

ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HEALTHCARE MARKETING BY USING INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

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By

Neha Nigam

Under the Supervision and Guidance of

Dr Anupam Mehrotra

2024



HEALTHCARE
CONSULTANTS

Date: 21.06.2024

TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that **Ms. Neha Nigam**, a student from IIMHR Jaipur MBA Batch 2022-2024 has successfully completed her internship programme with **Trizone Healthcare Consultants LLP** from **18th March 2024** to **15th June 2024**.

She demonstrated a positive attitude and enthusiasm towards learning new things.
We wish her all the best in all her future endeavors.

Cheers,

Krutika Mayavanshi.

**Senior Human Resources Executive
Trizone Healthcare LLP**



DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this dissertation titled **ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HEALTHCARE MARKETING BY USING INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES** is the bonafide record of my original research work. I declare that it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been duly acknowledged in the text.



Naṁē: Nēha Nigam

Date: 28-06-2024

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that dissertation titled **“ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HEALTHCARE MARKETING BY USING INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES”** is a record of the research work undertaken by **Ms. Neha Nigam** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MBA (Hospital and Health Management)** from the **IIHMR University, Jaipur** under my guidance and supervision and ~~his~~her approach to the research study has been sincere, scientific, and analytical.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nigam'.

Faculty Guide
IIHMR University, Jaipur

Date: 28/06/2024

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. S. S.'.

School Dean
IIHMR University, Jaipur

Date: 01/07/2024.

Abstract

Title: ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HEALTHCARE MARKETING BY USING INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Author Name: Neha Nigam

Advisor Name: Anupam Mehrotra

Keywords: Integrated Marketing Communication, healthcare marketing, branding, digital marketing, , Trizone Healthcare Consultants, HCG Hospitals.

Background: In the recent years, the healthcare sector has become competitive, and patient centred. There is a growing need for new marketing strategies that can improve messaging, brand identity and health delivery outcomes.

Objective: Identify the key/major components of the integrated marketing communication strategies that have been used by Trizone Healthcare Consultants for HCG Hospitals and analysing their impact.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted by organizing semi-structured interviews with 25 stakeholders who were directly involved in the development of marketing strategy at Trizone Healthcare Consultants

Results/Findings: Key findings include:

- IMC strategies significantly enhance the brand recognition and reputation of HCG Hospitals.
- Digital marketing, particularly social media and online advertisements, and public relations are perceived as the most effective marketing types.
- Brand messaging and positioning, along with a strong online presence, are the most successful branding activities.
- Understanding customer needs and patient feedback are critical for developing effective marketing strategies.

Conclusions: IMC strategies significantly enhance the brand identity/recognition and reputation of a hospital by helping them deliver a consistent message to their target customers Marketing initiative should focus on Digital marketing, especially through social media and online ads, along with public relations. Understanding customer needs and patient feedback is crucial for effective marketing.

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Abbreviations

- IMC: Integrated Marketing Communication
- HCG: Healthcare Global Enterprises Ltd
- SEO: Search Engine Optimization
- PR: Public Relations
- WOM: Word of Mouth

Chapter 1: Introduction:

1.1 Purpose of Research

This study aims to explore the integrated marketing communication strategy that have been used by Trizone Healthcare Consultants and what is the impact of IMC on healthcare marketing, branding, digital marketing, and Positioning of Hospitals

1.2 Problem Statement

In the recent years, the healthcare sector has become competitive and patient centered. There is a growing need for new marketing strategies that can improve messaging, brand identity and health delivery outcomes.

Today, a lot of organizations find it difficult to develop and/or implement marketing strategies which is effective. TV, radio, print ads in newspapers as well as email marketing under the alias of Traditional Marketing are alone no longer effective and thus, they cannot engage the customers as intended anymore. Currently, there is a growing need for integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategies that can deliver a consistent, compelling, engaging message to the target audiences via multiple channels.

1.3 Context and Importance

In this digital era, Healthcare organizations are unable to maintain a competitive advantage and at the same time also deliver high-quality healthcare. Integrated marketing communication can be very helpful to develop a strong brand identity, engaging target or potential customers and achieve positive healthcare outcomes.

1.4 Aim

Exploring and analyzing the integrated marketing communication strategies that have been used by Trizone Healthcare Consultants and check what is their impact on healthcare marketing and branding, digital marketing, and Positioning of HCG Hospitals.

1.5 Objective

Identify the key/major components of the integrated marketing communication strategies that have been used by Trizone Healthcare Consultants for HCG Hospitals and analysing their impact.

1.6 Strategy used by Trizone Healthcare Consultants

Trizone Healthcare Consultants developed a IMC strategy which will deliver a consistent message through various Marketing channels (Newspaper, Radio, TV, Billboard, IPL sponsorship, Email Marketing, Social Media, Website, SEO, Online Advertisement, PR events, community engagement, etc.). This strategy helped HCG Hospitals to approach their target audience/customers with desired messaging, improve patient engagement, and achieve business objectives.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature:

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategies use various combinations of different marketing channels and approaches. This technique makes it very easier to deliver consistent messaging and enhance brand visibility. This strategy tries to achieve the goals of a marketing campaign by effectively coordinating various promotional techniques that are specifically designed to complement one another (One complements the other). Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) utilizes the unique advantages that each communication channel provides and combines these advantages of each communication channel to create a more significant overall impact.

Marketing effectiveness are very crucial for Healthcare organizations to reach/ approach to their target audience/customers, improve patient engagement, and achieve business objectives.

The Table 2.1 summarizes recent studies on integrated marketing communication strategies:

Table 2.1

Authors (Year)	Published in	Study Location	Sample Size	Sampling Techniques	Salient Features
Srikanth K, Deb M, and Das S in 2024,	Academy of Marketing Studies Journal	Hyderabad , India	373	Convenience Sampling	The study tries to investigate and find out the influence of IMC elements on the brand identity/image of hospitals. It focuses on three IMC elements: advertising, online media, and referral marketing. The findings point to a significant enhancement of the hospital's brand identity through online media and word-of-mouth (referral marketing), while advertising does not have a noticeable/important effect. The research points out the growing importance/need of digital and personal communication channels in shaping consumer perceptions/behaviour in the healthcare sector.
Ala'Eddin Mohamad Khalaf Ahmad (2016)	International Journal of Business and Management, Vol. 11, No. 11, 2016	Saudi Arabia	290	Purposive Sampling	Explored impact (positive/negative) of IMC (advertising, personal selling, PR, WOM) on brand identity in private hospitals in Saudi Arabia. Found the IMC has positive effects on brand identity/image, except for sales promotion. It also recommended adoption of IMC for enhancing/improving hospitals brand image.
Annisa Soraya, Sri Wahyuni Nasution , Ermi Girsang, and Chrismis Novalinda Ginting in 2024	International Journal of Health and Pharmaceutical	Royal Prima Hospital, Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia	Head of outpatient department , three medical staff members, three existing patients, and three new patients	Purposive Sampling	Explored IMC strategies (advertising, customer-to-customer sales, PR, direct marketing) to increase outpatient visits. It found positive impacts on patient engagement and hospital visibility/ Brand Identity, recommended adoption of IMC strategies for enhancing/improving outpatient visits.

Authors (Year)	Published in	Study Location	Sample Size	Sampling Techniques	Salient Features
Terefe, Hiwot (2021)	St. Mary's University	Private general hospitals in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	400 distributed questionnaires, 302 valid responses	Convenience non-probability sampling	The study explores the effect of IMC on customer loyalty/patronage. The findings reveal that social media advertising and personal selling have the most significant/noticeable positive impacts on customer loyalty/patronage. Direct marketing and public relations contribute to a very less extent. Sales promotion shows little/no significant effect. It recommends focusing/prioritizing on social media advertising and personal selling techniques to enhance customer loyalty/patronage and suggests a implementing IMC strategy for maximizing/optimizing marketing efforts.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Questions:

- How do integrated marketing communication strategies (IMC) employed/used by Trizone Healthcare Consultants impact healthcare marketing effectiveness, branding, digital marketing, and positioning of HCG Hospitals?
- What are the key components and marketing channels utilized in Trizone Healthcare Consultants' integrated marketing communication strategies?
- How effective are these IMC strategies in enhancing brand recognition and reputation for HCG Hospitals?

3.2 Hypothesis :

Integrated marketing strategy (IMC) can have substantial/significant positive impact on improving brand recognition & reputation, engaging target audience and improving client outcomes.

3.3 Research Design:

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted for analysis.

3.4 Study Setting:

The study was conducted at Trizone Healthcare Consultants and the client base of Trizone Healthcare Consultants.

3.5 Study Population

Inclusion Criteria: Clients and team members involved in marketing strategy development at Trizone Healthcare Consultants.

Exclusion Criteria: Non-healthcare related members.

3.6 Study Tools:

Semi Structured Questionnaire

3.7 Duration of Study:

3 months (18 Mar 2024 – 18 Jun 2024).

3.8 Sample Size:

25 interviews were conducted with clients and members of Trizone Healthcare Consultants.

3.9 Sample Techniques:

Purposive sampling was used to select participants/respondents who are directly involved in marketing strategy development.

3.10 Data Collection Procedure:

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews having 13 questions. Answers given by the participants /respondents will be updated in an online Excel Sheet via MS Forms.

3.11 Qualitative Methods:

Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns/themes in the qualitative data obtained from interviews.

3.12 Ethical Considerations:

- Participants were asked to provide informed written consent before participation in the study

- Participation was voluntary and participants/respondents had the option withdraw at any time without penalty.
- Data was securely stored in the One Drive and accessed only by the research team.
- Participant confidentiality/anonymity was maintained throughout the study.

3.13 Operational Definitions

- **Integrated Marketing Communication Strategies:** Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategies use various combinations of different marketing channels and approaches. This technique makes it very easier to deliver consistent messaging and enhance brand visibility. This strategy tries to achieve the goals of a marketing campaign by effectively coordinating various promotional techniques that are specifically designed to complement one another (One complements the other). Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) utilizes the unique advantages that each communication channel provides and combines these advantages of each communication channel to create a more significant overall impact.
- **Client Engagement:** The level of interaction/involvement of clients/customers with the healthcare organization.
- **Healthcare Outcomes:** Measures of the effectiveness of healthcare services provided.

Chapter 4: Results

The findings/results from the data collected through the research questionnaire asked to the respondents/participants provided insights into the effectiveness of integrated marketing strategies (IMC) implemented by Trizone Healthcare Consultants and their impact/effectiveness on various aspects of healthcare marketing and branding for HCG Hospitals.

4.1 Respondent Demographics

The demographics give an simple overview of the participants/respondents in the study, including their gender distribution, average age and years of experience in healthcare and/or healthcare marketing.

Table 4.1.1

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Male	12	48
Female	13	52

The sample data has a balanced gender distribution, with slightly more female respondents. This balanced perspective can help in understanding diverse viewpoints on marketing strategies.

Table 4.1.2

Gender	Average Age of Respondents (years)	Total Years of Experience in Healthcare/Healthcare Marketing (years)
Male	31.6	6.2
Female	29.5	4.8
Total	30.5	5.5

The respondents are relatively young, with an average age of around 30 years and moderate experience in healthcare marketing, suggesting that they are likely to be up-to-date with current trends and technologies in the field.

4.2 Impact of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Strategy on Brand Recognition and Reputation

The respondents provided their perspectives on the impact of the IMC strategy on the brand recognition and reputation of HCG Hospitals.

Table 4.2.1

Impact Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)

Marginally Improved	2	8
Improved	11	44
Significantly Improved	12	48

A substantial majority (92%) believe that the IMC strategy has either improved or significantly improved the brand recognition and reputation of HCG Hospitals, indicating the strategy's strong positive impact.

4.3 Effectiveness of Marketing Communication through various Channels

Respondents were asked if they found that HCG Hospitals effectively communicate their services through various Marketing Channels used by Trizone Healthcare Consultants.

Table 4.3.1

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Agree	9	36
Strongly Agree	16	64

All respondents agree that HCG Hospitals effectively communicate their services, with a significant majority (64%) strongly agreeing. This suggests high satisfaction with the hospital's communication strategies.

4.4 Effectiveness Ratings of Various Marketing Types

Respondents rated the effectiveness of different types of marketing activities employed by Trizone Healthcare Consultants for achieving marketing objectives.

Table 4.4.1

Type	Effectiveness Rating (%)
------	--------------------------

Traditional Advertising (Print, TV, Radio)	63
Branding	89
Digital Marketing	97
Public Relations	94
Social Media Marketing	88
Search Engine Optimization (SEO)	80

Digital marketing and public relations are seen as the most effective marketing types, followed closely by branding and social media marketing. Traditional advertising is rated lower, reflecting a shift towards digital and interactive methods.

4.5 Successful Branding Activities

Participants identified which branding activities have been most successful in enhancing HCG Hospital's image.

Table 4.5.1

Activity	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Brand Messaging and Positioning	11	44
Community Engagement Programs	3	12
Media Coverage	2	8
Online Presence	9	36

Brand messaging and positioning, along with a strong online presence, are perceived as the most successful branding activities. Community engagement and media coverage are less impactful, suggesting a preference for direct and digital interactions.

4.6 Effectiveness of Digital Marketing Channels

The effectiveness of various digital marketing channels in engaging the target audience was assessed⁷

Table 4.6.1

Digital Channel	Marketing	Effectiveness Rating (%)
Website		89
Social Media		94
Email Marketing		52
Online Advertisements		93
Search Engine Optimization		76

Social media and online advertisements are rated as the most effective Digital Marketing channels for engaging the target audience, followed by the website and SEO. Email marketing is seen as less effective, indicating a potential area for improvement.

4.7 Metrics for Measuring Success of Digital Marketing Efforts

Respondents indicated which metrics they use to measure the success of their digital marketing efforts.

Table 4.7.1

Metric	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Website Traffic	25	100
Social Media Engagement	23	92
Conversion Rates	22	88
Click Through Rate	2	8
Sentiment Analysis	7	28

Website traffic and social media engagement are the most commonly used metrics, with conversion rates also being important. Click-through rates and sentiment analysis are less commonly used, suggesting that more advanced metrics might be underutilized.

4.8 Critical Data for Developing Effective Marketing Strategies

Participants pointed out that which types/kinds of data they think is most critical/important in developing effective marketing strategy.

Table 4.8.1

Data Type	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Customer Demographics	2	8
Common Ailments	3	12
Customer Needs	10	40
Market Trends	3	12
Patient Feedback	7	28

Understanding what the customer needs is considered to be the most critical/important data for developing effective/working marketing strategies, followed by patient feedback. Customer demographics data and common ailments data are seen as very less critical/important.

4.9 Ranking of the most important Metrics to Measure impact/effect of Marketing strategies on Healthcare Outcomes

Participants/respondents ranked the metrics used to measure the impact/effect of marketing strategies on healthcare outcomes.

Table 4.9.1

Metric	Rank
Patient Retention Rates	1
Patient Satisfaction Surveys	2
New Patient Acquisition	3

Patient retention rates is ranked as the most important metric for measuring the impact/effect of marketing strategies which is followed by the patient satisfaction surveys and the new patient acquisition. This highlights/points out the focus on maintaining long-term relationships with patient.

4.10 Overall Effectiveness of The Trizone Healthcare Consultant’s Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy

Respondents/Participants provided a overall rating of the effectiveness of the Trizone Healthcare Consultant’s integrated marketing Communication strategy.

Table 4.10.1

Response	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Poor	0
Below Average	0
Average	0
Good	56
Very Good	44

All respondents/participants rated the integrated marketing Communication strategies as either good or very good, which clearly indicates a very high level of effectiveness and satisfaction with the strategy/strategies implemented by Trizone Healthcare Consultants team.

Summary of Results

The results/findings indicates an highly positive impact of integrated marketing Communication strategies on the brand recognition, reputation, and communication effectiveness of HCG Hospitals. Digital marketing and public relations are considered as the most effective marketing type, and the brand messaging and online/internet presence being among the most successful branding activities. Critical datas like customer needs and patient feedback are very essential for developing the effective marketing strategies. Overall, Trizone Healthcare Consultants' integrated marketing communication strategy is rated highly effective by the respondents/participants.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of Results/findings and their comparison with other related studies

The research results/findings indicate that integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategies significantly enhance brand recognition and reputation for Hospitals. The effectiveness of the strategies is mostly but not entirely linked to digital marketing and public relations, which are also rated as highly by the respondents/participants. This finding aligns/matches with previous related studies, such as those done by Srikanth et al. (2024) and Ahmad (2016), which also highlighted/mentioned about the positive impact of IMC on brand image and customer engagement in the healthcare settings. Ahmad (2016) also observed the positive effects of IMC elements/components like advertising, personal selling, PR, and WOM on brand image/identity, which further supports the importance of these marketing channels as highlighted/mentioned by the respondents/participants in the current study.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

Although this study offers/presents the valuable insights but it is also subject to many limitations as mentioned below:

- **Sample Size:** The findings may have limited generalizability due to the relatively small sample size of 25 respondents.
- **Sampling Technique:** Purposive sampling may introduce bias, as participants are selected based on specific criteria, potentially excluding other relevant perspectives.
- **Geographical Scope:** The study is limited to Trizone Healthcare Consultants and their clients, which may not represent the broader healthcare marketing landscape.

5.3 Strengths of the Study

The study also contains several/many strengths which are as follows:

- **Focus on IMC Strategies:** The research provides a detailed exploration of integrated marketing communication strategies in a healthcare context, a relatively under-researched area.
- **Practical Implications:** The findings offer actionable recommendations for healthcare marketers to enhance their strategies and improve patient engagement and satisfaction.
- **Comprehensive Analysis:** The study examines/evaluate the multiple dimensions/aspects of the IMC effectiveness including the digital marketing, branding, and datadriven strategy development, which is providing a holistic/complete view of the impacts that IMC has.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Findings

This study explored/examined the impact/effect of the integrated marketing Communication (IMC) strategies which has been employed/used by Trizone Healthcare Consultants on healthcare marketing and branding. The key findings include the item which are mentioned below:

- IMC strategies when used can significantly enhance/increase the brand recognition and reputation of the HCG Hospitals.
- Digital marketing, particularly social media and online advertisements, and public relations are perceived as the most effective marketing types.
- Brand messaging and positioning, along with a strong online presence, are the most successful branding activities.
- Understanding customer needs and patient feedback are critical for developing effective marketing strategies.

6.2 Implications

The results/findings of this study offer valuable/useful insights into the effectiveness of integrated marketing Communication (IMC) strategies in the healthcare industry/setting and provide actionable recommendations/suggestions for Healthcare marketing Consultants and other healthcare organizations/industry to enhance/improve their marketing efforts and achieve better/improved healthcare outcomes for their clients.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the research results/findings, the following recommendations are proposed to be implemented:

- Allocate more resources to digital marketing channels, particularly social media and online advertisements, to engage target audiences effectively.
- Develop strong, consistent brand messages that resonate with the target audience and reinforce the organization's values and mission.
- Employ more advanced metrics, such as sentiment analysis and conversion rates, to measure the success of digital marketing efforts more comprehensively.
- Actively seek and utilize patient feedback to inform marketing strategies and improve healthcare services and patient satisfaction.

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