevant profiles are mandatory. Don't make profiles a cut-and-paste of resumes. Instead, train the staff to draw readers into their profiles with elements from the organization's brand messaging.

Make the profiles public by adjusting settings. The more people who see you and your team, the more new inquiries and referrals you will attract.

Recommend others on LinkedIn. Don't just make endorsements by clicking on the buttons at the top of people's profiles. Take the time to write a short but detailed review about what they did for your organization and how it helped. Over time, many will do the same for you, and these reviews act as online referrals. You can't beat word-of-mouth.

For more exposure on LinkedIn, get involved in groups and discussion boards. Repurpose blog postings to stay relevant and visible in multiple conversations. Whenever someone comments on a post, be sure to respond to keep the conversation going.

Let's talk about virality (not to be confused with virility). Virality is the tendency to spread by word of mouth. It's all about cracking the code on getting noticed on social media. Posts that get high virality, or are liked, commented on, and shared most often are: photos of the team, babies or dogs (or better yet, babies with dogs), happy birthday posts (or better yet, happy wedding or happy new baby) and funny images or cartoons. Think of things that will make people smile.

Posts that get low virality include polls and questions that require too much thinking, and long posts that require too much reading. This is a social setting, not a seminar. No one likes the overt intellectual or long-winded talker to overtake the conversation. Keep it light.

Social media can be a slippery slope in this open-communications era. Never post anything that may violate HIPAA privacy regulations. Train all staff members who are posting on social media to follow common-sense guidelines:

1. If you wouldn't say it in an elevator, don't say it online.
2. Don't post about clients, even in general terms, unless there is a signed consent form on file.
3. Do post about situations, solutions and research relevant to the target audience.
4. Don't badmouth the competition, even subtly.
5. Do use humor carefully.
6. When in doubt, leave it out.

Abe was right: It's impossible to please all of the people all of the time. Inevitably, you will get a negative social media post or comment. When it happens, behave just like you would with a disgruntled client for all to see. Respond publicly. Use a simple reply like, "Thank you for your feedback. We will do everything we can to rectify the situation." Then call them. Be calm and understanding, listening intently until all emotion about the issue has been exhausted. If a resolution is reached, consider asking the person to remove the post.

Above all else, take the high road in social media. Behave with the ultimate decorum, and it will reflect favorably on your organization.

Social media is only one tactic in the online marketing arena. Avoid the temptation to get too carried away overinvesting time or thought to it. Use the FLOURISH! method, and your team will be able to stay the course for steady results.

A SYSTEM FOR ATTRACTING WEB VISITORS

The right tactics for attracting web visitors surface in nearly every medical organization's marketing strategy. It's a matter of figuring out which tactics are best to deploy at any given time. There are so many tactics that even savvy marketers can get overwhelmed.

As always, first consider the target market research results. Would an existing client search online for an organization like yours? Would they click on the ads, or only the organic search results? Would they follow your organization on Facebook? Eliminate irrelevant tactics from the list.

Consider this funnel, the brainchild of Ryan Wilson of FiveFifty Digital Marketing, to further simplify the possibilities.

Awareness

The top and largest section of Wilson's funnel is awareness. For newer medical organizations, the immediate goal is to increase awareness of offerings. Few people know about the organization yet, but they will soon with tactics of video, contextual ads and behavioral ads.

A video makes most sense when it can be repurposed across several media. For example, a television spot can be added to the website homepage and shared across social media for maximum exposure.

Like retargeting ads, contextual and behavioral ads are colorfully designed, sometimes animated or flashy ads. Contextual ads appear on websites that have a context closely linked to the organization's offering. Behavioral ads appear on websites that match the online profile (or behavior) of those most likely to become clients. The experts typically best handle all awareness tactics. It's a big investment, but it pays off over time.

In 2007 GoDaddy.com invested millions of dollars in Super Bowl ads that subsequently went viral online. While they didn't capture an immediate monetary return on investment, they reportedly drew 1.5 million visits to the GoDaddy.com website. Suddenly everyone knew GoDaddy.com. This is top-of-mind awareness at its finest. After that game, whenever someone was ready to buy a website address, GoDaddy.com was the place to go.

Nurture

Consider the next concept in Wilson's funnel: the pool of potential clients that can be nurtured into the organization. These are people who may have a need in the future or who have made initial contact but not yet taken the next action. While they may not be ready to take that next step today, they are likely to in the next six months.

Nurture tactics help the organization show up in the right place at the right time. They most often include retargeting ads, Facebook ads, Facebook promoted posts and email campaigns.

Retargeting ads include more than just text like Google AdWords. Often called banner ads, they are colorfully designed, sometimes animated or flashy visuals that follow people around the web. Let's say a potential client visits your website but wanders off to other sites. A banner ad can appear atop multiple pages on those other sites to keep the organization top-of-mind.

Facebook ads work similarly, appearing in the newsfeeds of people who are likely to someday consider the organization. This visibility nurtures the potential client to think of you when the time is right. Facebook's promoted posts make it possible to plug the fact that certain people like your page and may invite other like-minded folks to do the same.

Daily posting on the organization's Facebook page is the unpaid way to capture this mindshare and can boost top-of-mind awareness.

As with SEO and Google AdWords, a one-two punch can pack a bigger bang. Retargeting ads, Facebook ads and Facebook promoted posts are best handled by the experts. Email campaigns are a great do-it-yourself option to nurture prospects to take the next step. Push it beyond the typical business newsletter. Create a series of emails that reflect your brand messaging and brand standards. Consider repurposing direct mail or print/billboard advertising campaigns into this digital medium for maximum effect.

Intent

The bottom and smallest area of the online marketing funnel is packed full of people who seek an organization like yours. It's easier and cheaper to reach the people who already have intent to find an organization like yours. "Right this very moment there are potential clients who already need your offering," explains Wilson. "It's just a matter of helping them find you."

These are the folks who reside in the intent section of the funnel: they understand that they have a need, they know they have to seek out a solution, and they are ready to take the next action once they find the right solution. This is the low-hanging fruit. It's comparatively inexpensive to get intentional people to take those steps.

Intent tactics typically include SEO and Google AdWords. There is a big difference between the two.

SEO drives websites to the top of the "organic" listings through methods of enriching website content. Google, Yahoo! and Bing crawl the web continuously to search out the most robust websites and present them

as top choices for the keywords that are being searched. A search strategist will keep your organization's name highly visible on search engines by keeping the website healthy and active with relevant content, working links, and a variety of other goodies that search engines hunt.

SEO used to be a simple process of stuffing keywords into a website and bolstering website headings with highly searched terms. Today it is a far more complex strategy. On average, Google changes its search algorithm 1.37 times every day. That means search strategists have to continuously stay on the leading edge to keep the organization's website on page one of the search results.

The more relevant the content and the more regular updates the website has, the more robust it appears to the search engines, and the higher it climbs in the search results. SEO is like car maintenance – the tasks for upkeep continue over the lifetime of the vehicle.

Google AdWords is simply an online auction. Competing medical organizations essentially outbid each other so their online ad shows most often. Each keyword, such as "Diarrhea after chemo," is given a dollar value, and the highest bidder's ad shows up first atop the page. The charge is triggered not when the ad shows but when someone clicks on the ad. Hence, the term pay-per-click advertising. This is where Google makes its millions, by making it easy for organizations to set up and manage their own campaigns.

Easy to set up and manage, sure. But it's more complicated to create a campaign that will drive results. A good search strategist will help select highly searched words and terms at a reasonable cost that are most likely to convert clicks into inquiries. A good ad leads not just to the website homepage but to a relevant landing page that echoes the offer in the ad. The landing page increases the likelihood that the prospect will take the next step: call, or take a tour for example. Like any good ad, AdWords can get the client in the door. The rest is up to your team, which compels having a dynamic website and a solid sales process.

It doesn't matter whether you or your teammates are more apt to stick to the organic search results or to click on the ads on the Google results. It matters only how your prospects behave online.

SEO and Google AdWords are not do-it-yourself tactics. Lean on a strong search strategist to get the most out of your investment. Combining both can more quickly drive new inquiries.

Each part of the funnel feeds into the next. Wilson advises, "If you have strong website traffic but visitors are not filling out the online form, buying or calling, that indicates the need to move people from nurture to intent. If your website traffic is low, that indicates a need for more awareness."

Some organizations benefit from regularly running one or two tactics in each area of the funnel. Many simply stick to nurture tactics to maintain the status quo of new inquiries or sales through top-of-mind awareness. All healthy organizations keep coming back to the brand messaging and brand standards to ensure a good spread of strategies, both online and offline.

The great thing about online efforts is that they are highly measurable. Be sure to set up Google Analytics to track website traffic. Gather monthly reporting on online marketing efforts. Consider these reports like you would financial investment statements: look for overall trends but try not to get too caught up in the details.

With online promotion, so much of the decision happens before the lead even contacts the organization. Work the funnel with the guidelines provided here, and you will have applied the fruitful FLOURISH! method to the organization's online marketing strategy, too.

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT SIMPLIFIED

Reputation management is public relations on the web – it's all about keeping your organization's reputation squeaky clean.

Hired specialists scour the web to uncover reviews and other content that may be damaging to the brand name. Some reputation management services help cover up bad reviews by stuffing the web with good reviews or other content. This essentially pushes negative reviews off page one of the search engines.

Be proactive rather than reactive. The more aware you are, the better positioned you are to immediately respond to marginal reviews. There are three things you can do today.

First, set up a Google Alert with your organization's name to receive regular updates about what's appearing on the web bearing the brand name.

Second, get social. The more active your organization is online, the more apt you are to get positive reviews and to see negative reviews as they happen.

Third, take quick action on a bad review. Rule of thumb: Behave the same way you would if a client voiced a negative opinion within earshot of others. Always respond. To say nothing might convey arrogance or ambivalence, implying agreement with the criticism. Type up a professional response and review it with another team member for objectivity and clarity before posting. Depending upon the protocols of your organization, you may need to review it with the legal department. Afterward, call the client to hear his side of the story and offer a resolution.

By the way, an overall rating of four stars is great on a scale of five. Five-star reviews across the board suggest review stuffing, or "astroturfing," which undermines credibility.

Reputation is built every day in every way. When your organization is humming along at its best, it will be reflected online just as it is in offline circles. In this way, the FLOURISH! method simplifies reputation management so you and your team can focus on care.

TOP 10 MISTAKES IN ONLINE PROMOTION

- 1. Believing slick salespeople.** There are no guarantees in online promotion. Walk away from anything that sounds too good to be true. "We will get you found on page one of Google tomorrow..."
- 2. Same old site.** There are a lot of cookie-cutter templates out there, but you don't want to look like the medical organization next door. At the same time, there's no need to hassle with an expensive custom website. A happy medium is a customizable WordPress theme. Pick a theme and add your own design and content to stand out.
- 3. Overdoing it.** In most cases, a 15-page website plus blog is plenty.
- 4. Bad shots.** Use crisp, clear and custom images in lieu of cliché stock photos.
- 5. Confusing navigation.** To keep the potential client moving through the website and eventually to your online door, narrow down the navigation to no more than seven pages or "rails" across the top and no more than five on each dropdown. Group similar information on each page so the layout is digestible and well organized.
- 6. Missing the opportunity.** Be sure the phone number, email address and links to the social media pages appear prominently on every web page. Better yet, include a short form on every page with an engaging offer: "Share your email address and get our whitepaper."
- 7. Missing the party. People are talking about your organization online.** Join the conversation.
- 8. DIY on the cheap.** Let go of the idea that a do-it-yourself solution for attracting website visitors will save money, and invest instead in a dedicated expert on your team or with an agency that can guide you through these tactics. It will pay off.
- 9. Billboard at sea.** The website is a billboard in the middle of the ocean until you make the effort to attract visitors. Start with intent tactics first (SEO and Google AdWords), since they are the easiest and least expensive way to attract people who already have the intention of finding a medical organization like yours.
- 10. Reputation management run amok.** Instead of worrying about bad reviews, focus on attracting great reviews by training your team to always be at its best.

BIGBUZZ

www.bigbuzzinc.com

GET YOUR COMPLIMENTARY MARKETING STRATEGY SESSION

Visit www.bigbuzzinc.com/contact-us and share a little info with us and we will get you scheduled for a free one-hour strategy session with our experts.