

Rome, 22 february 2022

HEALTHCARE MARKETING: 5 TRENDS TO FOLLOW IN 2022

THE REVOLUTION TRIGGERED BY THE PANDEMIC HAS FAST-TRACKED DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN HEALTHCARE COMPANIES. AN ANNOUNCED TURNING POINT, IN THE ERA OF COVID-19, A REAL STRATEGIC OBLIGATION. WE'VE GATHERED FIVE KEY HEALTHCARE MARKETING TRENDS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN 2022.

The profound changes brought about by the pandemic have altered people's lifestyle and consumer habits, also influencing their interaction with healthcare professionals and companies. More than ever, **patients and healthcare professionals are at the center of it all**, and everything revolves around keywords such as **innovation, communication, omnichannel, customer experience**. To meet these needs, in 2022 healthcare marketing needs to envision a new integrated and increasingly **human-centered** approach, supported by innovative and interactive technologies and platforms.

Polk&Union, Digital Communication Agency, has identified [five main healthcare marketing trends to follow in 2022](#).

*«Digital transformation has begun in the Healthcare and Pharma world and therefore also in healthcare marketing and communication strategies. In this context, the digitally evolved pharma and, more generally, **digital health** form a market that is full of opportunities, where change is driven by new technologies», explained Alessia Sersanti, Polk & Union Co-Founder & Managing Partner.*

*«At this moment, the two watchwords are, undoubtedly, **integration and multi-channel**. It has become essential that digital marketing strategies should be increasingly based upon an omnichannel structure, relating all activities to a single and coordinated action plan whose information and communication is simultaneously spread through multiple channels".*



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"Communicating in Healthcare is a complex challenge, which is why [Polk&Union has launched an entire Division totally devoted to the Healthcare & Pharma world](#), formed by a team of certified consultants with a specific know-how on the verticals of the medical-healthcare sector, and relying on a network of associations, opinion leaders and medical writers. "This is our competitive advantage: we guarantee pharma companies that we can provide tangible and substantial support in order to translate their tactical actions into feasible and winning objectives and goals", she concluded.

1. Omnichannel approach
2. Consumerization and storytelling
3. Artificial intelligence
4. SEO evolution and Voice Search
5. Videos, podcasts and interactive content

1. Omnichannel approach

For consumers, the division between the physical and the online space has become increasingly blurred, if not invisible. Likewise, in healthcare marketing, a successful strategy cannot be separated from a **multi-channel approach that manages as many touchpoints as possible**.

The goal is to better prepare to meet the needs of potential new users whenever they are looking for information and useful resources, thanks to an **increasingly advanced technology** that facilitates and supports their search: from news in the medical and scientific field to in-depth studies on drugs and pathologies, from the resolution of health problems to tools and tips to improve the therapeutic path and quality of life of patients.

In this scenario, **the customer journey is becoming increasingly jagged** also in healthcare marketing and, additionally, an omnichannel strategy allows a wider dissemination of the message, especially nowadays, when **patients and professionals**, just eager to find what they need, have become even more demanding than before and are, themselves, more involved and "empowered". The point is to know who your potential customers are, what they are

looking for, where and when (above all) they wish to have this delivered and to make yourself available to be found **through increasingly permeable and integrated channels**.

2. Consumerization and storytelling

Moreover, the two-year **emergency** has accelerated the trend towards **consumerization** also in the field of healthcare. Patients now have opportunities unheard of before 2020 to directly access services and information and they relate to the world of health with a consumer approach, comparing services and results, choosing whoever offers them the best experience.

For those who work in healthcare marketing, it is time to be prepared, with **reliable content and resources and tailor-made certificates**: patients and healthcare professionals also expect increasingly customized services and tools. At the same time, since they are aware that they own the power to choose, before they gain confidence they want to know and be constantly updated, so they can make a better decision.

Therefore, besides the value of social proof, we should not forget the importance of **guiding conversations with the proper storytelling**, which needs to highlight positive experiences (stories of patient, testimonials from operators and companies), underlining the value of one's daily commitment to improve other people's quality of life.

3. Artificial Intelligence

With the pandemic, the demand for **solutions related to artificial intelligence in the medical-pharmaceutical field** has also skyrocketed, and what at first might have appeared like a "plus", imposed by contingency, is now becoming a standard, with increasing determination.

Like SEO, AI is becoming more and more conversational. The evolution of artificial intelligence is actually one of the most relevant healthcare marketing trends in 2022, starting from **virtual assistants and chatbots** that can play a role of practical support role in many processes, including making online appointments, analyzing and proposing customized

solutions for products or services, and providing round-the-clock assistance (for example, answering the most frequently asked questions), thus "freeing" physical operators who can therefore concentrate on those activities where the human element is essential and irreplaceable.

Artificial intelligence-based apps for the healthcare and pharma industry are also growing, such as those designed to detect symptoms and early diagnose certain illnesses, along with applications to support treatments for patients and professionals.

Medical devices, software, telemedicine, monitoring, research and diagnostic apps: the **IoT (Internet of Things) in the health care sector** is one of the most active development areas. Such innovations are useful for both patients and healthcare professionals to collect data and information to provide better care by increasing the range of action, even outside of hospitals and medical offices.

In this evolution, **telemedicine**, namely the use of information technologies and digital communications allowing remote access and health care, is also increasingly requested by patients, and shows a greater organization and personalization. The time has come to consolidate it, so it becomes even more specific and performing, while it is equally important to direct and "educate" patients on its use, thus exploiting its full potential and turning it a concrete option within their clinical path.

4. SEO Evolution & Voice Search

With a view to an increasing healthcare consumerization, with people now playing a more active role in researching, choosing and monitoring their own medical care, users are changing SEO as well. The pandemic has also revolutionized this aspect, with the growing need to turn to Google and search engines to find information, while the algorithms have adjusted to their needs, thus becoming increasingly user-friendly.

Searches will be increasingly colloquial (and therefore spontaneous) and less based on simple queries. A trend that is also expanded by the growing spread of voice assistants. [According to an Edison Research](#), approximately 94 million people in the United States were estimated to own at least one smart speaker in 2021, up from 76 million in the previous year.

Users who do voice search with Siri, Cortana or Alexa generally ask a question, just like they would do with a real assistant.

People now interact in an increasingly natural way with technology and for those who work in healthcare marketing this trend is an opportunity not to be missed to better reach their customers and help them find and receive care when and how they look for it. **Voice search** also plays a particularly important role for companies operating locally. Adapting to this increasingly "spoken" future means moving forward right now with the optimization of sites for voice search.

5. Videos, Podcasts and Interactive Content

The **video-first approach is a healthcare marketing trend** that will continue to prevail in 2022, with a tendency towards short-format content, which can better capture the now hectic attention of users, who are used to platforms like TikTok and Instagram. According to a recent [Hubspot](#) survey involving over 1000 global marketing professionals, last year 31% of them already invested in short videos, and 89% are preparing to spend the same amount or boost their budget for this purpose also in 2022.

Nonetheless, pushing on content that is increasingly less textual does not mean having less "content". In fact, the other side of the coin is **the growth of podcasts in the medical field**, offering several hours of information and training to that part of the public who seeks to improve their knowledge regarding health, prevention and healthcare. This setting also includes the development of **interactive content** such as quizzes, surveys, guides, online tests that inform, entertain and influence, so that the audience of patients or professionals is increasingly involved.

For more information you can also read: [“Customer Journey: closer healthcare with digital innovation”](#)

Information about Polk&Union

Polk&Union Digital Communication Agency was born in San Francisco, California, in 2007 and was named after the crossroads of Polk and Union streets, where its first head office was located. Innovation and internationality are Polk&Union's distinctive traits. With the cross-cultural mindset that is the backbone of its DNA, and the know-how it acquired in the United States – first in San Francisco and then from 2019 in Seattle – in 2011 Polk&Union landed in Rome, Italy, where the agency became an established reference point within the Italian market, supporting companies, organizations and associations in 360-degree digital communications within the B2B and B2C sector. Its main services include: Integrated Marketing Communication, Content, Digital Media and Digital Technology, together with those specific to the Polk&Union Health division for the Healthcare & Pharma.

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