

The Doc is Texting: 4 Healthcare Marketing Priorities in 2018



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Emerging technology is having a dramatic impact on the healthcare industry. Telehealth, AI and VR are becoming household terms, and according to recent surveys by HIMSS, over 90% of physicians are now using mobile devices to engage patients and over 50% of hospitals are leveraging connected health devices.

Technology is not only advancing healthcare delivery and changing the way patients engage with their providers, however; it's also impacting the role of healthcare marketers. As the healthcare space transforms at a rapid pace, marketers too are evolving – working to keep up with tech innovation within their industry and organizations, as well as within their own marketing roles.

We recently spoke with senior executives from healthcare and life sciences organizations to understand how they're adapting to changes in the industry and what's on deck for 2018. We found that marketers are becoming extremely tech savvy and hyper-focused – drilling down on their customer segments, on metrics and on revenue. With that in mind, here are the key priorities for marketers and PR practitioners in the

healthcare space this year:

1. **Tie PR or Marketing to Business/Financial Metrics:** This has been a goal for some time, but marketers are looking to tie their programs more closely to business metrics and make a measurable impact on revenue.
2. **Better Segment & Target Key Audiences:** “Spray and pray” is over. Marketers want to be more targeted with their outreach and focus on nurturing leads, building relationships, buyer journeys and working towards specific goals with their customers.
3. **Create More Custom Content – for the Right Audiences:** Content must be highly customized in order to resonate, so creating more targeted content is a key priority for healthcare marketers in 2018. Using content to educate audiences is also important.
4. **Leverage New/Emerging Tech to Communicate with Stakeholders:** Marketers are placing a bigger focus on technology enablement, leveraging marketing automation platforms and emerging technologies like AI to transform big data into actionable insights. Some are also starting to use immersive technologies like augmented or virtual reality in their marketing programs.

Social media seems to be getting the biggest lift in order to meet the needs of target audiences and boost engagement, however. One executive we spoke with said “Harnessing social media to drive awareness and loyalty” is the biggest opportunity for healthcare marketers in 2018.

Other important tactics this year include developing more creative storylines for media relations and launching more emerging tech campaigns.

The marketers we spoke with overwhelmingly agreed that technology is the #1 thing impacting healthcare marketing and PR as we head into the new year. Some even said marketing will soon own as much technology as the IT department. As the

industry continues to evolve with the advancement of technology, so will the role and priorities of the CMO along with it.

To learn more about the healthcare industry in 2018, register to download: Report: Healthcare Marketers to Focus on Emerging Tech, Audience Segmenting and Impactful Storytelling in 2018

About the Author: Melissa is a Senior Vice President and Healthcare Lead at Affect, where she uses her extensive background working with healthcare and technology companies to raise her clients' brand profiles and position them as thought leaders in their respective industries. As an expert in stakeholder communications, she is adept at helping clients develop creative ways to communicate thoughtfully with their key audiences. Throughout her career Melissa has led programs for a variety of medical device manufacturers, pharmaceutical and biopharma companies, as well as care providers and health services organizations. While she has worked across many therapeutic areas, she has particular expertise in oncology and cardiovascular disease. She has also worked with a wide array of B2B technology companies. She has significant experience handling the complexities of communications programs for the healthcare industry, and a unique understanding of the many ways in which technology and healthcare intersect. Prior to joining Affect, Melissa was a Managing Director at Ricochet Public Relations, where she directed a range of agency operations, marketing and account management initiatives. While there, she also led the PR program for GlaxoSmithKline Oncology, focusing on pre-clinical research and pipeline communications, as well as campaigns for Volcano, Agendia and others. Previously, she worked in the financial services space and began her career

as a reporter for local New Jersey publications.