


Chapter 3

The Transformation of Healthcare Marketing in the New Digital Era: A Comprehensive Analysis With Reference to China

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ABSTRACT

Focusing on China's distinct market, this chapter delves into how healthcare marketing has evolved in the digital age. It analyzes how developments in AI, big data analytics, augmented reality, blockchain, and mobile technologies are fueling a transition toward a consumer-centric health culture. This chapter explores the changing demands and preferences of the Chinese healthcare market, the importance of value-driven marketing tactics, and the function of customer relationship management. Ethical concerns, pricing concerns, and success metrics are also discussed. This chapter is a must-read for anybody with even a passing interest in the rapidly growing field of digital healthcare, since it provides a thorough overview of the history, current applications, and future directions of digital healthcare in China.

1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing in the healthcare business is a multifaceted profession that draws from a wide range of disciplines to advertise and sell goods and services. Since the middle of the twentieth century, this field has expanded at an exponential rate, paralleling the rise of healthcare consumerism. Promoting medical items and drugs was an early focus of healthcare marketing, with doctors frequently serving as the intended audience (Gunjan et al., 2015).

As the industry developed, however, attention turned from marketing products to marketing services like those offered by hospitals, clinics, and wellness centers. Marketing strategies were implemented

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by hospitals in an effort to improve their standing in the eyes of patients, healthcare professionals, and insurance companies. The key goals were to increase the number of new patients, keep the current patients happy, and boost the hospital's standing in the community.

The digital revolution has brought about even more radical changes in healthcare advertising. While there is still a place for more traditional types of advertising, digital channels have begun to supplement and even supplant them. In order to connect with patients, healthcare organizations now need to implement digital marketing methods such as search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, content marketing, email marketing, and online reputation management (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

In addition, the widespread availability of the internet and cellphones has given consumers greater access to healthcare information, allowing them to become more involved, knowledgeable, and engaged in their own healthcare decisions (Carrera & Dalton, 2014). Patient-centric marketing, which puts patients' wants, needs, and values first, emerged as a result of the rise in consumer activism (Hernandez, 2009). Therefore, current healthcare marketing takes a more comprehensive strategy, emphasizing not just the promotion of healthcare products and services but also consumer education and awareness.

As a result, healthcare marketing's history is one of constant change, as new technologies and preferences have shaped the industry. Engaging patients, educating them, and promoting health products and services ethically are now at the center of the business, which once focused on the product.

The introduction of the digital age has significantly modified the promotion and distribution of healthcare services. Thanks to globalization and technological progress, there is now a generation of healthcare customers that are well-versed in their options and take an active role in making decisions about their care.

The widespread adoption of the Internet and smartphones has forced a change from conventional to digital healthcare marketing strategies. The term "digital marketing" encompasses a wide range of techniques, such as search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, social media engagement, email marketing, and online reputation management (Bala & Verma, 2018). Improved patient satisfaction can result from the use of these methods because healthcare professionals can communicate with a wider audience, interact with customers on a more human level, and offer timely information or support.

Information is the driving force behind this shift. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) and big data analytics has helped healthcare professionals learn more about their patients' habits, preferences, and requirements (Chattu, 2021). These findings can be used to build individualized health promotion campaigns that better meet the needs of each patient.

Healthcare services are now more accessible than ever thanks to innovations like telehealth and mobile health (mHealth) apps. Patients are able to schedule appointments, monitor their health, and learn more about their problems through the use of these online systems. Telehealth's ability to reach underprivileged areas has been crucial to expanding access to quality healthcare (Haleem et al., 2021).

In addition, AR and VR have broken through in the healthcare marketing sphere by presenting fresh methods of showcasing products and services and of educating healthcare professionals. Blockchain technology also has great potential to protect patient information and strengthen the credibility of healthcare advertising (Chakraborty, 2022).

Another major shift brought on by the information age is the expansion of value-based healthcare (Da Silva Etges et al., 2020). It has transformed healthcare marketing techniques to place greater emphasis on quality of care and the patient experience rather than service volume.

There are many reasons why China is a focal point in the international conversation on how healthcare marketing will evolve in the digital age. As the world's most populous country, it offers a massive

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