



Digital Marketing for Doctors and Healthcare Institutions:

A Basic Guide

Introduction



Is digital marketing for doctors and healthcare institutions required at all? In today's healthcare market, it is not easy to acquire patients. This is one of the greatest pain points for doctors, physicians, and healthcare institutions.

Even though today's hospitals have the most modern equipment

and are fashioned in a way to attract patients, enough inquiries are not coming in.

Up till now, hospitals got patients and inquiries via word-of-mouth publicity. Some hospitals also followed traditional advertising methods like running ad campaigns on the print media. However, the outcome of all these methods does not seem to be enough to mitigate the spiraling infrastructure expenses.

Moreover, the entire world is going digital. This situation has become even more pronounced after the pandemic when almost all services in the

world went into digital mode.

In the medical industry, doctors and numerous healthcare organizations have started to make use of cutting-edge digital marketing technologies to not only reach out to their potential customers but also to raise awareness about the best treatment methodologies and create a strong bond of trust in the market. These will naturally pave the way for higher revenues.

Why is digital marketing a must for doctors, clinics and healthcare institutions

As a doctor involved in modern medical practice or as the owner or promoter of a healthcare institution, what you need to understand is that you will have to adopt digital marketing techniques as part of your overall strategy in improving your ROI.

This also does not mean that you have to give up all your traditional advertisement methods and ditch the old for the new. This is especially relevant if you have been seeing great responses from traditional media and print ads.

But the advantages of leveraging modern digital marketing strategies with traditional methods can get you the best of both and enhanced responses. Optimizing this combination will likely bring in maximum results.

Given below are a few pressing reasons why a doctor's practice or modern healthcare institution requires digital marketing.

More patients are online than before

The Internet and social media have penetrated so much deeper in recent times, that the methods using which potential patients look out for

healthcare providers have vastly changed. According to surveys, most patients search for a doctor or healthcare facility using online methods.

This number is predicted to grow in the coming years. SO, if you are a medical practitioner or the owner of a healthcare institution, it may not be a wise decision to let the ever-increasing opportunity slip by.

So, whether you are a doctor or the owner of a healthcare institution, it is important for you to build an online presence in this digital era.

Target the right audience

With the advent of digital marketing, it has become obvious that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work. It is vital to employ a customized and precise marketing approach depending on the audience.

This approach is all about finding the customers who want your treatment and sending them the relevant information. This can be made possible through specialized techniques in digital marketing that will allow you to reach your target audience with ease.

Digital marketing is inexpensive and cost-effective

The best part about employing digital marketing for your medical practice is that you can save on the expenses that you will otherwise waste on traditional advertising. Many practices do not generate enough money to be squandered on traditional advertising.

The Internet offers professionals, big or small, an equal opportunity to advertise their capabilities to their patients. So if you are a medical

professional working on a shoestring budget, it is all the more important to move to digital marketing methods. This helps you to have a wider reach at lower costs.

Easier to interact with patients

Like in any other sector, patients' demands are continuously evolving. If you make your space in the digital realm, you will be able to meet their ever-changing expectations. For this, it means you have to be continuously updated on the latest developments in the digital world.

The traditional advertising methods do not offer any interaction with your customers and using this method in modern times may leave you outdated and lean as far as the number of patients is concerned. Therefore, it is important to gain an insight into the preferences of your patients and widen your reach.

Improving online reputation

Online brand building is a necessary activity that doctors and healthcare institutions have to take up in earnest. Though patients may not remember every small detail, they are likely to remember a doctor or hospital that shows care and compassion.

The perception of your brand in the minds of the patient is of supreme importance. Therefore it is important to build a positive brand image for your practise or healthcare institution though it may take a long time.

Staying ahead in the race

If it is about you as a doctor or a healthcare institution wanting to enter the digital realm, there are already many who have started on the journey. Jumping into the bandwagon is a good idea if you do not want to be left behind your competitors.

However, even though you may be late, the whole idea is to do this better than them. It is important to find out a digital marketing plan that fits your requirements, practice goals, and ideologies and put it into action without any delay whatsoever.

Becoming a thought leader/expert in your specialization

The easiest way to bring regular traffic to your site is to publish material that reflects your expertise in your line of treatment. Social media platforms allow you an opportunity to publish expert material that would create an online aura and position you as an expert in your niche.

You can also join forums and answer questions which would further up your online reputation and consequently our medical practice. Being helpful and answering online patients' queries would drive more patients to your practice/institution.

Benefits of Digital Marketing for Doctors

Now that we have discussed why doctors and healthcare institutions require digital marketing during these times of digitalization, the next set of points to be brought to the fore are the benefits the doctors and healthcare institutions will enjoy with digital marketing in place.

The latest digital marketing surveys have indicated that about half the population search online for the different treatment options that are available to them from healthcare institutions and doctors before deciding to fix and hospital or doctor of their choice. Digital marketing today is, therefore, an effective strategy that fills this need.

Digital marketing helps doctors and hospitals to brand themselves and build an online presence. There are many significant benefits that are available for doctors and hospitals via digital marketing and we list some of the best benefits right below.

Improved audience reach

With competition hotting up in the healthcare industry, it is crucial that doctors and healthcare institutions provide higher levels of awareness about the services they provide to the seekers. Many patients today make online appointments with doctors by using numbers available on the

websites of institutions or practitioners. The attempt to improve the branding of your services and provide greater insights into your specialities have far-reaching impacts and advantages.

Easier access to patients

Many doctors avoided advertising using the traditional methods because they feared flouting their professional ethics. However, digital marketing makes things easier for doctors by providing relevant information to the patients who would seek their services.

A website or a social media page would provide all the information required for the patients who are seeking specific services from healthcare institutions or doctors. AT this juncture it is important to note that a good user-friendly digital approach is what the patients are looking out for.

Allowing display of services

The Internet and the World Wide Web allow you to showcase the services you provide effectively to whoever is seeking the same. Your potential audience can reach you with a few clicks on their keyboard.

This is possible 24 x 7 from anywhere in the world and this means the greatest advantages for your brand.

Patient loyalty

Providing space for patient reviews on your website encourages positive feedback from the patients. If you have an excellent treatment approach

and your patients want to put that on record, they would post that on the reviews section of your website. This would help to further enhance your brand.

Brand marketing

Digital marketing is an extremely easy way to market your brand throughout the world. It is simple, cost-effective, and has the potential to reach millions of people all across the world. There are different formats of brand marketing such as PPC or content marketing, among others, that you can use to make it effective.

Suits all needs

There is no hard and fast rule for digital marketing ads. Brands of any size can take part in digital marketing and promote effectively. It is a level playing field for brands of any size.

It is also customizable and one need not follow the one-size-fits-all approach. Your service can be different and unique and you can still make it big using digital marketing.

Monitoring of metrics

The use of digital marketing for healthcare practitioners allows the use of tools that you can use to monitor some important metrics regularly. Ranging from patient satisfaction index to revenue garnered, this is a good yardstick that you can use to improve your performance. As all the figures are in black and white, you can press on with activities that bring you the maximum benefits.

SEO benefits

You can use SEO techniques to bring up your name to the top of search listings. For this, you can engage SEO specialists who can help you to bring your practice to the notice of the searchers.

If your website is tuned to local searches, you stand you benefit immensely as more local people are likely to consult you for their health problems. This is true for both individual practitioners and healthcare institutions.

Space for personal interaction

Your social media account can be a place for personal interaction with those who want to avail your services. Expert comments, suggestions, and opinions of expert medical practitioners would improve patients' trust in your knowledge and expertise.

Ability to address private questions

Digital marketing provides a venue wherein you can address questions fielded by the public that would otherwise be deemed as private or embarrassing. You would be able to answer questions that would come to you from anywhere else in the world.

Conversion rates

Conversion of new seekers into patients is only a few clicks away. That they would visit you in your clinic if you did not have an online presence is remote. However, once converted, they would make it to your practice, no matter what.

Paid advertising

You can get a good response organically if you engage with high-quality digital marketing agencies. However, if you want more pronounced results, you can try paid advertising wherein you can make sure that your website positively reaches those who are searching for your kind of services.

Digital Marketing for Doctors – Step by Step Approach

As a doctor or as the owner of a healthcare institution, you would have by now realized the importance of digital marketing for your practice. However, if you are wondering how to get started with it, here is a brief idea on how to get started.

Start with a social media presence

It is important to have a social media presence. Whether you are a practising doctor, or you run a healthcare institution, it is important to let others know what service(s) you provide. The digital marketing agency that you partner with can help you on this count.

Start vlogging blogging

Just simply having a website may not be helpful. It is a good idea to publish blogs or vlogs on subjects of interest to the patients. People will realize that you are an expert and thought leader in your medical speciality niche. Social media accounts such as Instagram and Facebook allow you to promote many posts that can further your presence in the digital realm.

Get a better idea of SEM and SEO

You can request your digital marketing agency to give you an idea about SEM (Search Engine Marketing) and SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and how they will help to build your practice. Encourage your patients to provide honest reviews of their experience. This will improve your online reputation.

Website essentials

Ensure that the website you build is simple, easy to navigate, transparent and open about the treatment charges, and user friendly. Otherwise, the effect may not be what you want.

Target social media groups

The easiest way to promote your practice or institution is to reach the information across social media groups (Facebook and Instagram). You will be able to engage with a group of people all at once.

You can also use SEM by using targeted keywords in your blog content and this will help the audience with a specific disease to connect to a specific doctor who treats this disease.

Referrals

It is easy for patients to access you if you are on social media platforms. The digital agency you engage with can help you set up your social media accounts. Once you treat some patients, the number of referrals is also likely to increase.

Email marketing

Sending customized emails is a great way to connect with your audience. You will be able to address patients of a similar kind and pass on information to them. This type of marketing has the capacity to increase the number of referrals.

Telemedicine

Telemedicine is a good option for doctors to serve people in remote places. If you have a presence in the digital space, then it becomes easy to reach out to such patients, especially in times such as that of a pandemic.

LinkedIn ID

It is good to have an account on the LinkedIn social media platform. Favored by businesspersons, professionals and entrepreneurs, it will be easy for you to connect with persons in the same industry through this platform.

In the end, winning digital marketing strategies for doctors and healthcare institutions are as follows:

- ▶ Have a website and an easy-to-navigate one
- ▶ Produce your videos
- ▶ Encourage patient reviews
- ▶ Opt for pay-per-click ads
- ▶ Invest in local SEO
- ▶ Have extensive directory listings
- ▶ Publish all the events that you have attended

Conclusion

In today's times, digital marketing for doctors is a must. Doctors and professionals in healthcare institutions will be short of time to devote to digital marketing. Therefore make hire a good digital marketing agency to help you with the strategies.