



PREPARING FOR THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT: SEVEN STRATEGIES FOR HEALTHCARE MARKETING SUCCESS

By Jim Walker
Director, Marketing Strategy
Cadient Group



Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Deliver Trust in the Midst of Massive Change	6
When Performance Matters, Administer the Minimal Optimal Dose	10
No Product Is an Island	14
To Grow Your Business, Help Grow Their Business	18
Clarity at the Core	22
One Size Does Not Fit All	25
Let's Give them Something to Talk About	30
Conclusion	



**“ In skating over thin
ice our safety is in
our speed.” ”**

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Introduction

Along with the rest of the nation, healthcare marketers are wrestling with the changes brought about by the Affordable Care Act. Despite the daunting scope of the new provisions, there are many proactive steps that healthcare marketers can take in order to thrive in the midst of this changing environment.

While each marketing team will need to assess the particular details and challenges facing their patients and therapeutic areas, we have identified seven strategic considerations that can be applied across the entire healthcare marketing spectrum.



Introduction

These strategic lenses were developed based on a pragmatic and flexible understanding - that regardless of politics or payment mechanisms, brand teams will need to keep on finding ways to quickly, efficiently, and creatively communicate their messages to patients and providers.

Ultimately, we believe that healthcare marketers who wish to succeed in the coming years of ‘thin ice’ will need to build messaging platforms that are laser-focused on delivering speed, agility, and action. Together, these seven strategies will help provide the foundation for enduring success.

Brand teams will need to keep on finding ways to quickly, efficiently, and creatively communicate their messages to patients and providers.

Strategy #

1

**Deliver Trust in the
Midst of Massive
Change**

Strategy #1: Deliver Trust in the Midst of Massive Change

Even apart from the partisan politics surrounding the ACA, it's important for healthcare marketers to recognize many people simply have a difficult time dealing with changes of any kind.

When these changes are dramatic, and are also tied to issues surrounding life and death, then emotions inevitably run high. In the midst of this heightened communications environment, brands who offer consistency, clarity, and trust will be naturally well received. For incumbent brands, emphasizing successful history and adoption will be paramount.



Strategy #1: Deliver Trust in the Midst of Massive Change

Challenger brands however, will be facing a more difficult road the next few years and marketers need to recognize that for both patients and providers, the overall tolerance for additional change is going to be very low.

Thus, new launches will need to emphasize how the product fits seamlessly into the existing health paradigms and treatment protocols – and patients will need to be constantly reassured that a new treatment regimen will be fully supported and cause as little disruption as possible.

New launches will need to emphasize how the product fits seamlessly into the existing health paradigms and treatment protocols.

Strategy #1: Deliver Trust in the Midst of Massive Change

When these changes are dramatic, and are also tied to issues surrounding life and death, then emotions inevitably run high.

In the midst of this heightened communications environment, brands who offer consistency, clarity, and trust will be naturally well received. For incumbent brands, emphasizing successful history and adoption will be paramount.

Brands who offer consistency, clarity, and trust will be naturally well received.

Strategy #

2

**When Performance
Matters, Administer
the Minimal Optimal
Dose**

Strategy #2: When Performance Matters, Administer the Minimal Optimal Dose

More than ever before, outcomes and performance will be driving healthcare decision making – both for providers and patients. Increasingly, the language and mindset of applying “the minimal optimal dose” will permeate the way in which care is delivered.

The same must also hold true for healthcare marketing – patients will have little tolerance for being overdosed with messaging that does not provide actionable or essential information.

Patients will have little tolerance for being overdosed with messaging that does not provide actionable or essential information.

Strategy #2: When Performance Matters, Administer the Minimal Optimal Dose

With this in mind, healthcare marketers will need to become even more rigorous in developing personalized message streams that provide just enough information, in just the right dose – so that patients can take action instead of being paralyzed by information overload.

Tracking, feedback, and on-going patient support will be critical to overall marketing success. Forward-looking brands will become highly focused on factors surrounding filling scripts and long-term compliance.

Healthcare marketers will need to become even more rigorous in developing personalized message streams.

Strategy #2: When Performance Matters, Administer the Minimal Optimal Dose

Fortunately, as digital technologies and smartphones continue to proliferate, marketers will find that they have unprecedented channels for cost-effectively delivering reminder messages that drive action and change patient behavior.



Strategy #

3

**No Product Is an
Island**

Strategy #3: No Product Is an Island

One of the broadest and most powerful themes underlying the Affordable Care Act is the coordination of care – whether driven through Accountable Care Organizations, Integrated Delivery Networks, or Electronic Health Records.

As collaboration and coordination become part of the national healthcare culture, brands will need to clearly and credibly demonstrate how they are “team players”.

Strategy #3: No Product Is an Island

For many brands, this will require some serious self-evaluation and re-positioning.

- How can product communications be delivered more seamlessly to HCPs?
- How will patients be made aware of potential drug interactions?
- Will pharmacists receive support from the brand?
- Will the care-networks themselves receive support and streamlined customer service?

Strategy #3: No Product Is an Island

While difficult to achieve, brands that address these difficult questions, and truly shape themselves into collaborative partners in the marketplace will thrive.



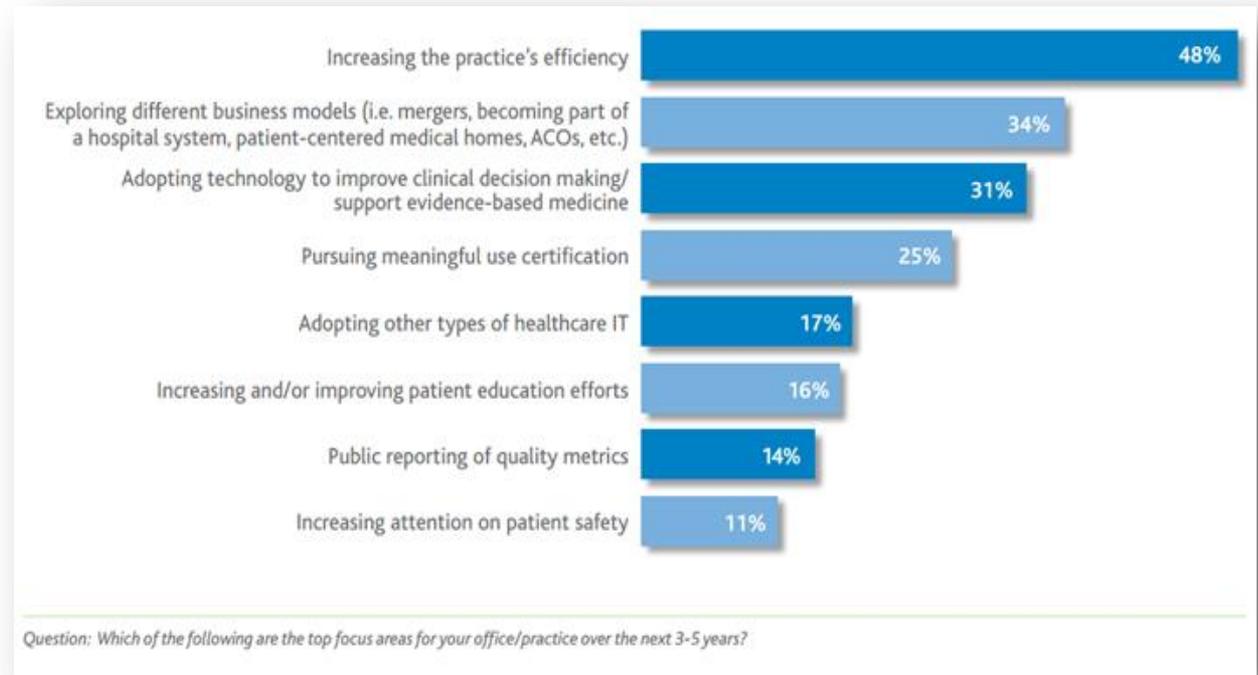
Strategy #

4

**To Grow *Your*
Business, Help Grow
Their Business**

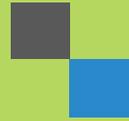
Strategy #4: To Grow *Your* Business, Help Grow *Their* Business

A recent study by Wolters Kluwer found that the top concerns for physicians adopting to the ACA.



Source: Wolters Kluwer Health 2013 Physician Outlook Survey

FACT



Implementing technology to improve clinical outcomes is one of the top concerns for physicians adopting to the ACA.



Strategy #4: To Grow *Your* Business, Help Grow *Their* Business

Just as many consumer packaged goods companies have tailored their products to fit into the Walmart distribution system, healthcare marketers need to aggressively adapt their messaging and overall professional marketing strategies to recognize the dramatic pressures that HCPs are now facing.

It is important to recognize that these concerns surfaced among the HCPs are not some technology trend or business fad, but instead represent a core shift in how they operate their businesses – both as individuals and networks. Healthcare marketers who continue to operate their own businesses like it is 2003, or 1993 – will quickly find themselves ignored and irrelevant.



Strategy #

5

Clarity at the Core

Strategy #5: Clarity at the Core

A confusing, constantly changing, fast-paced environment creates an abundance of information “noise”, and a related shortage of clarity. In a quest for clarity, consumers have already reacted to this environment by an increasing reliance on short form messaging (Twitter), visual communications (Pinterest), and feedback from their friends and family (Facebook).

Patients and HCPs have the same incredible need for highly condensed, highly relevant messaging – whether they are attempting to learn about a new indication, understand their treatment regimen, or grapple with the trade-offs involved in a certain procedure.



Strategy #5: Clarity at the Core

Within the entire healthcare system, healthcare marketers have a unique role to play in championing health literacy and messaging clarity, while adapting the latest, most potent communications and training channels.

Brands that step up and meet this challenge will not only be rewarded in the marketplace, but will be providing critical leadership in addressing our national healthcare challenges.

Healthcare marketers have a unique role to play in championing health literacy and messaging clarity.

Strategy #

6

**One Size Does Not
Fit All**

Strategy #6: One Size Does Not Fit All

While many aspects of the ACA seem to be fostering Federal led healthcare conformity, the reality is that across the nation there will be a wide range of implementation, experimentation, and improvisation when it comes to healthcare reform.

For practical-minded healthcare marketers, this means that regionalization of messaging and targeting will grow increasingly important – if not essential.

Across the nation there will be a wide range of implementation, experimentation, and improvisation when it comes to healthcare reform.

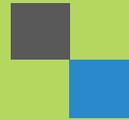
Strategy #6: One Size Does Not Fit All

As these regional differences grow more pronounced, healthcare messaging and approaches that resonate in the Northwest will likely have little interest to people living in the Southeast. Quite simply, brands that continue with a “one size fits all” campaign mindset will not be able to gain traction in the midst of increasingly distinct and hyper-local healthcare markets.

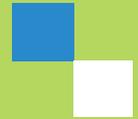
The path forward for healthcare marketers in this regard is clear, but extremely challenging: data, determination, and long-term discipline are all required in order to execute a successful regional strategy.

Data, determination, and long-term discipline are all required in order to execute a successful regional strategy.

FACT



Most states have opted out of setting up a health care exchange.



Strategy #6: One Size Does Not Fit All

This map of Health Exchange adoption gives some indication regarding the state-by-state differences that are at play.



Strategy #

7

**Let's Give them
Something to Talk
About**

Strategy #7: Let's Give them Something to Talk About

In April 2013, the Kaiser Family Foundation conducted a detailed poll to determine how people were learning about the Affordable Care Act.

In this age of digital social media and communication overload, it was surprising to learn that word of mouth conversation with friends and family is the number one channel for learning about the ACA, outpacing traditional news media by several percentage points.



Strategy #7: Let's Give them Something to Talk About

For many people, healthcare information appears to be increasingly moving along personal lines of communication – bypassing online news sources, television, and even physicians. In light of this trend, the opportunity for healthcare marketers is clear – give them something to talk about!

Obviously though, achieving this type of viral word of mouth communications is easier said than done

Healthcare information appears to be increasingly moving along personal lines of communication.

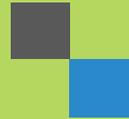
Strategy #7: Let's Give them Something to Talk About

Brands need to identify how they are relevant to their customers, and then create engaging messages and platforms that are conversation worthy. For marketers who remain in a broadcast “this is my message” mindset, achieving this high level of personal engagement will be a challenge.

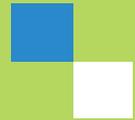
However, brands that commit to being original and relevant will increasingly find themselves at the core of everyday conversations – and what better place could there be for healthcare marketers?

Brands need to identify how they are relevant to their customers, and then create engaging messages and platforms that are conversation worthy.

FACT



Conversations with friends and family has been the primary resource for information on the ACA.

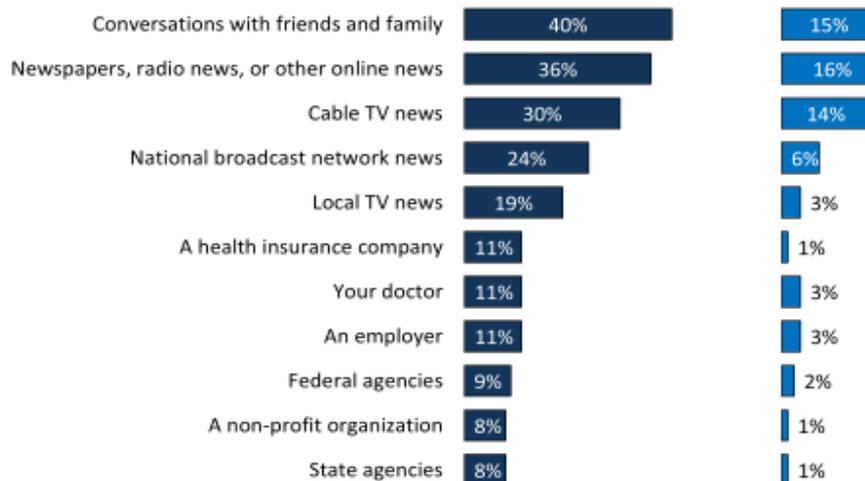


Strategy #7: Let's Give them Something to Talk About

Personal Conversations, News Media Lead List of Information Sources on Law

Percent who say they have gotten any information about the health care law from each of the following sources in the past 30 days:

Of the information source you named, which would you say has been your MOST IMPORTANT source of news and information about the health care law?



NOTE: Question wording abbreviated. See topline (<http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8439.cfm>) for full question wording. None/Something else (VOL.) and Don't know/Refused answers not shown.

SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll (conducted April 15-20, 2013)



Conclusion

It's clear that the healthcare system is about to change more in the next few years than it has in the previous few decades! For healthcare marketers, this environment is going to require new levels of resourcefulness, creativity and commitment.

The specific strategies will not be easy to put into action – but the path is clear - teams that are able to deliver trust, focus on performance, work collaboratively, emphasize customer business results, leverage short form messaging, execute regionally, and generate word of mouth conversations – will enjoy tremendous success in the midst of a total healthcare transformation.

 Follow Us: @MedData Group
www.meddatagroup.com

About MedData Group

MedData Group provides demand generation and data services for providers of healthcare technology, medical devices, medical education and others looking to engage with hard-to-reach physicians and other healthcare professionals by using a fundamentally unique approach.

MedData Group publishes Medical Product Guide, the industry's go-to resource that provides clinicians and healthcare professionals with meaningful vendor, product and industry information. By distributing meaningful content to healthcare professionals, we are able to collect more data, glean deeper insights, and reach larger audiences than any other demand generation service. Using behavioral analytics and big-data techniques, our proprietary content and lead management system produces unrivaled insights that we apply to best-in-class marketing practices to achieve unmatched results towards helping our clients reach their business goals.

About the Author: Jim Walker

Jim Walker provides strategic marketing and communications insights for a wide range of clients, focusing on Healthcare 2.0 solutions. He is particularly interested in helping brand teams take advantage of social networks, mobile marketing, and video-based campaigns. He has worked on a wide range of Rx drugs targeting both healthcare professionals and consumers.

Prior to joining Cadient Group, Jim has had extensive experience in e-Marketing as the founder of an online company, as a consultant, and as a trainer. Jim has held ePromotions positions at major pharmaceutical companies, including AstraZeneca and GlaxoSmithKline. At AstraZeneca, Jim was a Brand Promotions Manager, developing healthcare professional programs in support of Atacand.

Prior to that, Jim was an early employee at Cadient before leaving to become the founder and president of Mind Palace, an online company promoting a unique software package.

