



Evaluating the Role of Promotion in Enhancing Healthcare Services: A Review

Prince James S Bangera^{1*}, Manjunath Kuntoji², Morageri Mubintaj³, Deepika Ravi⁴
^{1,2,3,4} Department of Hospital Administration, Acharya Institute of Allied Health Sciences, Bengaluru, India
*Corresponding Author: pjbangera7@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

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This article evaluates the role of promotion in enhancing healthcare services by reviewing the historical context and development of marketing in the healthcare industry, which began in the early 1970s. The primary objective of this article is to understand how promotion and marketing have become vital components in hospital and healthcare management. The method used is a review of various published articles to explore the challenges, opportunities, and the impact of marketing on the emotional relationship between healthcare providers and patients, as well as its influence on customer engagement, trust, and loyalty. The findings of this article indicate that promotion and marketing methods have a positive impact on improving healthcare service quality and achieving a competitive edge, particularly through digital marketing and effective brand equity management..

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the historical context and evolution of advertising in the healthcare industry, focusing on its emergence in the early 1970s and its subsequent growth as a vital component of healthcare management. Initially met with scepticism due to ethical concerns and a reluctance to blend healthcare with marketing practices, the industry has since undergone a paradigm shift towards user-oriented strategies. This article emphasizes the significance of effective marketing in shaping a hospital's brand image and the need for all staff, from management to frontline employees, to participate in conveying the organization's mission to its clientele (1).

Furthermore, this article delves into the unique challenges and opportunities in healthcare marketing, emphasizing its interdisciplinary nature and the absence of a direct monetary equivalent for services provided. It discusses the role of marketing in creating an emotional connection between healthcare providers and patients, as well as the influence of marketing on customer engagement, trust, and loyalty (2) The impact of digital marketing methods such as content marketing and social media is also explored as a need to attract new patients and enhance the quality of healthcare services (3).

Additionally, the article highlights the role of brand equity in healthcare marketing, emphasizing its importance in gaining a competitive edge and ensuring long-term success. It concludes by discussing the scope of concept marketing and branding in healthcare (4). The transformation of life standards of the population over the years in the modern world has influenced healthcare provision and caused vital modifications in the system (4). The change in perspective to be

user-oriented has influenced the people of the field to adopt the techniques and strategies of marketing in healthcare. This has also aided in widening the scope of revenue generation from distribution and management of healthcare services (5).

Every hospital represents a certain image or brand value either healthcare services of low cost or better specialization. Everyone from the owner of the healthcare facility to the receptionist and clerks must advertise the mission of an organization effectively to the customers (6). A hospital brand focuses on patient satisfaction and directs patients to be loyal which is possible through improvement in service quality, influences positively the patient's will to revisit the hospital when required (4). In today's advancing competitive world and healthcare environment, hospitals focus their marketing efforts on effective and strategic brand management. The goodwill of an organization is a substantial intangible asset for many organizations (9).

An organization's reputation is visible through its brand and the reputation of the organization is composed of everything that an organization does in the marketplace. The process of marketing on the other hand includes the elements of an organizational brand but marketing represents the organization's act of buying or selling goods or services. It is the business transaction between the producer and the consumer which includes processes such as selling, advertising, packaging or communicating the product or service to the consumer (7).

Marketing was not an early thought for hospitals, nursing homes, and managed care organizations until the 70s decade of the 20th century. Healthcare professionals and marketers did not prefer blending of the words healthcare and marketing. There was an ethical misconception in the minds of stakeholders of the healthcare industry that advertising and branding for healthcare services was inappropriate. This is the reason that forbids health service providers from incorporating formal marketing practices into the operations of healthcare management (8).

The field of healthcare is an enduring area that creates opportunities and platforms for the excellence of healthcare professionals in their respective streams. The application of advanced methods of advertising and promotion for healthcare services has to be efficient enough to reach the desired results (6).

The type of demand created by healthcare services in the aspect of its marketing differs significantly from the marketing or promotion of other services. Also, it has been observable over the years that the healthcare professional is the decision maker and not the seeker or the beneficiary. Secondly, the beneficiary may not be the target of the marketing campaign, the healthcare provider decides on what service demands and how much price (7). The expansion of business is seen with the promotion of digital methods of marketing and promotion. New patients can be attracted and quality health services can be given to them with the help of strategic development. This will ensure satisfaction among patients (8). The main purpose of this article is to understand how promotion and marketing are vital components in hospital and healthcare management.

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used was a review of published articles to explore the challenges, opportunities and impact of marketing on the emotional connection between healthcare providers and patients, and its influence on customer engagement, trust and loyalty.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the various services offered in society, healthcare is one of the human-centered services. Healthcare is paramount among other services such as hospitality, law, food, education, and transportation. This shows the importance of clear communication from every party in the healthcare



sector that hospitals are the center of health and well-being in society. To improve the healthcare delivery model, it is crucial to build healthy and effective relationships between healthcare providers and patients. This relationship is not only related to the physical aspect, but also to the emotional aspect, which can affect the overall patient experience.

As healthcare costs rise for providers, operational costs rise, and customers become more informed and knowledgeable, branding for hospitals becomes a very important strategy. Good branding can help hospitals to not only attract patients, but also build a stronger emotional connection between healthcare providers and service seekers. This in turn increases patient loyalty and their satisfaction with the quality of service provided.

The article also provides insights into the influence of advertising and social media communication on hospital brand image and brand trust formation before the consumption stage. These influences prove to be significant in determining how healthcare seekers respond and interact with the hospital. After consumption, their responses to service quality, satisfaction levels, and behavioral intentions are also strongly influenced by the pre-constructed brand image. For example, hospitals with a strong and trustworthy brand image are more likely to be chosen by patients, as they feel more comfortable and confident with the services provided.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that brand equity is one of the most important concepts in business practice and academic research. Strong brand equity can provide a competitive advantage for healthcare providers, allowing them to expand their business and reach more patients. Successful brands provide greater opportunities in terms of business expansion, as they have built a good reputation and gained customer trust, which in turn can attract more patients. Therefore, investment in building and maintaining strong brand equity is key to long-term success in the healthcare sector.

Among various services offered in society, healthcare is one of the human-centred services. Healthcare is the foremost among such services including hospitality, legal, food, education, and transport services (9). It should be explicitly conveyed by everyone in the field that the hospital is the centre of health and wellness in the community. It is significant to establish a healthy and effective connection between healthcare provider and patient to improve the model of healthcare delivery (9).

The rise of healthcare costs to its providers, increase in operating costs, and informative and knowledgeable customers, it is vital for hospitals to brand for driving strategies. It also establishes an emotional connection between the healthcare provider and the seeker (10).

This review article also provides insight into the influence of advertisements and social media communication on the hospital brand image and brand trust formation before the consumption stage and their impacts on healthcare seekers and their response post consumption concerning the quality of service, satisfaction, and behavioural intention (7). Additionally, it is worth understanding that brand equity is one of the most important concepts in business practice and academic research. This is because successful brands can allow marketers to gain an advantage in competition including the opportunities in business expansion (10).

The purpose of the study described in this paper was to find out what the possibilities are of brand orientation for local healthcare providers (8). Marketing is arguably the most critical and important managerial responsibility associated with the pursuit of its success in promotion of healthcare (9, 10).

The ability to respond to patients' needs and demonstrate the importance of displaying messages on platforms of social media with the influence of healthcare industry can effectively implement marketing strategies to only build and enhance its brand image but also attain highest level of patient satisfaction alongside hospital revenue (11).

CONCLUSION

In the context of healthcare, branding and marketing play a very important role in building effective relationships between providers and patients. As the cost of services increases and customers become more informed, hospitals need to employ branding strategies that can create an emotional bond with patients. Advertising and social media have a great influence in shaping the hospital's brand image and building patient trust, which in turn affects their satisfaction and loyalty to the services provided. In addition, strong brand equity enables healthcare providers to gain competitive advantage, expand market reach, and increase business expansion opportunities. Therefore, investment in building and maintaining a strong brand image is critical for long-term success in the healthcare industry.

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