

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

new
buzzword
in

Hospital Marketing

HashTAGit takes a closer look at how leading healthcare providers in India and abroad are leveraging Social media marketing strategies to improve engagement, responsiveness, information, dissemination & conversion to enhance revenues.



Abstract

Sometimes being a brand is not enough. Many healthcare giants, despite the prosperous business, face difficulty in maintaining the visibility. The reason behind is the fact that healthcare market is quite competitive thus the visibility of leading providers is often challenged by the new entrants, advance healthcare facilities etc.

This phenomenon has made hospitals change the way of doing business and there is an evident shift towards adopting customer-centric approach and building long term relationships.

Today, healthcare sector is jumping aboard the social media marketing bandwagon to survive in the highly competitive market. Though, it is about couple of years behind other industries but still striving hard to walk hand-in-hand with the latest developments.

The emergence of digital marketing has brought credibility, dependability and satisfaction, making the experience more personalized for customers (patients, in this case) - an aspect which is the soul of healthcare domain.

In this white paper, HashTAGit takes a closer look at how leading healthcare providers in India and abroad are relying on social media marketing strategies.

HashTagit team analyzed 50+ healthcare providers (hospital) spread across different locations including Apollo, Fortis, Max Healthcare, Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic etc. As per the research data, most of the leading healthcare providers are leveraging the potential of social media pages to communicate with their target audience, perhaps it was also seen that many of the tier-2 city hospitals have already starting promotions through social media engines. However, Facebook have been their first choice, considering its humongous global user base and tremendous advertising options. With the aid of social media giant, today businesses are promoting their services and increasing the visibility through social media platforms to engage the customers worldwide.

Earlier, hospitals were majorly spending on outdoor advertisements and print but in the last decade digital marketing have taken the driver seat. As per estimate a few leading hospitals are spending 0.3% to 0.5% of their revenues on the digital marketing.

However, just riding on the digital marketing bandwagon because everyone is, should not be the driving force for any organization. One should remember that a goal without a plan is just a wish and if you don't know where your organization is heading you can never achieve the set goals.

Hospitals need to sketch the digital marketing strategy which can comply with the already outlined organizational objectives.

To make a social media campaign successful, it is significant for a healthcare provider to pay attention to certain aspects such as - number of posts, kind of posts, timing of posts, target audience, page responsiveness etc. for an effective communication on the social pages.

Broadly healthcare organization depending upon their usage of social media marketing / digital marketing could be categorized as (1) Digital Leader healthcare organizations (they have drilled down the nucleus of social media marketing and leverage it to optimize marketing spend) (2) Digital Placeholder healthcare organization (they are just randomly posting on social media – for them social media is just about posting) (3) Anti-Social healthcare organization (operating in 21st century with 19th century tools)

For example: a leading hospital in central Mumbai, whose Facebook page boasts of 2,13,308 likes (community) and engages 4-14k people on every post (Healthcare | Media | Communication). So, if a hospital is doing 20 posts a month, they are reaching to 2,00,000 people.

Earlier, it was possible to depend solely on traditional medium to conduct effective marketing campaigns, since it was sellers' market (very few corporate providers) but today leveraging digital marketing is indispensable. And the major reason is that a huge number of people are not only becoming active online but are also searching solutions for their problems online. Besides, digital marketing is far more effective and inexpensive in comparison to traditional marketing channels.

If we take social media into perspective, the health care providers don't need to run behind the target audience, unlike traditional methods. The customers are already there and they want to communicate with the brand, know about the services, participate in different activities etc. Also, the promotion on social media doesn't need the healthcare providers to shell out big money.

If people active on the social media platform are liking and sharing your content then it is equivalent to the 'word of mouth' marketing. This type of marketing approach is vital in the healthcare sector. For example, if many people around you refer to Dr. Sen, you are more expected to consider that doctor.



Increasing relevance of “Social Media Marketing” in Healthcare

To achieve a leading position in the compliance-driven healthcare sector, it is significant for the hospitals and health care providers to segment their market correctly and facilitate services as per the market demand and fluctuating customer expectations. Besides, it is also critical to communicate your services to the target audience in order to position yourself among the healthcare giants.

In this scenario, healthcare industry cannot overlook the digital marketing. And it is safe to assume that healthcare combined with digital marketing has a pool of opportunities in it.

There was a time when traditional advertising channels such as TV, outdoor and print were considered best for marketing purposes but not anymore. As the pattern of content consumption by the users is changing significantly, companies too are deploying smarter ways of reaching to the target audience i.e. turning digital. And the healthcare sector is not an exemption.

Until a few years back, healthcare providers used to rely on websites and emails to communicate with the audience but now social media marketing is evolving as the first hand tool for communication for major healthcare providers. Today, an increasing number of people, who are concerned about their health and that of loved ones, are looking for solutions online, most preferably on social media.

The use of platforms like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn is growing worldwide. At present, there are around 2.34 bn social media users worldwide.

The common public and healthcare providers are already leveraging the power of social media platforms for the purpose of healthcare communication, education and engagement among users.

Many national and international hospitals utilize social media (especially Facebook) for communicating about healthcare or educating about healthcare. One can see posts on their social media pages related to facilities, advancement in healthcare technology, specialized

doctors, medical health camps and other sort of engaging content. The information is presented in different formats, such as text, pictures, videos etc. as per the campaign requirement to keep the audience engaged within the brand.

Also, the live video option provided by Facebook facilitates hospitals in establishing personal connection with the users (patients in this case). Many healthcare providers conduct live chat sessions, featuring the specialists, to share information on health care and latest advancements in healthcare technology, making the communication transparent and authentic.

A growing number of healthcare providers also use social media to communicate directly with patients to supplement clinical care. Mostly, they join online communities where they can read articles, listen to experts, make referrals, share cases and ideas, consult colleagues about patient issues, research medical developments etc.

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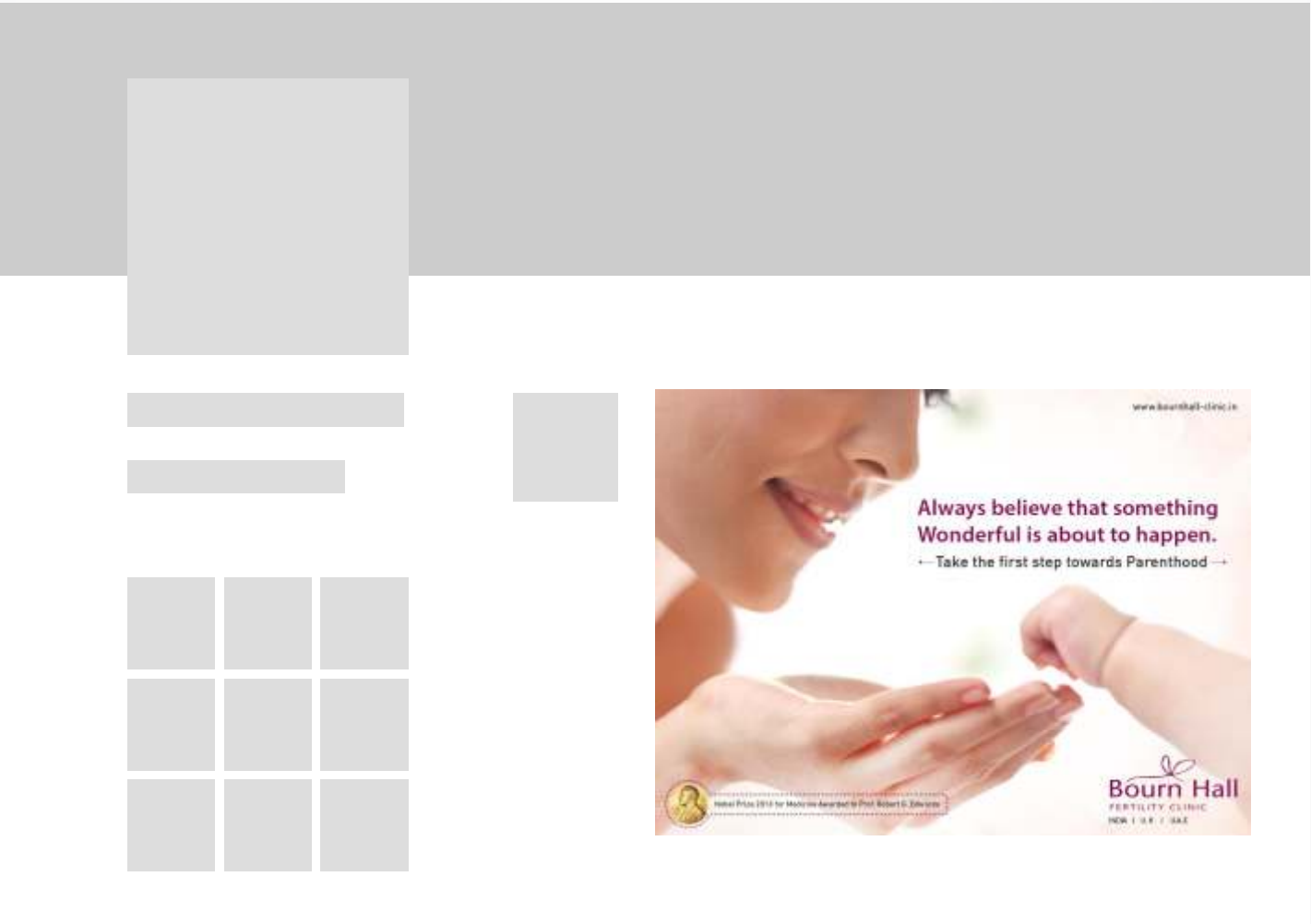
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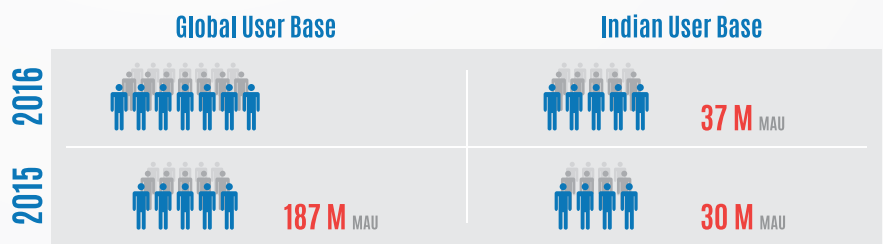
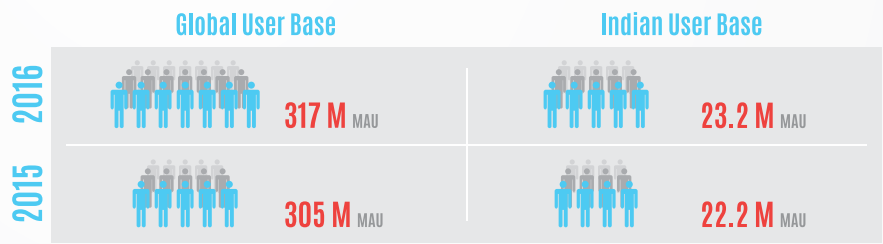
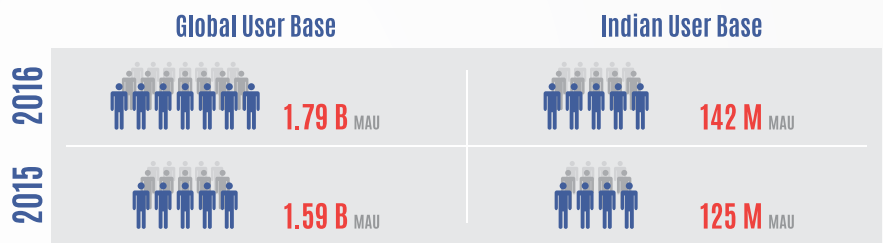
Illustrative 1: Post on social media (Facebook) engagement.



Your "target audience" is here, growing wrt number and relevance

Unlike the traditional marketing mediums, with social media marketing, the healthcare providers have an upper hand at conducting marketing activities more effectively. Now, brands have less hassle in identifying the target audience, fewer spending on ads compared to hefty amount put on TV/Print ads/campaigns and getting instant results which is not possible with traditional marketing channels.

The social platforms like Facebook and Twitter boast of a humongous user base worldwide including people of all age groups. And healthcare providers, out of the wide audience, can segment their target audience seamlessly with the help of available social media tools.



As per the analytical data, Facebook had 1.79 billion average users per month in 2016 while the number of users monthly in India stands at 142 million. If we talk about Twitter, the micro blogging site has 317 million average monthly users worldwide and 23.2 million in India.

Besides, the people of all age groups ranging from 18-24 to 65+ are equally active on the social platforms. So, healthcare sectors have the upper hand here in designing the content as per the audience they intend to target. Every healthcare provider, be it a childcare hospital or senior citizen healthcare provider, or maternity center or cancer care hospital or heart care hospital, has an equal chance of benefitting from social media as they can segment their target audience out of the entire available lot.

The people who have liked your page, share your posts, viewed your videos etc. are the ones who admire your services and prefer it over other healthcare providers. There are several social media tools through which companies can conduct the SWOT analysis and accordingly design future strategies..

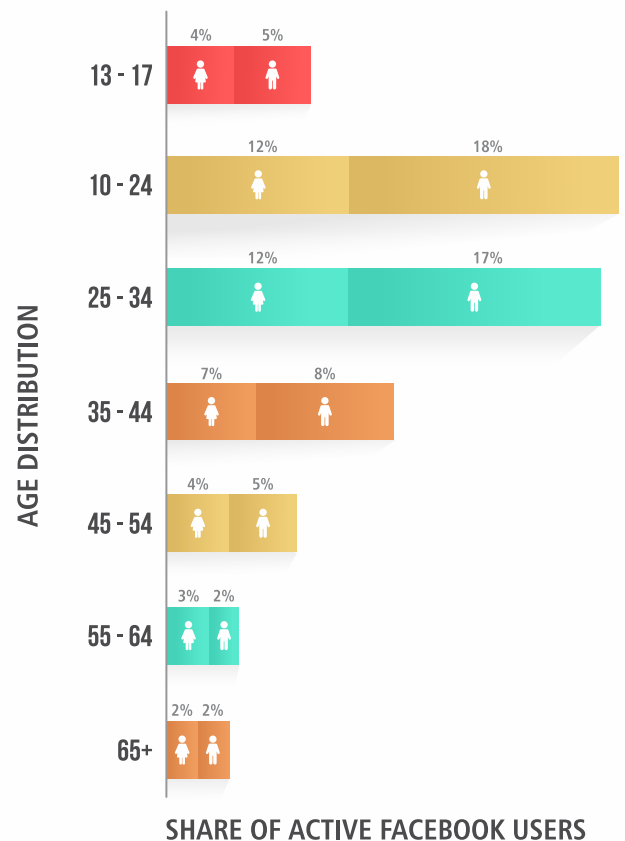
Interesting, many businesses cut down the expenditure on marketing in time of recession but social media marketing remains unaffected of this proposition as the companies need not spend big mullahs to run the social pages. Customers may not purchase the product/services but they remain active on social media pages, watch ads online, share content etc.

However, to engage the audience and ultimately grow the business, healthcare providers must concentrate on developing such social media campaign which can, 1) Give your organization a voice, 2) Can educate the audience. 3) Advertise your products/services, and 4). Give audience exclusive content which is not available on competitors' pages

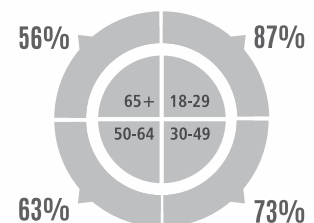
It is significant for healthcare providers to adopt a holistic approach in order to sustain business on the digital platform.

The audience wants to talk to you

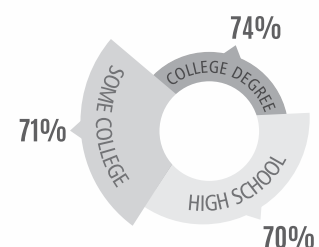
Social media is not just a marketing channel but a platform for customer experience as well. Earlier, social media was used primarily as a platform to surge sales but now it has become a meeting space for organizations and customers (sellers & buyers), and an integral part of the brand experience itself.



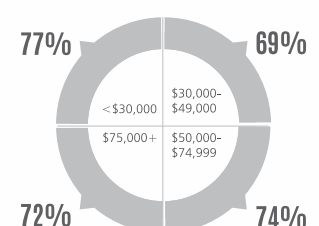
OF ALL ONLINE ADULTS, BY AGE GROUP:



OF ALL ONLINE ADULTS, BY EDUCATION:



OF ALL ONLINE ADULTS, BY INCOME:



Brands know that their target audience is there on the social platforms but what else they need to understand is that the audience wants to talk to them. Thus, it is relevant for companies to design social strategies which can facilitate two-way communication.

In case of healthcare sector, it is extremely important as the consumers (patients) expect personalized approach here. The patients look for customized healthcare solutions and not what doctors would hand over to principally anyone with the similar condition.

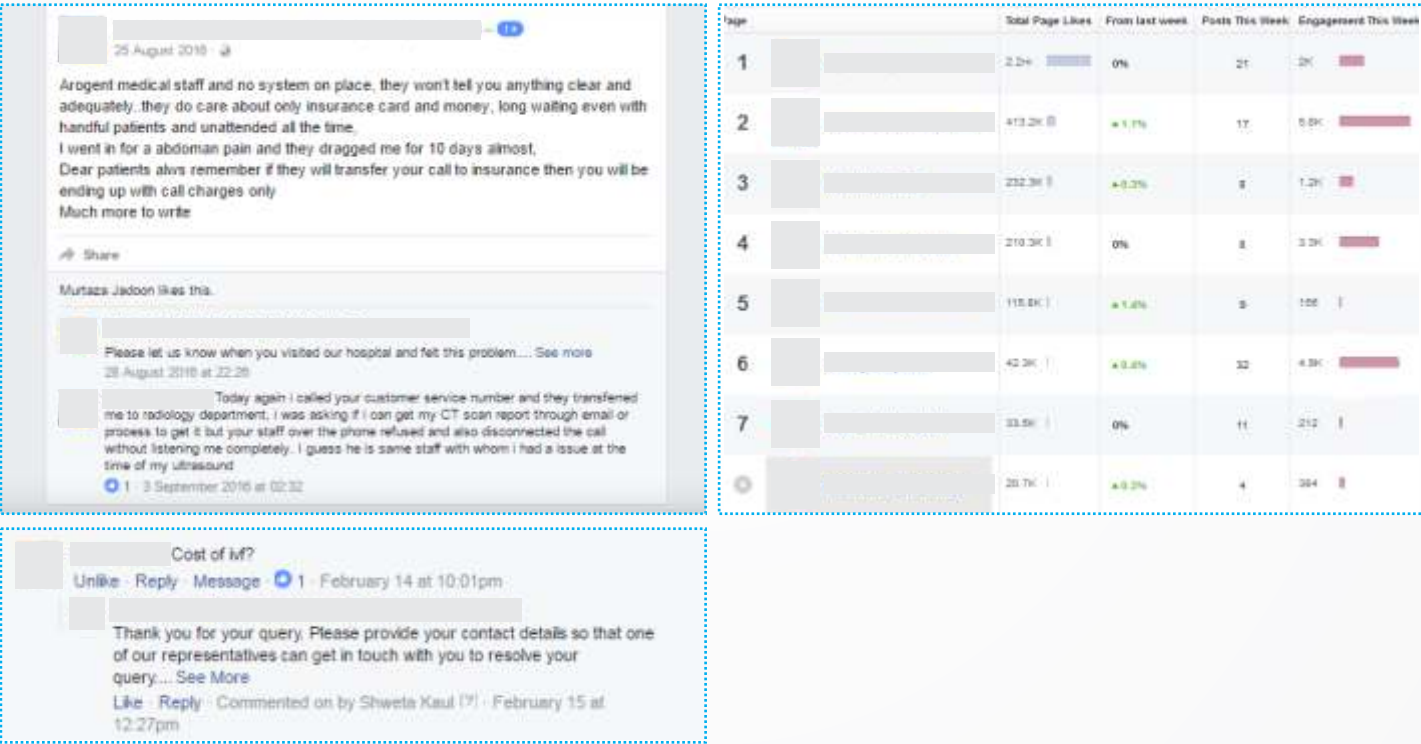
They levy heavy trust on hospitals, where they get treated and doctors (from whom they receive consultation) thus want to communicate directly and get listened too.

There are chances that you might be bombarding your audience with advertisements and products or services you are hoping to sell with absolutely no room for feedback, response and query from the audience. This practice, if done for long time, may lead to drop in participation or followers. If you notice these changes, then it's time focus on changing your communication module and focus on engaging your audience.

And you can do it by being responsive and allowing your audience to talk to you – such as asking them for their opinions, comments, and ideas on how you could make things better for them.

In order to leverage the power of social media platforms to full extent and make the marketing practice successful, the main focus of an organization should be on listening to the customer.

Illustrative 2: Reviews, Engagement, Customer Query



If we talk about mature health care sector, social media marketing has taken a driver seat from last four to five years. And the very reason behind this is the fact that companies have understood that just being a brand is not enough but visibility and constant engagement with the customers is equally important in order to grow business. Thus, to meet all these requirements and yield effective results, the sector is leveraging on the power of social media, especially tech-giant Facebook.

Healthcare providers leveraging the power of social media marketing

In present times, social media is beyond a mere platform for friends and family to share personal experiences. Various industries have embraced Facebook, Google+ , Twitter, blogging and other specialized communities to reach out to customers, employees and partners.

In case of healthcare sector, the social media marketing is turning out to be a phenomenal asset for enhancing patient experience as well as delivering comprehensive care. Many hospitals and healthcare providers, that have leveraged the power of social media to grow their business, stated an increase in sales and number of loyal customers. This phenomenon has led many medical institutions to remodel their approach and incorporate social media in marketing, communication and even networking strategies.

A large number of international hospitals including Howard Medical, Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic, and many more are extensively leveraging on the social media marketing. This new age marketing technique has helped them in maintaining individuality in the competitive healthcare circuit as well build a strong relationship with customers, which is quite significant for the business growth.

Though, it is important to note that social media marketing works differently from one organization to another. For example: Cleveland Clinic, a multispecialty academic hospital located in Cleveland, Ohio, boasts of 2,01,64,478 likes on its Facebook page. To serve this large audience the social media team of the hospital shares an average of 90 posts per week and 400 posts per month. On the other hand, Fortis Hospital (India) which has 10,62,686 followers, shares 10 posts per week and 22 posts per month. Out of 22 posts, 19 are general info + tips, rest three are event related posts.

International hospitals

S.No.	Hospitals	Page likes	Avg. post / Month	Nature of Posts	
				Events	Others (Info + tips)
1	Seha Emirates Hospital	38,320	14	2	12
2	King Faisal Specialist Hospital-Health Education	21,171	43	0	43
3	Howard Medical	2,636	5	0	5
4	The Mount Sinai Hospital	2,14,297	26	11	15
5	Cleveland Clinic	2,01,64,478	400	0	400
6	Mayo Clinic	9,05,205	100	15	85
7	Humud Medical Corporation	1,01,204	50	18	32
8	Vejthani Hospital	62,681	24	2	22
9	Samitivej Hospital	28,342	22	2	20

Both hospitals have tailor-made social media plan as per their structure & objectives, but the average engagement per post they achieve is similar – 200-300.

However, the healthcare providers who still aren't fully convinced how social media can work wonders for their business must learn more about its distinctive advantages. For example: 1. Social media facilitates quick dissemination of healthcare information, 2. It's a cost effective way to promote a message. 3. Has a mainstream media outreach. 4. Helps communicate in time of crises. 5. Aid in training medical personnel

Indian hospitals

S.No.	Hospitals	Page likes	Avg. post / Month	Nature of Posts	
				Events	Others (Info + tips)
10	Kokilaben Dhirubhai Hospital	4,79,669	25	1	24
11	Fortis	10,62,686	22	3	19
12	Max Healthcare	2,36,540	23	4	19
13	Apollo	22,08,496	30	6	24
14	Medanta	21,651	22	15	7
15	Artemis	22,221	4	0	4
16	B.L Kapoor Hospital (New Delhi)	1,33,068	30	6	24
17	Manipal Hospitals (Bangalore)	4,64,237	31	3	28
18	Wockhardt Hospital (Mumbai)	2,13,308	22	5	17
19	Aditya Birla Memorial Hospital (Pune)	19,265	27	4	23
20	Surya Mother & Child Care (Mumbai)	16,772	22	0	22
21	Cocoon Hospotel (Jaipur)	13,153	21	1	20

Effectiveness of marketing dollar spent on social media is highest

With the outburst of social media platforms and their growing relevance, the social advertising is mounting at profound rates. Marketers have realized that their advertising dollars are more effective on social media platforms in terms of wider reach, visual interaction and their ability to target specific persona by interest/demographic is also greater. Notably, the percentage of overall marketing budget spent* on social has witnessed a hike of 10.7 percent in 2015 to 14 percent in 2016.

If you are a healthcare provider, looking for methods to achieve best marketing results and be smart about rupee spent, then you cannot overlook the power of social media. Interestingly, Facebook has become the penultimate choice for video advertising – even surpassing YouTube with regards to advertising interest. HashTAGit understands all aspects for the business growth and accordingly design social media campaigns that can bring maximum engagement, wider visibility and greater ROI. To reap maximum benefits of the campaign, the company deploys personalized approach as per the product/services offered by the clients.

Slice and dice Target audience for appropriate and customized content

Social media advertising is one of the best advertising methods available to get connected with a particular persona, a target audience or the competitor's audience. The Facebook ad manager allows you to slice and dice the target audience as per your content requirements.

Here are some of the approaches to do that:

Location: Facebook allows you to reach customers in significant locations -country, state/province, city and postal code. For example: If you're a healthcare provider in Lonavala, Mumbai, you can target your advertisements at people who live in Mumbai and Pune.

Demographics: Companies can also target audience based on demographics such as age, gender, relationship status, workplace, education and more. For example: Cocoon Hospital (Jaipur) will channel its marketing practices on women (expecting mothers) to bring in more business.

Behaviors: Brands can also reach people based on their purchasing behavior, device they use and other activities. For example: If your company provides online psychological counselling, you can select the related term online counselling or best psychology counselling under behavior category.

Advanced: This option on Facebook allows you to target your advertisements to your current customers from your own list, or exclude them from a specific campaign. This option is beneficial if you want to offer some special offers or discounts to your loyal customers.

Custom Audience: Confidentially upload a contact list of people you would like to reach or exclude and accordingly target your Facebook advertisements at them.

Lookalike Audience: After creating the custom audience, companies can also utilize lookalike audience to find people who are quite similar to best customers.

However, for effective utilization of the medium, it is significant for the companies to determine the frequency of posts and nature of posts. HashTAGit helps create an effective strategy which can yield maximum results for the organization in the question.

Also, irrespective of what social media channels a marketer zeroes in their resources and efforts, the core of the business' objectives should be at building meaningful and long-lasting relationships. The advertising on social media platforms acts as an outlet for companies to establish trust and build credibility with their prospective buyers. When people connect with a brand through a well thought out and implemented social advertising campaign, it opens the door of opportunities for a marketer to tell their brand's story to the targeted media.



About the Author

Sachin is the Founder & CEO of HashTAGit, he has more than 15 years of global experience in managing healthcare businesses, management consulting and Information technology across India, US and Middle East. Prior to investing into HashTAGit, he has worked with Genpact, Ernst & Young (EY), Infosys Technologies, Wockhardt & Apollo Hospitals. He has multiple paper publications in his name.



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You are
what you share !

About HashTAGit

Many organizations across the globe have crossed the success path by relying on HashTAGit for its online promotional activities. HashTAGit successfully offers Digital Marketing, Social Media Optimization & Marketing, Search Engine Optimization, Web Development and Advertising services to help clients share what they are.

For more Information about HashTAGit, visit www.hashtagit.in