



The Do's and Don't's of
Rural Health Marketing:
A user's guide

legäto[®]
healthcare marketing



Marketing is marketing, right? Once you've passed Intro to Marketing 101, having mastered all the principals, you're all set, right? Not quite: Rural healthcare is in a class by itself. What works for big city hospitals doesn't necessarily resonate in the country. Here are some tips for success, gleaned from over a decade of being in the business.

The DOs:

Know your audience. Even if your patient base is small, chances are they aren't homogenous. Segment your audience and target them appropriately. Spend your resources wisely and efficiently: It does you no good marketing obstetrics care, for example, to a geriatric population. Service lines shouldn't dictate your message: Your audience should.

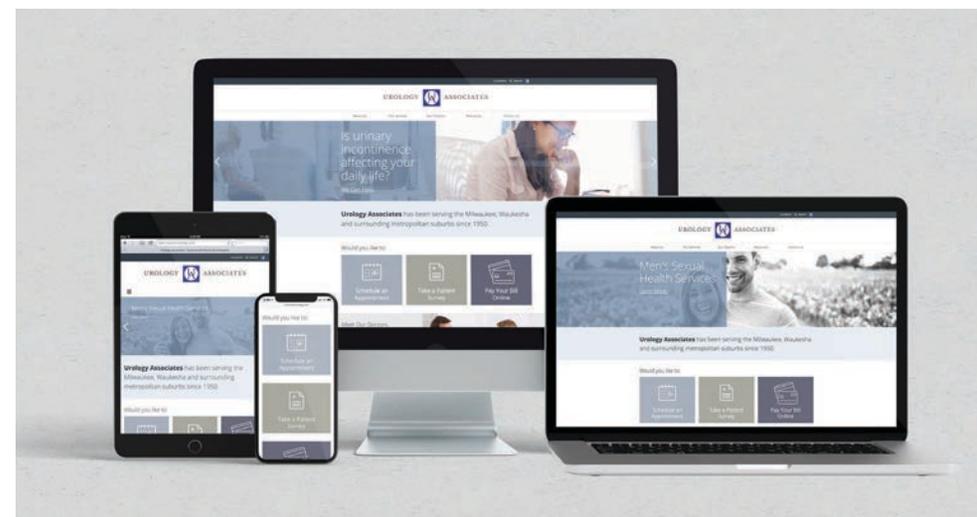
Use testimonials. Testimonials from providers are always nice, but the biggest impact comes from using patient testimonials. Your message becomes a lot more authentic when it comes from a friend, neighbor, or greeter at church.

Leverage a combination of traditional and digital marketing tactics. The Internet is a bigger influence than you might think. With smart phones and better than ever Wi-Fi services, even the most remote populations have—and use—Internet access. Use a variety of platforms to maximize your message. Campaigns that incorporate both traditional and digital media are often the most successful.

Develop a consistent brand voice. When you're speaking to your patient base, make sure they can tell it's your hospital even before you identify yourself. A consistent brand voice, as well as a uniform look and feel, will help you stay noticed in a sea of messages.

Make an investment. It's hard to justify spending money on something when you can't demonstrate a positive ROI. That's why we encourage you to track, track, and track some more. Make sure you measure results of campaigns so you can refine and redevelop messages to keep what's working and to skip what's not.

Remember that we're all in this together. Your facility is uniquely positioned in the community. You have a genuine interest in keeping your community healthy, so don't forget your bond with the people who make up your patient base. And don't forget, either, that we're with you every step of the way. Your operational goals are our marketing goals. You're here for your patients, and Legato Healthcare Marketing is here for you.



The DON'Ts:

Don't just promote services. Make it personal! While of course it's essential that your patients know what services your hospital offers, do it in a way that shows how this offering can directly impact them. The more personal you make it, the more conversions you'll achieve.

Don't assume they know about you. Make sure your audience isn't living with an old, outdated assumption of your hospital. Keep your messages fresh, relevant, and out there; be sure to highlight any new service lines you've added.

Don't underestimate the power of online reviews. While it's not exactly fair, the truth is, people who have had negative experiences are more likely to share them. Be aware of what's out there and do your best to provide stellar, positive-review-worthy care.

Don't be afraid to brag! "Tooting one's own horn" and "rural" are not a combination any of us are used to, but go for it! If your hospital has achieved unprecedented patient satisfaction scores, celebrate it! If you've won an award, take an ad out in the newspaper. This helps show the community your commitment to them while simultaneously boosting morale among your employees and staff.

Don't let the squeaky wheel get the grease. Provider wants can be pretty influential, but be sure it's best for your whole organization before you take out that billboard with the provider's face on it or go in the direction he or she strongly suggests. Make sure you approach marketing problems from a place that is concerned about the good of all of you, not just one provider. (And we should add: Sometimes face billboards are what's best. Sometimes, they are not.)

Don't be afraid to try out-of-the-box campaigns. We can assure you that your audience can handle something different. Try something fresh and new for a change.

Don't go it alone. Would you do your own appendectomy just because you've seen them performed successfully? Of course not. Experts are here to help you get the most of your marketing resources. Your expertise is in rural healthcare. At Legato Healthcare Marketing, our expertise is in rural healthcare marketing. We can help.



We hope you've found this list helpful. Remember to try new things, keep your audience involved, and please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions.



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