

Issues, Challenges and Strategies used for Online marketing by Healthcare Industry: an Exploratory Study

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of

Post-Graduate Diploma in Health and Hospital Management

by

Dr Nandini Sharma



International Institute of Health Management Research

New Delhi -110075

May, 2013

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Certificate of Internship Completion

Date: 30.04.13..

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Dr. Nandini Sharma has successfully completed ~~his~~ 3 months internship in our organization from January 01, 2013 to April 01, 2013. During this intern she has worked on "Issues, Challenges & Strategies of E-marketing's Client Perspective" under the guidance of me and my team at Indian Health Consultants, Gurgaon.

We wish her good luck for her future assignments


(Signature) Partner(s)

Mr. Kuldeep Chaudhary
CEO, Indian Health Consultants

Certificate of Approval

The following dissertation titled "Issues, Challenges & Strategies
used for Online marketing by Healthcare Industry :
and Exploratory Study."
is hereby approved as a certified study in management carried out and presented in
a manner satisfactory to warrant its acceptance as a prerequisite for the award of
Post- Graduate Diploma in Health and Hospital Management for which it has been
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Dissertation Examination Committee for evaluation of dissertation

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Certificate from Dissertation Advisory Committee

This is to certify that Dr. Nandini Sharma a graduate student of the Post- Graduate Diploma in Health and Hospital Management has worked under our guidance and supervision. She is submitting this dissertation

"Issue, challenges and strategies used for
Online marketing by Healthcare Industry : an Exploratory
Study."

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Post- Graduate Diploma in Health and Hospital Management.

This dissertation has the requisite standard and to the best of our knowledge no part of it has been reproduced from any other dissertation, monograph, report or book.

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Dissertation Organisation: Indian Health Consultants

Area of Dissertation: Marketing - Online

Attendance: 100 %

Objectives achieved: Dr. Sharma successfully achieved the goal of the study by getting the questionnaire filled and analysing the feasibility of online marketing for healthcare.

Deliverables: (1) Client's requirements from own web initiatives
(2) Gaps & challenges faced during online marketing
(3) Revenue Mapping among Referral, Direct & Online marketing for individual clients.

Strengths:
- Intergroup & Interpersonal communication
- wider approach towards subject ~~responsibility~~
- Keen Learner & self starter

Suggestions for Improvement:
- Learn to work with numbers.

Signature of the Officer-in-Charge/ Organisation Mentor (Dissertation)

Date: 25 April 2013

Place: Gurgaon, Haryana

ABSTRACT

E-marketing has been observed as an emerging trend in the field of marketing not just in product industries but also in service industry, Healthcare in particular. The Internet provides a potential for more interactive communication, one wonders how much this opportunity is taken up. Very simply put, digital marketing or E-Marketing refers to the application of marketing principles and techniques via electronic media and more specifically, the Internet. The terms E-Marketing, Internet marketing (I-Marketing) and online marketing are frequently interchanged, and can often be considered synonymous. This study is exploratory in nature and aims to understand the healthcare providers opinion towards this fast emerging tool used for marketing. Ten healthcare providers were chosen and an in-depth interview was conducted with each one of them. The study revealed that web based marketing is now being used as a tool not just for sales but also for positioning the brand in the minds of the people. Online Marketing provides a great platform to give the end-user a glimpse of the intangible healthcare services. This study also divulged the challenges faced by the healthcare players. Technological incompetence and paucity of time emerged as the most prevalent. However, there still remains an untapped segment which needs awareness of the utilisation of this strong arm of marketing besides the conventional word of mouth referral and direct marketing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This project report would not have been possible without the kind support and help of many individuals and organizations. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of them.

I am highly indebted to my mentor, Dr Rahul Prashad at Indian Health Consultants for his guidance and constant supervision as well as for providing necessary information regarding the project & also for his support in completing the project.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my guide Dr. Pawan Taneja, for his constant guidance, critical analysis and support.

I would like to express my gratitude towards my parents & other members of Indian Health Consultants for their kind co-operation and encouragement which help me in completion of this project.

I would like to express my special gratitude and thanks to industry persons for giving me the attention and time. My thanks and appreciations also go to all my colleagues in developing the project and people who have willingly helped me out with their abilities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	11
1.1 Healthcare in India.....	11
1.2 Challenges of Healthcare Industry in India.....	11
1.3 Need for marketing in Healthcare.....	11
1.4 Internet in India.....	12
2. Online Marketing.....	13
2.1 Online marketing strategies.....	14
2.1.1 Web promotion plan and development strategy.....	15
2.1.2 Search Engine Optimization.....	15
2.1.3 Marketing by video posts and embedding.....	18
2.1.4 Social Media Optimization.....	19
2.1.5 E-mail Marketing.....	21
2.1.6 Search Engine Registration.....	22
2.1.7 Blog and Forum Marketing.....	22
2.2 Evaluating Online Strategies.....	23
2.3 Rationale of Study.....	25
3. Review of Literature.....	26
4. Aims and Objectives.....	29
5. Methodology.....	29
6. Organization Profile.....	31
7. Reflective Learnings.....	35
8. Data Analysis and Discussion.....	36
9. Conclusion.....	51
10. Study Limitations.....	52
11. References.....	53
12. Annexures.....	55
12.1 Annexure-A.....	55
12.2 Annexure- B.....	56
12.3 Annexure-C.....	58

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 – Snapshot of Google Analytics Report.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - Online activities opted by healthcare providers

Table 2 - Reasons for opting for Online Marketing

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Healthcare in India

Healthcare is one of India's largest sectors, in terms of revenue and employment, and the sector is expanding rapidly. The private sector accounts for more than 80% of total healthcare spending in India (PWC Report- Emerging Markets 2007).

A weak government health care delivery system, coupled with the poor quality of care offered by it, is a major contributing factor to the growth of the private health care system. The Government of India offers a number of financial concessions to corporate hospitals in the form of subsidized sale of land, reduced import duties and tax concessions for medical research (Baru, 2000). Other benefits received by the private sector include reduced utility charges, discounted or free land, and low-interest loans (Chakraborty, 2003).

Health care has emerged as a blue-chip industry, attracting individual as well as institutional investment. Domestic and foreign companies have also come forward to set up tertiary care/super-specialty hospitals. With continuing advances in information and communication technology, the applications of computers in medicine have increased rapidly, and have the potential to revolutionise healthcare. And, the Internet, with its powerful penetration and scalability, has become an increasingly popular medical information resource.

1.2 Challenges of healthcare industry in India

India's healthcare sector holds great potential and promise and is looking forward to a healthy future. It is expected to reach US\$ 280 billion by 2020 with the hospital services industry to be worth US\$ 81.2 billion by 2015 (<http://www.indianexpress.com>).

However, inspite of being profitable to such tremendous scales, the healthcare market faces many pitfalls. There are various gaps in the Indian healthcare market, which also present a vast opportunity.

1.3 Need for Marketing in Healthcare

Like all other products and services, Marketing today has become a vital component of all hospital & healthcare operations owing to the rise in the number of hospitals and immense competition. Before the advent of the Internet, many medical provider decisions were based on geographical considerations and referrals. In the late 2000s hospitals began marketing their specialties and advancements through online portals (<http://www.ehow.com>).

One of the most recent and popularised mode of marketing is Online media. The need for online marketing in the industry in healthcare was realized when studies revealed that almost 69% of internet users gathered healthcare information from the web (<http://www.slideshare.net>) and nearly 31% people who own mobile phones were using the technology to access healthcare information (<http://www.slideshare.net>).

In today's internet age, building an online presence for any business is imperative to keep up with the competition. E-marketing provides the option to access the masses at an affordable price and allows the marketer to undertake a personalised marketing approach.

1.4 Internet in India

At about 150 million Internet users, India now has 3rd largest Internet population in the world after China (at 575m) and the US (at 275m). At 150 million total Internet users, the Internet penetration in India remains at 12 per cent vs. 43 per cent in China and 80 per cent in the US (<http://techcircle.vccircle.com/>). However, the low penetration means that India presents unmatched growth opportunity for the Internet sector in coming years. India will likely see golden period of the Internet sector between 2013 to 2018 with incredible growth opportunity and secular growth adoption for E-Commerce, Internet advertising, social media, search, online content, and services relating to E-Commerce and Internet advertising.

2. ONLINE MARKETING

Online marketing refers to the use of the Internet and digital media capabilities to help sell your products or services (<http://toolkit.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au>). The digital technology acts as a value addition to traditional marketing approaches regardless of the size and type of your business. Online marketing is also known as Internet marketing (i-marketing), web based marketing or e-marketing.

Unlike conventional marketing, e-marketing is creating a strategy that helps businesses deliver the right messages and product/services to the right audience. It consists of all activities and processes with the purpose of finding, attracting, winning and retaining customers. What has changed is its wider scope and options compared to conventional marketing methods (<http://toolkit.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au>).

E-marketing joins creative and technical aspects of the Internet, including: design, development, advertising and sales. It includes the use of a website in combination with online promotional techniques such as search engine marketing (SEM), social media marketing, interactive online ads, online directories, e-mail marketing, affiliate marketing, viral marketing and so on. The digital technologies used as delivery and communication mediums within the scope of e-marketing include:

- Internet media such as websites and e-mail
- Digital media such as wireless, mobile, cable and satellite.

Before an organization/company decides to opt for web based marketing, it has to define its needs and objectives i.e. the reasons why your business wants to go online and allow you to estimate and monitor the progress of your online marketing activities. They also provide an incentive to focus on critical areas and formulate strategies to help achieve intended objectives. Online marketing campaigns can help you reach your objectives (<http://toolkit.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au>). The goals may be:

- Brand recognition:
Strong branding allows your brand to stand out among competitors
(<http://www.infoentrepreneurs.org>)
- Customer engagement:

Through online marketing, the company can increase their visibility towards the consumers, by prominently displaying brand's message and engaging them.

- Lead generation:

A lead is a person who has indicated interest in your company's product or service (<http://www.hubspot.com>)

- Increasing the traffic on the website:

Website traffic is simply the amount of people that comes to visit a website, the number of pages visitors click, and the amount of time a visitor views a page on a website (<http://website-traffic-definition.blogspot.in>)

Health care marketing has evolved as a result of advanced digital marketing strategies. The popularity of smartphones and mobile marketing will also continue to rise in the coming years, with many hospitals and diagnostic centres promoting services via customized phone apps.

2.1 Online Marketing Strategies

With the introduction of the Internet, Online marketing is no longer an option; it is a necessity. It is a dynamic system, with both companies and consumers having to adapt to it. For companies, this means that competition has become global. Companies can no longer be geographically limited; they need to expand across countries and continents. These expansions mean that companies have to adapt different types of strategies from what they are used to with offline marketing (<http://bookboon.com>).

Internet marketing can attract more people to the website, increase customers for the business, and enhance branding of the organization.

The strategies and tools that may be used for implementation of web based marketing are:

1. A web promotion plan and an effective web design and development strategy
2. Search Engine Optimization, to get ranked at the top in major search engines
3. Email Marketing
4. Post Videos on Your Website
5. Social Media Optimization
6. Search Engine Listing
7. Forums and Blog Commenting

2.1.1 A web promotional plan and development strategy:

A successful website Marketing & Development Plan serves as a blueprint to attract more clients and profits. All the elements of a well done marketing plan must be consistent and open to change from all areas as the organization evolves.

In today's economy, it is crucial to get the most of the money invested in the project. A marketing plan will define what works for you and what doesn't, who you should target and who you shouldn't, where you should allocate funds and resources, and where you shouldn't, etc. But before the plan is developed, the objectives must be stated.

A marketing plan objective is the goal you want to achieve. It's a definite, clear, final product you want to see come about. It's the direction of your marketing future, and in many ways the most important part of your entire marketing plan. In case of web-based marketing, typically an objective should be able to increase sales through online acquisition channels (<http://www.nectarmarketing.com>).

The measurability of marketing objectives is hugely important in a medium to large business because it also is the measure of accountability within a business marketing structure. To be blunt, it helps them decide who to fire when things go poorly. In a small business with only one or two people working on a company's marketing efforts, things are a bit different. Also, for many new small businesses, the owner has a hard time saying if a 10% increase in a certain area is easily achievable or ridiculously hard. In that case the objectives probably don't need to be as rigidly measurable as expected in a larger business (<http://www.hellomarketing.biz>).

2.1.2 Search Engine Optimization:

While there are many ways to drive new users to the websites' homepage, search engines like Google, are among the best at bringing new visitors to the door. SEO is a technique which helps search engines find and rank your site higher than the millions of other sites in response to a search query. SEO thus helps you get traffic from search engines. Search engines perform several activities in order to deliver search results (<http://www.webconfs.com>) –

- *crawling*
- *indexing*
- *processing*
- *calculating relevancy*
- *retrieving*

SEO is **not** purchasing the no.1 sponsored link through Google Adwords. There are a large number of strategies that can be used to optimize a website for search engines. By combining elements of on-page optimization and off-page optimization strategies, search engines take notice and rank the website higher in the ranking. A strong search engine optimization campaign can improve your company's search engine ranking position (SERP) in major search engines which allows potential customers looking for the services you offer to find you (<http://static.googleusercontent.com>).

On Page Optimization

A large number of optimizations take place on the website to ensure that content is being properly indexed, keywords are picked up, and H1 and H2 tags are used effectively to allow Google and other major search engines to rank the website relevantly. An analysis and revision of the internal link structure, content keyword density, and duplicate content is performed and changes are made as necessary to ensure a high content integrity.

Off Page Optimization

Search engine optimization also requires the creation and maintenance of optimization techniques outside of the domain of a website. Strategies in off page optimization include submitting your website to major directories, social bookmarking websites, and other sources of information. Through link building practices and press release creation, relevant content and incoming links are created for your website to improve relevance and traffic to your website from other sources. This also assists your website's rankings in major search engines (<http://www.shore-designs.com>).

Search engine optimization is often about making small modifications to parts of your website. When viewed individually, these changes might seem like incremental improvements, but when combined with other optimizations, they could have a noticeable impact on the site's user experience and performance in organic search results. The basic

actions that can be implemented to achieve the targets are
(<http://static.googleusercontent.com>):

1. Create unique accurate page titles

The title for your homepage can list the name of your website/business and could include other bits of important information like the physical location of the business or maybe a few of its main focuses or offerings.

2. Use description “meta tags”

A page's description “meta tag” gives Google and other search engines a summary of what the page is about. Whereas a page's title may be a few words or a phrase, a page's description meta tag might be a sentence or two or a short paragraph. This is achieved by ensuring accurate summarizing the content on the page.

3. Make the site easy to navigate

All sites have a home or "root" page, which is usually the most frequented page on the site and the starting place of navigation for many visitors. Make it as easy as possible for users to go from general content to the more specific content they want on the site. Add navigation pages when it makes sense and effectively work these into your internal link structure.

4. Offer quality content and services

Think about the words that a user might search for to find a piece of the content. Users who know a lot about the topic might use different keywords in their search queries than someone who is new to the topic.

5. Provide better anchor-text

Links on the website page maybe internal (pointing to other pages on the same site) or external (leading to content on other sites). In either of these cases, the better the anchor text is, the easier it is for users to navigate and for Google to understand what the page to which it is linked to is about.

6. Optimize use of images

All images can have a distinct filename and "alt" attribute, both of which the creator may take advantage of. The "alt" attribute allows us to specify alternative text for the image if it cannot be displayed for some reason. One can use brief, but descriptive filenames and alt text.

7. Use heading tags appropriately

Heading tags (not to be confused with the <head> HTML tag or HTTP headers) are used to present structure on the page to users. There are six sizes of heading tags, beginning with <h1>, the most important, and ending with <h6>, the least important. This is a visual cue to users that this text is important and could help them understand something about the type of content underneath the heading text. Multiple heading sizes used in order create a hierarchical structure for your content, making it easier for users to navigate through the document.

8. Promote the website in right manner

A blog post on one's own site letting their visitor base know that something new has been added is a great way to get the word out about new content or services. Other webmasters who follow the site or RSS feed could pick the story up as well. Putting effort into the offline promotion of your company or site can also be rewarding.

2.1.3 Marketing through video posts and embedding

Here are a few reasons why relevant images are important in your marketing video (stats courtesy of MDG Blog):

- ✓ 60% of consumers say they are more likely to contact a business if an image or video shows up in search results.
- ✓ 67% of consumers say the quality of the image or video is very important when making purchasing decisions.
- ✓ Viewer engagement is 37% higher for images posted to Facebook versus text, and 31% higher with video.
- ✓ Websites with images and video get 94% more total views

With over four billion hours of video watched by 800 million unique users every month, YouTube has cemented its position as the top video sharing website in the world. With that in mind, it's no surprise that YouTube is one of the best and most original online marketing tools available (<http://www.mainstreethost.com>).

YouTube is an interesting beast to varying degrees: a search engine, a hosting service, an advertising platform, a social network, and a community site. In order to get benefit from

having a presence YouTube as a marketer, your strategy needs to harness the nature of user intent, rather than work against it. This means you either need to serve user intent by creating content that will inform, instruct, or entertain; or support user intent by creating ads which can be served as preroll content to users watching videos relevant to your business (<http://www.seomoz.org>).

With the right content, those watching informational/entertaining videos can get to know your brand better and in a positive light; while ads, in precisely the TV advertising vein, can improve brand recall, perceived legitimacy, and overall reputation (<http://www.seomoz.org>).

No longer are consumers willing to sift through pages of black and white text when what is being said could be summed up in a thirty-second video. If there is a desire for the business to not only survive but to thrive in the mobile era, one needs to start incorporating unique, creative visual stimuli into its marketing campaign. Video scribing is a good way to do that. Use images/video alongside your text, post your content to Facebook and Twitter, pin to Pinterest, and encourage others to share; if your content is visually captivating, chances are viewers will be more than eager to pass it along (<http://www.reelseo.com>).

When it comes to selling a product or service, nothing adds credibility to the business like a completely third party recommendation. It's the same reason customers turn to friends, family, and even complete strangers for buying advice: so they can cut through the sales pitches, the buying pressure, and the marketing to get an honest opinion from someone who has no incentives to sell (<http://rightlookcreative.com>).

In the Healthcare scenario, there has been an increase in the reliance on patient's testimonials regarding a particular service. Patient testimonials give the hospital/doctor instant credibility. It is a quick and effective way to let someone else speak on their behalf and allow potential patients to hear how the organization helped other people with problems similar to their own (<http://doctors.fosterwebmarketing.com>).

Other than that patient testimonial videos improve the Google ranking.

2.1.4 Social Media Optimization

Abbreviated as SMO, social media optimization is the process of increasing the awareness of a product, brand or event by using a number of social media outlets and communities to generate viral publicity (<http://www.webopedia.com>).

Social media optimization includes using RSS feeds, social news and bookmarking sites, as well as social media sites and video and blogging sites. SMO is similar to SEO (search engine optimization) in that the goal is to drive traffic to your Web site (<http://www.webopedia.com>).

Social media optimization has given businesses the opportunity to connect with their clients like never before. Whether you are building a community to support your customers or running a blog to keep the public informed, social media services can position your company at the forefront of this marketing opportunity (<http://www.thesocialdoctor.com>). Social media optimization is the latest and faster way of marketing done through social media such as blogs, community sites, video sharing sites etc. Today the popular sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube has more than five million visitors every day and are considered to be an important hub for marketing (<http://www.web3world.com>).

The fundamental idea behind social media is not new. Socializing with friends, family, sharing stories, spreading word of mouth referrals– has been occurring forever. Social media sites like Facebook and Twitter simply make the process of sharing easier. Social media allows consumers to be a part of the conversation. Now the public decides what ads to click on, what Facebook pages they want to follow, and which YouTube videos to watch. People now have interactive dialogue with a brand, instead of a company just talking to potential consumers (<http://www.thesocialdoctor.com>). With this interaction, people are more likely to convert, spread word of mouth, and build stronger relationships with brand.

Increased communication for organizations results in brand awareness and often, improved customer service. Additionally, social media serves as a relatively inexpensive platform for organizations to implement marketing campaigns (<http://mashable.com>).

Methods for incorporating SMO (<http://www.neuroseoservices.com>):

- Profile Incorporation on major social networking sites including LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter etc.
- Social Bookmarking
- Article Submission
- Press Release Submission
- RSS Feeds Submission

2.1.5 E-mail marketing:

Email Marketing, to many people strikes as an old-fashioned modality. More fashionable venues like social media and mobile marketing get all the attention, and some people believe that email marketing is dead.

Unfortunately, reality doesn't agree. In fact, studies reflect that with a strong content marketing approach, email is more powerful than ever thanks to social media. The reason sighted is that it moves the conversation about the product/services a business has to offer, to a more personal and serious environment — the In-box.

Email provides the most direct line of communication for conversion to sales ... which is why the most savvy online marketers have no intention of giving it up any time soon. However with the increase in awareness regarding e-mailers and related resources, the in-box has become a fierce battleground for the subscribers' attention.

Opt-in email marketing is an excellent way of promoting products, services and events to customers, business prospects, members and suppliers who have explicitly requested to receive such email messages (<http://www.lsoft.com>).

Email marketing can reach a wide audience in a short period of time and allows recipients to immediately act on messages. Campaigns can be implemented and executed with only minimal software, hardware and personnel investments. Email marketing is much more cost-effective than traditional direct mail marketing, banner ads or telemarketing where additional fees are incurred. Email marketing allows links to be embedded in messages, which drives website traffic. Regularly delivered email messages with proper subject lines and logos reinforce company and product awareness. Email creates an interactive connection and nurtures quality customer relations. Email marketing and sales campaigns can be measured in detail through open-up, click-through and conversion rates to evaluate

the success of campaigns. The data allows marketers to adjust strategies to improve future results (<http://www.lsoft.com>).

The success of any email marketing program depends on genuinely compelling content. It's also amazingly cost-effective. With an ROI of around 4,300% (according to the Direct Marketing Association), email practically pays for itself ... and saves a tree or two. It's what you use when you want to move from "conversation to commerce."

2.1.6 Search Engine Registration:

Search engine marketing (SEM) or Search Engine Registration or is a form of internet marketing that involves the promotion of websites by increasing their visibility in search engine results pages (SERPs) through advertising.

In brief Pay Per Click is a type of sponsored online advertising that is used on a wide range of websites, including search engines, where the advertiser only pays if a web user clicks on their ad. Hence the title, 'pay per click.' PPC advertising works like a silent auction. Advertisers place bids on keywords or phrases that they think their target audience would type in a search field when they are looking for specific goods or services. When a web user types a search query into the field of a search engine that matches the advertiser's keyword list or visits a web page with content that correlates to the keywords or phrases chosen by the advertiser, the PPC ad may be displayed on the page. In search engines, a PPC ad is generally just above or to the right of the search results where they can be easily seen. On other kinds of websites, the ad will be placed in the location that the site designer has determined will be the most advantageous to his site and the advertiser (<http://www.brickmarketing.com>).

Overall, PPC ads are beneficial to advertisers and web users alike. Advertisers get noticed by their target audience and are charged only for the times that their ads are clicked on and web users get to select from sites that may be relevant to the page they are viewing without having to deal with obnoxious banner or pop-up ads that flash and distract. A small, web-savvy company can, with a limited budget, outbid much larger companies with enormous advertising budgets and gain the edge they need to get noticed in their market.

2.1.7 Forum and Blog Commenting

Forum marketing is a great way to make your online business stand out from the crowd. Forum users are generally net savvy and open to making online purchases. Many forum users are also respected experts and bloggers in the specific topics covered by the forum. Blogs and forums are still popular online channels for reaching out to your target audience and attracting new customers. Plus they have the added bonus of boosting your online profile as well as improving your search engine page ranking (<http://www.searchenginexperts.com.au/seo-services/blogs-forums-marketing>).

Blog Marketing

Blogs are considered an integral part of an online marketing strategy. Use them to influence the conversation, become a thought leader, encourage consumer engagement or broaden your market. The marketers can help you create a blog marketing strategy that allows the organization or individual to engage in conversations with their customers while improving the website's search engine rank.

Forum Marketing

Forums are an effective way to boost online presence. Forums are populated with net savvy users, bloggers and experts who are active communicators and networkers. Making regular valuable contributions on forums with such influential audiences will get the brand noticed, boost its credibility and generate good will.

2.2 Evaluating Online Marketing Strategies: Websites

Google Analytics: **Google Analytics (GA)** is a service offered by Google that generates detailed statistics about a website's traffic and traffic sources and measures conversions and sales. The product is aimed at marketers as opposed to webmasters and technologists from which the industry of web analytics originally grew (<http://www.google.com/analytics/>).

GA analysis can identify poorly performing pages with techniques such as funnel visualization, where visitors came from (referrers), how long they stayed and their geographical position. It also provides more advanced features, including custom visitor segmentation.

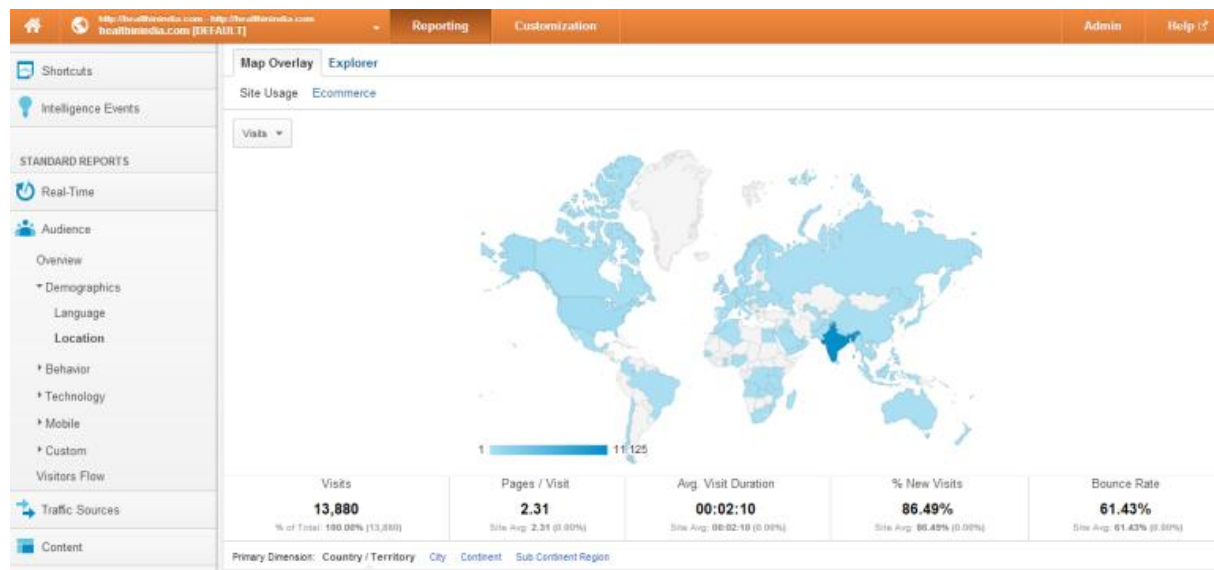


Figure 1

Google analytics can be used for a variety of purposes (<http://support.google.com>):

- **Tracking multiple websites**

Google Analytics will track as many websites as one owns! We've provided multiple profiles in your account, so you can view individual reports for specific domains or subdomains.

- **Tracking your blog, MySpace, or Facebook pages**

To use Google Analytics to track your pages on Facebook, MySpace, WordPress or other solutions, we recommend that you search for 3rd-party widgets that simplify the Analytics set up for pre-defined site templates. You may not be able to use Analytics on sites where you cannot edit the page code (such as on MySpace, for example). However, often you will be able to find plugins or widgets that will help you use Analytics in your page.

- **Tracking visits from RSS feeds**

In order for Google Analytics to track data, it is necessary that the Google Analytics tracking code gets executed. Since most RSS/atom readers cannot execute JavaScript, Analytics will not count pageviews that are loaded through an RSS reader. Analytics requires that the visitor execute a JavaScript file on Google's servers in order to track that pageview.

- **Using Analytics with other web analytics solutions**

The marketing team can run Google Analytics in parallel with any third-party or internal solution you've already deployed.

2.3 Rationale of the study

Online media has revolutionarized marketing in a big way. Its success in non-healthcare industries is evident. However, there is a difference that exists between the product oriented and service oriented industries. The healthcare industry within the service based industry is a classic example.

Online marketing is a recent marketing tool however; the objectives that can be achieved from it are still hidden. The financial implications seem to cause a barrier in achieving those. For many of the healthcare providers, Social media optimization, Search Engine Optimization, Cross-linking and Hyper-linking, website content and use of keywords are still unheard of.

Untill now, international and national studies have been conducted to know what benefits an organization reaps from web based marketing. However, no study has tried to explore what the clients foresee from the concept of web-based marketing.

The study “Issues, Challenges and Strategies in Online Marketing” aims at analyzing the healthcare professional’s perspective and expectations that from web-based marketing and also to understand how feasible it is to indulge in online marketing considering its impact on revenue generation.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Author name: Mr. Kartik Raichura

Internet As A Marketing Tool

Internet has brought with it a very high degree of control to the media user. Not only are there a plethora of sites catering to every imaginable need, there is also a high degree of flexibility in what the user is able to do. All of this makes Internet a highly interactive media but also an expensive one. If the internet is treated and used exactly like any other medium, it is unlikely to yield major benefits to the marketer. Its effectiveness is dependent not only on the target audience one is talking to, but also largely on the ability of the marketer to make use of the real advantages of the Net like interactivity, flexibility, ability to monitor and the like. Next, one can also evaluate Internet as a media from the marketers' point of view by way of a similar classification. A main advantage of the Internet is its self-generating advantage. By allowing visitors to interact with each other and with the site, they create content for the site. All this will help build a relationship with the customer and it will ultimately help the marketer to achieve his objectives. Internet has opened up new avenues for reaching the consumer. It is true that there is never a fixed way or strategy that a marketer can use to market its products and services on the internet but it is still very much an arena where creative thinking can take the company reach new heights. Thus we can say that marketing has not changed its shape. It is the same, unpredictable, unusual and creative field that needs constant change and open inputs that can work wonders for the company.

2. Author name: Alfa Shima and Mona Varfan

Traditional marketing vs. Internet marketing: A comparison

Marketing is an important strategy for businesses and it contains numerous effective tools. Traditional marketing has been in use for many years and nowadays Internet has brought new ways of doing business for companies and that has affected marketing. What are the main differences between Internet marketing and traditional marketing? Which one of the two approaches contains the most used and effective marketing tools according to chosen companies in this thesis?

The aim of this study is to compare traditional marketing and Internet marketing and show the differences of characteristics between them. And to find out what marketing tools are effective for some chosen companies in the fashion industry.

The information gathered in this study was obtained through qualitative research from textbooks, websites, articles and interviews. Some quantitative data such as statistics were also gathered. The authors conducted interviews with few companies operating in the fashion industry to collect information needed for the analysis in this study

By analysing different aspects of theory, comparison and interview answers, the authors came to a conclusion. Using the advantages of both Internet marketing and traditional marketing according to the goals of the company, is considered to be the most effective way of marketing. Comparing the two approaches, Internet seemed to be a complementary tool to traditional marketing.

3. Author name: Steve Latham

A Case Study in Online Marketing ~ Barbados Fertility Centre

The Barbados Fertility Centre (BFC) is one of many providers of fertility services seeking to distinguish itself on a global stage, namely among patients in the U.S. Led by Dr. Juliet Skinner, BFC had established itself as a leading provider of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) services. BFC just needed an effective way to reach and engage its target audiences.

While there is no silver bullet in online marketing, the BFC campaign demonstrates that with solid planning, execution and measurement, combined with a good story to tell, health care providers of all sizes can leverage the Web and digital media to grow their practice. Remember the proverb “measure twice, cut once” and you too can be successful in this rapidly growing medium.

4. Author name: Shepherd CD, Fell D

Hospital marketing and the Internet: the adoption of an innovation

Given the manner in which the Internet permeates today's society, it is easy to forget that the Internet as we know it is only about a decade old. Due to its newness, the Internet has provided an opportunity to view the manner in which marketers move to adopt such an

innovation. To that end, since 1995 a series of studies has tracked the adoption and use of the Internet by hospital marketers. In addition to simply investigating the number of hospitals that utilize the Internet in their marketing efforts, the studies have addressed such questions as: How are hospitals using the Internet to market themselves?, What roadblocks have held hospitals back from adopting the Internet as a marketing tool?, and How happy are hospitals with their Internet investment? This manuscript details the most recent in this series of research studies. In addition, the authors compare the results of this study, conducted in the fall of 2002, with the results from the previous studies. As a result, this study provides a unique opportunity to observe the actual adoption of an innovation, the Internet, by hospital marketing professionals.

5. Author name: Anmol Wankhade

Web Search Optimization and Internet Marketing

This project consists of ample information on the wide range of aspects covered under the heading of Internet Marketing. The scope of this project includes everything right from explaining the basic concept of Internet Marketing, to the role it plays to different people. Internet Marketing is an all-inclusive term for marketing products and/or services online. It refers to the strategies that are used to market a product or service online, marketing strategies that include search engine optimization and search engine submission, copywriting that encourages site visitors to take action, web site design strategies, online promotions, reciprocal linking, and email marketing.

Marketers are constantly devising new Internet marketing strategies in the hopes of driving more traffic to their Web sites and making more sales, witness the increasing use of blogs as marketing tools for business, for Marketer It is all about informing people how our product or service could save them time... save them money... reduce Stress in their lives... help them to improve their relationships, etc....

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

General Objective: To identify the awareness, issues and challenges with respect to Online Marketing.

Specific Objectives:

1. To assess the awareness amongst the healthcare professionals about web-based marketing
2. To enumerate the activities undertaken for internet marketing
3. To evaluate their needs from online marketing
4. To assess the awareness regarding the implications of online marketing
5. To analyze what impact does online marketing have on the revenue generation.
6. To enumerate what challenges do they face while practicing online marketing

5. METHODOLOGY

Study Area

This study is focussed on the healthcare facilities and professionals in Gurgaon.

Study Design

Cross Sectional and Exploratory Study

A cross sectional study is the study that describes the situation just as it exists without any manipulation of the variables. Other Characteristics of cross sectional studies are:

- Takes place at a single point in time
- Allows the researcher to analyze various parameters at once

An exploratory study is undertaken when not much is known about the situation at hand or no information is available. It is undertaken to better comprehend the nature of the problem since very few studies might have been considered in that area.

Sampling Method and Population

The sampling population was selected using the convenient sampling method. The population includes Administrators, Owners and marketing executives of various Healthcare facilities which includes hospitals, clinics and diagnostic centres.

Individual Doctors also were included in the sampling population.

(Annexure-B)

Since the study type is exploratory, it was important to gather information from individuals with varied profiles.

Data Collection Tools

Primary data collection - In-depth Interview schedule (annexure 1)

6. ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Indian Health Consultants (IHC) is a group of professionals with in depth knowledge of the healthcare industry.

The team members at IHC have been instrumental and the pillar behind the successful establishment of two of the major hospitals in Gurgaon viz. Artemis Health Institute & Paras Hospital. In both the hospitals, Mr. Kuldeep Chaudhary, along with the team, played the key role as Head of Sales & Marketing Department. Apart from the team has a rich experience in the fields of diagnostics, health insurance & research based projects.

Today IHC with the pool of professionals with expertise knowledge in their respective fields is attracting the best talent from the field of Healthcare and are growing by leaps and bounds due to their cost effective and long lasting health care solutions.

Vision

Our Vision is to make our clients businesses profitable, to provide them sustainable, cost effective and easy to implement solutions. We intend to be the most favoured partners for healthcare providers across the globe.

Mission

Our mission is to create an organization where each employee feels satisfied, works in the area of their choice and takes responsibilities which they relish, decide how much they want to earn and how much time they want to work. The idea is to create a platform where there are no bosses and no employees just a group of talented professionals having the same vision as of the organization.

Services offered

1. Sales, Marketing & PR

Almost all the functions of the department of marketing such as tariff lists, empanelment with various Insurance companies, TPA's, Governmental organizations, Public Sector Undertakings, rate negotiations, organizing activities such as camps, CME's, talks, presence in the media, referral associations, tie-ups with other healthcare facilities, international patients facilitation & complete management, web based publicity etc. We also undertake the collection of money due from the various empanelled organizations. We recruit, train and manage the marketing teams on behalf of our clients. The marketing budget is spent in correlation to the results accruing to the client.

2. Medical Tourism

IHC has a large base of facilitators who provide us patients from different countries. The choice of doctor / hospital and the cost of treatment is communicated by us to the partners and the entire facilitation of the patient ranging from assistance in travel documents, travel arrangements, pick-up from the airport, local travel, currency exchange, stay arrangements outside the hospital, special food requirements, interpreter services etc are taken care by us. We manage the complete international patient desk of the hospitals and facilitate the patients inside and outside the hospital.

3. Operations, Quality & Accreditation

CGHS has already mandated that all the hospitals empanelled for the treatment of their beneficiaries are required to get NABH & NABL accreditations before the end of this year. Similarly in order to get the international patients in good numbers a hospital has to get JCI accreditation.

We provide complete solution for these accreditations. We provide solutions for getting various statutory approvals & licenses for the hospitals. We assist the clients in identifying and implementing the right kind of IT solutions both in terms of hardware and software. We help in making a good Annual Plan with industry

benchmarking. We also assist our clients in setting and measuring the various quality parameters in the deliverance of healthcare and implement standard operating procedures in the processes of supply chain management, vendor selection, price negotiations with suppliers thereby bringing the costs down and improving operational margins.

4. HR, Finance & Project Management

We provide help in procuring funds from the banks, financial institutions and also assist in getting equity based funding. We understand that in the long run, it is the Doctor that helps in establishing the brand in the market and hence it becomes imperative for any hospital to have good doctors in place. We provide quality manpower in the fields of medicine, nursing, para-medical and other functions. We provide consultancy in getting professional courses like the DNB and arranging training for employees both medical & non-medical. We assist in tie ups with various sources of manpower supply such as medical schools, nursing colleges and para-medical institutions.

We conduct market research for setting up new projects and offer assistance in defining the product, selection of equipments and the level of investments.

5. Health Insurance

We offer solutions in the field of Health Insurance both for individual and corporate clients. Our solutions are not only limited to the selling of health insurance policies but we cater to the needs of our clients for advising them about the right doctors & hospitals for various ailments, provide facilitation at the various hospitals for getting cashless hospitalization and ensuring that they get the right treatment at the right place. Our deep knowledge of the healthcare industry gives us the strength to get the best for our clients.

6. Online Marketing

We have an array of online solutions to suit our clients. Ranging from creation of websites to web based promotions and Social Media Optimisation through various stories, blogs and discussions, the options available are galore. The deep insight on how internet can be utilized to maximum advantage enables us to carry out the task perfectly.

7. REFLECTIVE LEARNINGS

I have been fortunate to have been associated with Indian Health Consultants. My tenure with the organization began from 1st January, 2013. With the exposure and training in the organization, I can now relate my learning's with the subject of Healthcare Marketing.

For the first 15 days in the organization, I was involved in observation and assimilation of the various operational activities in the organization. I was also briefed about the various projects undertaken by IHC. I learnt about the healthcare status of the city and how the market has grown over the past few years.

After the training and orientation, I was made in-charge of individual client's. The following days involved understanding the clients profile and meeting with the same. My work so far has been associated with the online marketing of various hospitals and clinicians. I got an insight into what web-based marketing means and the kind of work associated with it including search engine optimization, search engine listing, social media marketing, etc.

An extensive use of the evaluating tools gave me a glimpse of the leaders in the market.

Apart from that I have been associated with branding activities, writing articles in newsletters, event management. Meetings and interaction with the healthcare providers have made me confident and improved my inter personal skills.

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

I. Awareness regarding Online Marketing

Excerpts:

“We do have a website of our hospital. We made it in the year 2010 and the updation is done by the marketing consultants.”

- (*Administrator of 70 bedded hospital*)

“Yes, website is the first face or the opening pitch of any organization. Now days, any business needs website.”

- (*Marketing executive, 200 bedded hospital*)

“We just do online marketing and that is outsourced. Of course there is support from the hospital marketing as well but it is not very substantial.”

- (*IVF specialist*)

“At present we have a large number of patients coming to us... we are already short of resources, that is the reason why we do not involve ourselves in websites and everything else... Once we are able to receive more funds, we might consider it. ”

- (*Administrator, Charitable clinic*)

“Yes, we do have a website. I got it made from an external source that make websites... making websites for healthcare players is a tough job. It has been more than 03 years that we have been online”

- *(Radiologist and Owner of a Diagnostic chain)*

“I got my website made about 2 years back...”

- *(Cardiothoracic surgeon)*

“Our new centre just opened in the city...that is when we decided we could go ahead with the website. At the same time, we also decided to promote our centre through face book. We announced our inauguration on our face book page.”

- *(Manager, Skin and laser centre)*

“I got my website recently made”

- *(Administrator of 70 bedded hospital)*

Discussion:

Out of all the healthcare professionals interviewed approx 10% denied of having practiced any online activity. Also, it has been noticed that mostly online marketing for them was focussed upon creating and managing the website.

II. Online practices or activities opted by Health care professionals and Hospital

Excerpts:

“We have clear demarcation between Marketing and Sales. The sales team is in house and report in to me. There are two sales executives and they are involved in referral sales only. Institutional sales and Marketing is outsourced. They take care of all the website, logo, signages, banners and communications part.”

- *(Administrator of 100 bedded hospital)*

“Activities such as sharing publications and articles, social media as a medium, blogging and interaction with the masses are some of the activities we do on a regular basis.”

- *(Marketing executive, 200 bedded hospital)*

“Marketing of IVF India centre is only through Online... the marketing consultant only does the keyword checking for the site. I generally don't get much time to go through the site but make sure to check on the posts in FB once a week.”

- *(IVF specialist)*

“We can do it through website, Google, face book, ad listing on Just dial, etc.”

- *(Radiologist and Owner of a Diagnostic chain)*

“We have got the SEO of the website done on 5 keywords relevant to our business and specialties. Facebook is not very much used by us and reason is just the lack of time.”

- *(General Manager of 70 bedded hospital)*

“We do almost all activities advised to us by our team... we sent e-mailers to our prospective customers along with special discounts... We also have groups on face book on which we post regularly... we recently thought of writing articles about the procedures and their success rates...We also upload pictures and videos of satisfied patients on our website”

- (Manager, Skin and laser centre)

“I recently got a video shoot done for one rare surgery that I performed on an international patient...I got a lot of appreciation for it on you-tube”

- (Cardiothoracic surgeon)

	Doctors	Specialty Clinics	Diagnostic Centers	Tertiary hospital	Super specialty hospital
Website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ad listing		✓	✓	✓	
FB posts	✓		✓		✓
Articles and Blogs					✓
Keywords/ ranking				✓	
Video Promotion	✓	✓			

Table 1: Online activities opted by healthcare providers

Discussion:

Web- based marketing for most of the respondents meant creating websites and face book promotion. Very few said that they were practicing promotion through e-mails and listing on various search engines. The teams who were well-versed with the various tools in the domain of internet marketing were

also indulging in activities such as blogs and discussion forums along with search engine listing and advertising. Some also revealed the practice of sharing patient testimonial on YouTube and their websites.

III. Reasons for opting for Online Marketing

Excerpts:

“When we started this hospital marketing was never in our mind because we used to get patients through our relationships only. However with growing competition Marketing became imperative and that is when we decided to outsource it.... We felt that these are computer literate people and can be benefitted through information on website. Another reason was TPA empanelments which we wanted to get for our hospital and it was very clear that a well made website would always be helpful in getting the empanelments easily... We manage the sales but along with that consultancy, we are basically involved in rural marketing activities, ads in newspaper, in house camps etc”

- *(Administrator of 100 bedded hospital)*

“At present we have three independent centres and several collection centre employing about 100 people... I used to meet people who asked me...do you have a website? And I got tired of saying- no!!”

- *(Owner of dental clinic)*

“At present we have a large number of patients coming to us... we are already short of resources, that is the reason why we do not involve ourselves in websites and everything else...”

- *(Administrator, Charitable clinic)*

“Of course there is no doubt that marketing does help and organisation grow. But in our case it is more of years of trust in the hospital that is fetching us

patients.....We have a website of our hospital. It was basically created to enhance our marketing programme and also to add a virtual asset to the hospital so that our hospital can stand in the league of modern hospitals.”

- *(General Manager of 70 bedded hospital)*

“I have created it to facilitate patients who are net savvy and are looking for options such as online appointment and test reporting etc. Today the availability of time to the customer is a problem both for taking an appointment and then receiving a report...”

- *(Radiologist and Owner of a Diagnostic chain)*

“Activities such as online marketing, publications, social media, participating in conferences and trade shows are the avenues for query generation.”

- *(Manager, Skin and laser centre)*

“Internet would play a vital role in the marketing of health services, majority of the educated population is on the internet these days hence it’s a platform where healthcare can be promoted and awareness generated... website provides people or clients an easy access to look for the details of our centre and the kind of work that we do.”

- *(Marketing executive, 200 bedded hospital)*

“The purpose of getting my website made was simple; I wanted people to know about me, my specialization. With medical tourism on the rise and online consultations, it started getting necessary to go on the web and be searchable. I feel the web will soon take over the concept of word-to-mouth marketing..... I wanted my website to serve the purpose of research. In cardio-thoracic surgery, there are many challenging cases that one operates upon. I wanted to share my experiences.”

Discussion:

After having met the stakeholders who were/weren't interested in web based marketing and interviewing them, it was seen that, their expectations varied. Possible reasons for this varied response could be the scale of the organization they own or are employed under and the profile of the organization. For e.g. the needs and expectations of a practicing doctor are different to those of a doctor who owns a diagnostic centre.

The most common expectations that could be listed after analyzing the responses are as follows:

- ✓ Health education and awareness
- ✓ Get empanelments
- ✓ Maintaining web presence and brand positioning
- ✓ Enabling the end-user to contact them to generate queries
- ✓ Adding into baseline revenue
- ✓ Providing accessibility to online reports
- ✓ Medical tourism

Parameters \ Profile	Doctors	Speciality clinics *	Diagnostic centres	Super speciality hospital **	Tertiary care hospitals ***
Awareness & education	✓			✓	
Web presence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Query generation					
Online Reporting			✓		
Brand positioning	✓			✓	
Procure empanelments					✓
Medical tourism	✓	✓		✓	

Table 2: Reasons for opting for Online Marketing

*- Dental and cosmetic centres

** - Hospital with bed strength more than 100

*** - Hospital with bed strength less than 100

IV. Awareness about implications of web-based marketing

Excerpts:

“We keep getting queries from the website. As a matter of fact we have got more than 40 patients through website in last one year.”

- *(Administrator of 70 bedded hospital)*

“We get almost 25-30 queries per month. This definitely adds up to the revenue baseline. Besides, simple queries can now be addressed online without the involvement of a telephone call or a visit.”

- *(Radiologist and Owner of a Diagnostic chain)*

“We keep getting queries from the website. My centre is a virtual brand but is slowly becoming an internationally acclaimed brand as we keep getting queries from so many international patients.”

- *(IVF specialist)*

“For me, patients are the biggest benefit. That way I increase my revenue. We also get patient queries from the website... many TPA's have done our empanelment in very less time.”

- *(Administrator of 100 bedded hospital)*

“I was told that my name can appear in the first few entries on Google search, when a person finds me on the internet”

- (*Cardiothoracic surgeon*)

Discussion:

After analysing the discussion with the respondents, it was seen that in maximum number of cases, the awareness regarding implications could be weighed at par with the expectations they had with online marketing. The only attractive and exciting implication that the respondents seemed to have was related to query generation that added to the revenue figures.

- V. Client’s understanding of terms like Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Social Media Optimization (SMO), Search Engine Registration (SER) and Google Analytics

Excerpts:

“I definitely know about listing on the internet like JD, asklaila, and all, but I am not aware about the Analytics”

- (*Administrator of 100 bedded hospital*)

“Yes I know about the keywords and query generation. I do not know Search Engine listing or Google analytics. However, I receive a report from the web designing company from time to time about the status of the website.”

- (*Cardiothoracic surgeon*)

“We have got the SEO of the website done on 5 keywords relevant to our business and specialties along with ad on JD (just dial). Face book is not very much used by us and reason is just the lack of time.”

- (*General Manager of 70 bedded hospital*)

“I am not aware about the Analytics thing... What is that?”

- (*Manager, Skin and laser centre*)

“We were told by our website maker about a few keywords and the possible calls or queries (like you say), that we would get if our website is in the first few on Google. Is that what Google analysis means? ”

- (*Owner of dental clinic*)

“I know about SEO and query generation online because that is only thing that fetches me business.”

- (*IVF specialist*)

Discussion:

After a thorough discussion with the sample population, it was seen that:

- Those interested and practicing online marketing knew about Search Engine Optimization and the use of keywords.
- Most of them were using social media like face book, twitter and LinkedIn to promote their business but unaware of the term, ‘Social Media Optimization’.

- Search Engine Listing came across to be synonymous to Ad listing on Just Dial for all those interviewed. However, search engine listing means more than that. There are more than hundred search engines who cater to the masses providing information about products/services.

It was seen that SER was a common practice for smaller setups (50-100 bedded hospitals) and speciality clinics. The administrators/ owners have been paying the listing agencies like Justdial, India mart, Ask Laila, etc to feature amongst the top 5 entries, unaware of the fact that such activities can be conducted free of cost too. The larger hospitals and individual doctors relied more on the SEO.

Only the respondents whose profile matched to those of marketing executives knew about Google Analytics, the rest of the sample population was unaware regarding the same.

VI. Impact of Online Marketing on revenue generation

Excerpts:

“We are an aesthetic centre and the website affects the functioning of our centre in a big way. We receive maximum number of patients from the website. At the same time we are also spending a lot in maintenance of this website. I think it is about ‘give and take’”.

- *(Manager, Skin and laser centre)*

“I think our hospital can attribute a total of 5% of its total revenue generation to website and other online activities.”

- *(Marketing executive, 200 bedded hospital)*

“Eversince I got my website up and running, I received a lot of queries from India and abroad, mainly, the United States. However, I along with my team could not convert any of those to a major procedure. So as of now, I can only attribute 1% of my revenue to the website.”

- *(Cardiothoracic surgeon)*

“My diagnostic center makes up a huge amount through referrals. Online activity contributes to around 3% of revenue that we make.”

- *(Radiologist and Owner of a Diagnostic chain)*

“Being an IVF specialist, I get a large number of international patients. Out of 100 patients, the break up is 50% referrals, 30% direct and 20% through the website. My team has done a superb job with the website. For me, the website has been a huge advantage.”

- *(IVF specialist)*

“When we started indulging in marketing for our hospital, we drew more revenue than what we had invested into the online activity.”

- *(Administrator of 70 bedded hospital)*

Discussion:

It has been inferred that even though the respondents were unsure about the benefits they could reap from web-based marketing, they were able to draw a considerable amount of revenue through the same. The majority of revenue generation ranged from 0% to 20%. Reasons for such variance can be as a result of the kind of services they have to offer. For e.g. In case of an aesthetic centre which offers guarded services, people rely on online search, whereas in case of a practicing surgeon, the people’s perception is based on referrals. Healthcare providers that have understood the psyche of the end-user are making the most out of online marketing. At the same time, healthcare

providers who haven't understood the end-user behaviour are trying hard to gain benefits from web marketing.

VII. Challenges that the healthcare provider faces while handling online marketing.

Excerpts:

“The problems are mainly due to need for continuous changes such as quick updation or addition of new information.”

- *(Administrator of 70 bedded hospital)*

“The updates that we want to be done on the website are generally not done in time as we forget to inform our vendor of the same. Second thing is the facebook promotion which is actually an activity that needs dedicated efforts from not only the marketing head but from the entire team, including the doctors. But somehow I feel they do not have that kind of orientation.”

- *(Radiologist and Owner of a Diagnostic chain)*

“The biggest challenge that I face is the lack of time to have a look at the website on a regular basis and inform my vendor about the updates that need to be incorporated. Also I am not very active on facebook and stuff so leading from the front on facebook is not there. ”

- *(Manager, Skin and laser centre)*

“Not exactly. Just that I attend so many conferences and events but I hardly get time to update them on my website unlike my other competitors.”

- *(IVF specialist)*

“If the hospitals or a doctors name is splattered across the web, one won't be able to erase all traces of the bad stories published.”

- *(Cardiothoracic surgeon)*

Discussion:

It was seen that the biggest problem while maintaining the website was related to the lack of sound technical knowledge. Also, website handling is a real-time and dedicated activity, one has to keep pace with the newer strategies (websites vis-a-vis mobile websites), to ensure their web presence. One of the most important de-merit pointed out by one of the respondent is that it is extremely difficult to get rid of any undesirable reports about the professional. Therefore, it is a tool which is a double edged sword.

VIII. Evaluation of the web- based marketing strategies

Excerpts:

“My evaluation of the website is simple, if I keep getting queries and patients then my website is working fine.”

- (*IVF specialist*)

“I go through the keyword ranking and content.”

- (*Radiologist and Owner of a Diagnostic chain*)

“See the idea of outsourcing was because I do not have much time to sit and check the website. I did all corrections when we made it. After that the consultant asks me for new matter and I give it to him.”

- (*Administrator of 70 bedded hospital*)

“I know that my website is good because I get patients who tell me that the website is very informative. What else is required other than that?”

- (*General Manager of Sethi hospital*)

“Through Google analytics, my team is able to tell me the status of the website in terms of number of visits and page views.”

- (*Marketing executive, 200 bedded hospital*)

“I check the content and get it rectified by the team who manages it.”

- (*Manager, Skin and laser centre*)

“In spite of my team telling me about how important it is to keep a check on the activities we do, the task lags behind because I am not able to devote that much time to evaluate the website or other things.”

- (*Cardiothoracic surgeon*)

Discussion:

It was seen that when it came to evaluation and assessment of the online activities, they relied more on the content updation and functionality. Very few of the respondents knew about Google Analytics that could be used as a tool for evaluation. The assessment of the online marketing was only restricted to websites whereas, the activities include a large number of components such as search engine listing, publishing advertisements, etc.

9. CONCLUSION

Healthcare is a service industry and its criticality must not be ignored. It has come out of the cocoon where it once dwelled.

Unlike the product based industry, healthcare does not come with specifications that can be displayed and sold. Healthcare players have been trying hard to stand out and position themselves in the consumer's mindset. The days are long gone when the patient would depend upon the expertise of the doctor with total reliance on his advice.

Strategies such as advertising, promoting and selling value based services are now being regularly used by all. However, the market leaders are now adopting newer tools to promote themselves.

Internet Marketing is gaining importance not only amongst the hospitals and clinics but also for the individual practitioners. Web based marketing is now being used as a tool not just for sales but also for positioning the brand in the minds of the people. Online Marketing provides a great platform to give the end-user a glimpse of the intangible healthcare services. More with the expectation to add 30 million new Internet users in 2013, and total Internet population touching 180mm, the promise which Internet marketing of products & services including Healthcare Services holds is immense.

The study explores the extent of this potential, however, those who have already started enjoying the attractive profit margins that E-Marketing brings; would vouch for it. There remains an untapped segment which needs awareness of the utilisation of this strong arm of marketing besides the conventional word of mouth Referral and direct marketing. Another aspect of this study analyses the reflection of online marketing in the minds of the people and reveals the challenges faced by the healthcare players. Technological incompetence and paucity of time emerged as the most prevalent.

10. STUDY LIMITATIONS

The limitations of the study are as follows:

1. Since this was an exploratory study, future research is needed to continue to develop an understanding about the practice of online marketing. Studies could be done on analysing the gaps between what is practiced and what more could be achieved.
2. The study was limited only to Gurgaon which is considered to be the medical hub now. However, similar studies must be conducted in various parts of the country to be able to generalize the findings.
3. Since the sampling technique used was convenience sampling, a possibility of bias cannot be ruled out.

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ANNEXURE -A

In Depth Interview Schedule for the client:

1. Please Tell me something about Yourself (background, total work experience and working in this organisation)
2. Please tell me your organisations (Size, activities, and scale of operations etc.)
3. How do you market your product/services Do you have a marketing division? if yes, What is its composition and what all activities it does? How does it affect the revenue generation and budget allocation?
4. What do you know about internet as a source of marketing_in health sector
5. Do you have a website for your company/hospital? If no. why? If yes, why did you get one created?
6. When did you get one made_and how do you update it
7. What kind of benefits you are getting out of your website?
8. Do you evaluate your website, if yes, how?
9. What did you do to promote your website?
10. Are you aware of the concept of keywords, query generation, search engine listing, Google analytics?
11. Do you think advertising and promoting business on social media is beneficial
12. Do you face challenge while handling your business website? if yes what are those?

ANNEXURE -B

Respondents Profiles:

1. A 100 bedded Multispecialty hospital located at Gurgaon, Haryana. The hospital offers high quality health services at affordable prices. It is promoted and led by renowned Laparoscopic & Cancer Surgeon, Dr. Vikram Singh who has accomplished the most complex and challenging surgeries in the last 15 years.
2. A 75 bedded multispecialty hospital located in the heart of Gurgaon. Being one of the oldest hospitals in the region, the hospital generates its main revenues from the loyalty of the patients and from patients looking for a hospital mainly on older part of Gurgaon. The hospital is headed by the couple Ortho-Gynae specialists
3. A chain of speciality dental centres located at Sector-56, Sector-14 and Sushant Lok, Gurgaon. The chain is promoted by a Maxillofacial Surgeon. The centre is fully equipped with state of the art infrastructure and managed by highly trained experts, provides contemporary dental care and complete oral rehabilitation.
4. A renowned Cardiac Surgeon of Repute presently working with Artemis Health Institute. The Highly Skilled and experienced surgeon has held various coveted portfolios at World famous Cardiac institutes. The surgeon specialises in complex cardiac surgeries and 60% of his patients are through Medical Tourism
5. An IVF Specialist heading the centre for In Vitro Fertilisation - IVF India at a premier Health Institute. She is considered one of the best IVF Specialists in India.
6. Diagnostic Centre & Research Centre is the Oldest Diagnostic Centre of Gurgaon. Adjudged the best Diagnostic Centre in Delhi- NCR for three years in a row, the centre always brings the best in diagnostic equipments and modalities for the patients. Headed by a renowned Radiologist, the centre is considered a benchmark

when it comes to Diagnostic Centres.

7. Skin and Laser Centre: This is a chain of cosmetic centre with 4 branches located at Chandigarh, Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Gurgaon. The Chain is headed by a Dermatologist, a name respectable among the doctors. Fully capable with all kinds of technology, the centre at Gurgaon tops all the competitors in the league.
8. A charitable dispensary located in Old Gurgaon has been catering to the population of Gurgaon for the last 15 years. Dependent on the Grants and funds from various sources including Corporates and Individuals, the dispensary sees a turnover of 100-120 patients per day.
9. A Superspecialty Hospital and one of the first biggest hospitals in the region. The hospital to its credit has many "firsts" in the region including First PET CT and First NABH Accredited Hospital in Gurgaon. The hospital has highly qualified staff and US board certified Doctors on board, a fact which draws many Medical Tourism patients on regular basis.
10. A specialist Orthopaedic and women's health centre providing a complete package of high quality care. The Clinic has highly skilled and experienced team of doctors offering the best service and aims to promote an active lifestyle for both men and women.

ANNEXURE- C

Interview 1

Nandini: Hello Sir. Good afternoon. How are you?

Dr: Hello... I am very well. Thank you.

Nandini: Sir, since when have you been working. Can you tell me something about your younger days?

Dr: Oh. It has been ages since I visited my childhood memories. I grew up with my family in a small town with my brothers. I was an intelligent boy and my father taught me just one thing 'hardwork pays'.

Nandini: When did you decide on becoming a doctor?

Dr: At that time and place where I lived, illness and diseases were frequent. I saw a lot of it around me. As I grew up I realized I needed to do my bit with my efforts. That was the first time I thought of choosing medicine as a profession.

Nandini: It must have been tough to achieve what you have. Where did you study medicine sir?

Dr: I did my MBBS from Medical College Rohtak. I also served in Indian Army for 5 yrs, Haryana Civil Medical Service for 1 year. Later I did my Radiology specialisation from Army Hospital Delhi Cantt.

Nandini: How long has it been with Modern Diagnostics?

Dr: I am running this diagnostic centre for last 28 years

Nandini: Tell me more about your setup. It must have expanded over the years.

Dr: Our diagnostic centre under the name and style of Modern Diagnostic & Research Centre was started in 1985. It has all the highest end modalities such as 3.0T MRI, Dual Source CT scan, Ultrasound and colour dopplers such as iE33, iU22 etc, in X-ray we have both DR as well CR, Mammography, OPG, BMD and a fully automatic lab having Real time PCR etc. We conduct regular CME programmes. At present we have three independent centres and several collection centre employing about 100 people.

Nandini: How do you market your product/services?

Dr: We do it through advertisements, CME programmes and directly meeting doctors in Gurgaon.

Nandini: and who does it for you?

Dr: I have a team of 4 people in my marketing team. They manage everything for the centre but what is important to me is the quality of work done and not what is done.

Nandini: How does it affect the revenue generation and budget allocation?

Dr: my diagnostic center makes up a huge amount through referrals. But online activity contributes to around 3% of revenue that we make.

Nandini: What do you know about internet as a source of marketing in health sector?

Dr: We can do it through website, google, face book, emailing etc.

Nandini: Do you have a website for your company/hospital? Why did you make one?

Dr: Yes, we do have a website. I have created it to facilitate patients who are net savvy and are looking for options such as online appointment and test reporting etc. Today the availability of time to the customer is a problem both for taking an appointment and then receiving a report. Both these facilities are available on the website and i am getting a good response from it.

Nandini: Who made it for you?

Dr: I got it made from an external source that make websites. I don't think marketing courses teach website designing. Also, making websites for healthcare players is a tough job. The content that needs to be put up on the site is technical. I had a lot of problem in getting the content put up. But finally when I got it made, I got a good response.

Nandini: When did you get it made?

Dr: It has been more than 03 years that we have been online.

Nandini: you mentioned that you had a tough time in getting the website made. What issues came up?

Dr: Initially updation was an issue because the person making the website was not from the same background; he was given an update in writing so that he could put it up. Immediate developments could not be uploaded and we have faced times where it would be days before any important information could be passed through the website.

Nandini: after all this, has the website been beneficial?

Dr: We get almost 25-30 queries per month. This definitely adds up to the revenue baseline. Besides, simple queries can now be addressed online without the involvement of a telephone call or a visit. My centre makes up a huge amount through referrals. Online contributes to around 3% of revenue that we make.

Nandini: Do you evaluate your website, if yes, how?

Dr: Yes I do evaluate my website as and when time permits. I go through the keyword ranking and content. Since in Healthcare, the Employee turnover is relatively high in gurgaon because it is expanding and new hospitals need staff, thus it is imperative to continuously update the same on the website in the list of doctors available. We also include newer laboratory tests by inclusion of a new machine which also needs a mention in the website.

Nandini: Are you aware of terms like keywords, query generation, search engine listing, Google analytics?

Dr: Yes I know about the keywords and query generation. I do not know Search Engine listing or Google analytics. However, I receive a report from the web designing company from time to time about the status of the website.

Nandini: What did you do to promote your website?

Dr: Our website is on 70 visits per day. The work with keywords was done by the designing company itself. I discussed what keywords I wanted and they promised me the top position on those keywords. They have done a good job, the benefits of which are appreciable to the added revenue to our business.

Nandini: Do you think advertising and promoting business on social media is beneficial

Dr: Definitely, promotion of the products and services have almost become a norm on Face book and other socialising media. If everyone is doing it, I should as well.

Nandini: Do you face challenge while handling your business website? If yes what are those?

Dr: The problems are mainly due to need for continuous changes such as quick updation or addition of new information. The updates that we want are generally not done in time as we forget to inform our vendor. Secondly, face book is an activity that needs dedicated efforts from not only the marketing head but also the entire team including doctors. But somehow, they do not have that kind of orientation.

Interview 2

Nandini: Please tell me something about yourself (background, total work experience and working in this organisation)

Respondent: I am an MBA in Marketing and before joining this Hospital I worked with American Express & Kotak Mahindra Banks. I am currently the General Manager of the hospital.

Nandini: Please tell me about your organisation.

Respondent: This is multi specialty hospital with 70 beds and it is headed by a doctor couple. We are one of the oldest hospitals and have a good patient base.

Nandini: About marketing

Respondent: Marketing at our hospital is more of referral, Online and corporate focussed. I personally look after the corporate and online part where as two other people look after the referral segment.

Nandini: How do you market your product/services? Do you have a marketing division? if yes, What is its composition and what all activities it does? How does it affect the revenue generation and budget allocation?

Respondent: We do not have a marketing division as such. As I told you that I personally head the marketing for the hospital apart from the general administration. Of course there is no doubt that marketing does help and organisation grow. But in our case it is more of years of trust in the hospital that is fetching us patients. Yes online marketing is

something that we started last year only and have been getting patients through the website. We outsourced it but I am the person responsible for it. When we started indulging in marketing, we drew more revenue than what we had invested into online activity.

Nandini: What do you know about internet as a source of marketing in health sector?

Respondent: Yes I know about the SEO and facebook marketing etc

Nandini: Do you have a website for your company/hospital? If no. why? If yes, why do have created it?

Respondent: Yes we do have a website of our hospital. It was basically created to enhance our marketing programme and also to add a virtual asset to the hospital so that the hospital can stand in the league of modern hospitals.

Nandini: When did you get one made and how do you update it

Respondent: We made it in the year 2012 and the updation is done by our vendor.

Nandini: What kind of benefits you are getting out of your website?

Respondent: We keep getting queries from the website. As a matter of fact we have got more than 40 patients through website in last one year.

Nandini: Do you evaluate your website, if yes, how?

Respondent: See the idea of outsourcing was because I do not have much time to sit and check the website. I did all corrections when we made it. After that the consultant asks me for matter and I give it to him.

Nandini: What did you do to promote your website?

Respondent: We have got the SEO of the website done on 5 keywords relevant to our business and specialties. Facebook is not very much used by us and reason is just the lack of time.

Nandini: Are you aware of the concept of keywords, query generation, search engine listing, and Google analytics?

Respondent: First three I definitely know but I am not aware about the Analytics thing.
What is that?

Nandini: Do you think advertising and promoting business on social media is beneficial?

Respondent: Yes it is, otherwise we wouldn't have got queries and patients online

Nandini: Do you face challenge while handling your business website? If yes what are those?

Respondent: the problems are mainly due to the need for continuous changes such as quick updation or addition of new information.

Interview 3

Nandini: Please Tell me something about yourself madam

Respondent: I am an Infertility Specialist having more than 14 years of experience in treatment of patients with infertility issues. I am the head of IVF India centre which is infact a Virtual Brand within Artemis Hospital Gurgaon.

Nandini: Please tell me something about your business

Respondent: This is a speciality clinic within the hospital. Hence we have complete range of diagnostic facility, IVF lab, Sperm Bank, Embryo Fertilisation chambers, IVF OT.

Nandini: what do you think about marketing?

Respondent: Marketing of our IVF centre is only through Online and a bit through CME and conferences. We have a very well promoted website that generates lot of queries and patients for the centre. Also what this online marketing and the virtual brand has done for us is that people have started recognizing me as the Head of IVF centre rather than just any other consultant.

Nandini: How do you market your product/services Do you have a marketing division? If yes, What is its composition and what all activities it does? How does it affect the revenue generation and budget allocation?

Respondent: We just do online marketing and that is outsourced. Of course there is support from the hospital marketing as well but it is not very substantial. I get many international patients, Out of 100 patients, the break up of revenue could be: 50 through referrals, 30- direct and 20- website.

Nandini: What do you know about internet as a source of marketing in health sector.

Respondent: Yes I know about the SEO and facebook marketing etc

Nandini: Do you have a website for your company/hospital? If no. why? If yes, why do have created it?

Respondent: Yes we do have a website of our centre. That is the only major source of our marketing. My team has done a superb job. For me, the website has been a huge advantage.

Nandini: When did you get one made and how do you update it?

Respondent: We made it in the year 2012 and the updation is done by our vendor. The marketing consultant only does the keyword checking for the site. I generally don't get much time to go through the site but make sure to check on the posts in FB once a week.

Nandini: What kind of benefits you are getting out of your website?

Respondent: We keep getting queries from the website. IVF Centre is a virtual brand but is slowly becoming an internationally acclaimed brand as we keep getting queries from so many international patients.

Nandini: Do you evaluate your website, if yes, how?

Respondent: My evaluation of the website is simple, if I keep getting queries and patients then my website is working fine.

Nandini: What did you do to promote your website?

Respondent: We have got the SEO of the website done. SMO is also being done.

Nandini: Are you aware of the concept of keywords, query generation, search engine listing, Google analytics?

Respondent: I just know about SEO and query generation online because that is only thing that fetches me business.

Nandini: Do you think advertising and promoting business on social media is beneficial?

Respondent: Yes it is, otherwise we wouldn't have got queries and patients online

Nandini: Do you face challenge while handling your business website? If yes what are those?

Respondent: Not exactly. Just that I attend so many conferences and events but I hardly get time to update them on my website unlike my other competitors.

Interview 4

Nandini: Please tell me something about yourself

Dr: I am a General, Laparoscopic & Cancer Surgeon by profession with experience of more than 15 years and 16000 surgeries. I am the proprietor of this Hospital.

Nandini: Please tell me your organisations

Dr: This is mainly a surgical and gynae set up with 125 beds and ours is the only hospital in Gurgaon City to have a modular OT and ICU.

Nandini: So with all these services, how do you make yourself aware to the general public?

Dr: That is very important now. We tried to handle promotions and ads but then outsourced it to a marketing consultancy. We manage the sales but along with that consultancy, we are basically involved in rural marketing activities, ads in newspaper, in house camps etc.

Nandini: Do you have a marketing team then in the hospital or is it just that consultancy? How does it affect the revenue generation and budget allocation?

Dr: When we started this hospital marketing was never in our mind because we used to get patients through our relationships only. However with growing competition Marketing became imperative and that is when we decided to outsource it. After proper marketing we have been getting lot of urban patients. We have clear demarcation between Marketing and Sales. The sales team is inhouse and report in to me. There are two sales executives and they are involved in referral sales only. Institutional sales and Marketing is outsourced to Health Consultants. They take care of all the website, logo, signages,

banners and communications part.

Nandini: What do you know about internet as a source of marketing in health sector.

Dr: Yes I know about the SEO and facebook marketing etc

Nandini: Do you have a website for your company/hospital? If no. why? If yes, why did you create it?

Dr: Yes we do have a website of our hospital. The website was created when we saw that we have started getting patient from Urban areas. We felt that these are computer literate people and can be benefitted through information on website. Another reason was TPA empanelments which we wanted to get for our hospital and it was very clear that a well made website would always be helpful in getting the empanelments easily.

Nandini: When did you get one made and how do you update it

Dr: We made it in the year 2010 and the updation is done by the marketing consultants.

Nandini: You mentioned that websites got you urban patients. Do you get some other benefits also?

Dr: For me, patients are the biggest benefit. That way I increase my revenue. We also get patient queries from the website. Apart from that many TPA's have done our empanelment in very less time.

Nandini: Do you check your website, if yes, how?

Dr: See the idea of outsourcing was because I do not have much time to sit and check the website. I did all corrections when we made it. After that the consultant asks me for new matter and i give it to him.

Nandini: What did you do to promote your website?

Dr: website was made after deciding on few keywords for which they told me the website will come on top on google. I made a facebook page also with our logo and pictures of the hospital and promotions were done on that. We post photos of any activity that we do like camps, famous doctor/surgery.

Nandini: So you said keywords. Do you know about search engine listing and google analytics?

Dr: I definitely know about listing on the internet like JD, asklaila, and all, but I am not aware about the Analytics thing.

Nandini: Do you think advertising and promoting business on social media is beneficial

Dr: Yes it is beneficial since our patients have been telling us good things about our website and have been receiving patients through website as well.

Nandini: Do you face challenge while handling your business website? If yes what are those?

Dr: my biggest challenge is the computer skills. Also I don't get a lot of time.

Interview 5

Nandini: Sir, Can you please tell me something about yourself. What is your background and work experience?

Dentist: I started this clinic a few years after I finished my MDS in Oral Surgery. I spent almost 10 years in learning the skills before I opened my first centre.

Nandini: Please tell me more about your clinic?

Dentist: At present we have three independent centres. And each centre is equipped with the best equipments. The staff too is very well trained for all types of treatment procedures.

Nandini: So how many dental chairs do you have at each centre?

Dentist: There are 2 chairs at each clinic. But I am planning to add more now.

Nandini: With so many dentists now, isn't it difficult to build up a practice. How do you manage to attract patients?

Dentist: Well, I think it is all about doing good work. If you treat the patient well, the patient will never stop coming to you.

Nandini: So you think that marketing does not help?

Dentist: No I didn't mean to say that. Marketing adds to the good work. But if you fool with patients, Marketing alone cannot do much.

Nandini: Do you do marketing for your clinics?

Dentist: Yes I do. We do advertising and some camps also.

Nandini: What about a website sir? Do you have one?

Dentist: Yes we do have a website. I used to meet people who asked me, 'do you have a website?' and I got tired of saying- no.

Nandini: Did you make it?

Dentist: No (laughs) we got it made from a website designer.

Nandini: Is there any other online activity that you do?

Dentist: No. nothing else.

Nandini: Do you know anything about Search engine optimization, Social media optimization and Google Analytics?

Dentist: We were told by our website maker about a few keywords and the possible calls or queries (like you say), that we would get if our website is in the first few on Google. Is that what Google analysis means?

Nandini: No sir that is SEO.

Nandini: So do you get any queries from the website?

Dentist: We do get queries for appointments but the patients don't reach our clinic. Our website maker said that it takes time.

Nandini: So do you check on the website?

Dentist: No, I really don't get the time. I tell my website maker to keep checking.

Nandini: Do you face challenge while handling your business website? If yes what are those?

Dentist: I really do not have the time to handle my website. Once I get the time, maybe I will know more about challenges.

Interview 6

Nandini: Good morning sir. How are you?

Doctor: Good morning Dr Nandini. I am very well, thank you.

Nandini: You keep very busy. How is your practice running?

Doctor: Oh yes. That is by God's grace, I get a lot of patients. People know me now.

Nandini: That is a very good thing sir. In today's times when there are so many hospitals and doctors, patients have a lot of options to choose from?

Doctor: well yes you are very right. To keep up with this competition, it is very important to keep doing something new, so that you are noticed.

Nandini: So what 'new' things do you do?

Doctor: I try and do as much as I can. I recently did a very rare surgery on an international patient and I wanted to let people know about that, so I got the video shoot done and uploaded on YouTube. I also do a lot of interaction with my patients to make sure they don't feel stuck up and neglected. Also, I want people to know about me and my specialization.

Nandini: Wow that is interesting. Can I also see that link on YouTube?

Doctor: sure.. I'll give you the link. Otherwise you can search on YouTube from my name. I think it will show then.

Nandini: hmmm.. Sir, I see that you are quite aware about search and uploading. Do you have any website also?

Doctor: Yes, I do. I got it made recently about 2 years back.. You see with medical tourism on the rise and online consultations, it started getting necessary to go on the web and be searchable. Also, I wanted to contribute to research.

Nandini: Research? Why research.

Doctor: well... I am a Cardiac surgeon and in Cardio-thoracic surgery, there are many challenging cases that one operates upon. I wanted to share my experiences. That is why I wanted my website to serve the purpose of research.

Nandini: Like the video, do you do anything else on the internet to get noticed?

Doctor: No... Not really but I thought the video was a very good thing to do. I got a lot of appreciation for it on YouTube.

Nandini: Okay... so do you know about Social Media Optimization, or Keywords.

Doctor: ya, I know about keywords and queries generation. My website designer told me (laughing). They even told me that my name can appear in the first few entries on Google search, when a person finds me on the internet.

Nandini: How about Search engine listing and Google Analytics?

Doctor: No... I do not know about these.

Nandini: So how do you evaluate your website?

Doctor: Uhhh In spite of my team telling me about how important it is to keep a check on the activities we do, the task lags behind because I am not able to devote that much time to evaluate the website... However, I receive a report from the web designing company from time to time about the status of the website.

Nandini: you seem to be satisfied with the work your company has done on the website. Are you happy?

Doctor: That is difficult to say because even though my website is on the top and ever since I got my website up and running, I received a lot of queries from India and abroad. However, I along with my team could not convert any of those to a major procedure.

Nandini: from what other countries did you get queries?

Doctor: mainly, the United States

Nandini: ok. So do you generate any revenue from the web?

Doctor: Like I told you, as of now, I can only attribute 1% of my revenue to the website.

Nandini: You think that online marketing has any negative aspects also.

Doctor: well yes, I am a doctor and If my hospital's or a doctor's name is splattered across the web, one won't be able to erase all traces of the bad stories published. I even told my team about this... but they said they would handle it in case it ever happens.

Nandini: That will get in some ethical work on the other side though and besides you are a very successful surgeon; your name won't be splattered.

Doctor: Thank you... that's very kind of you.

Interview 7

Nandini: Good morning sir. How are you?

Executive: Good morning Dr Nandini. I am very well, thank you.

Nandini: I hope you are not busy. I needed to discuss something about marketing with you.

Executive: I am not busy right now. But can you be quick?

Nandini: Sure Sir.

Nandini: Can you please give me a brief introduction about yourself.

Executive: I am a non-medico and did my MBA from IMT. After which I worked for a few years in Reliance. I have 2 years' experience in Marketing in the Healthcare Industry and currently involved in sales & marketing of this hospital.

Nandini: So what exactly do you handle in marketing?

Executive: Basic responsibilities in the current organization are market research, marketing campaigns, lead generation, sales support and social media marketing.

Nandini: hmmm... and something about this Hospital.

Executive: Okay ours' is a super speciality hospital and was one of the biggest hospitals to come up in Gurgaon. With 200 functional beds, we cater to both domestic and international patients.

Nandini: This is a big hospital and with so many hospitals around. Must be challenging.

Executive: well... It is. So we have a dedicated team. We have a scheduled marketing calendar which states all the activities like campaigns, publications, seminars, etc. to make sure that we don't miss on anything.

Nandini: I know that you have an Online marketing wing also. Tell me something about that.

Executive: Yes we do have a website. A Website is the first face or the opening pitch of any organization. Now days, any business needs website. It has become a mandatory for business in certain market geographies to do that.

Nandini: Yes. Very true. What else do you do in online marketing?

Executive: Activities such as sharing publications and articles, social media as a medium,

blogging and interaction with the masses are some of the activities we do on a regular basis.

Nandini: You think it is useful?

Executive: Absolutely. Internet we knew, would play a vital role in the marketing of health services, majority of the educated population is on the internet these days hence it's a platform where healthcare can be promoted and awareness generated... website provides people or clients an easy access to look for the details of our centre and the kind of work that we do.

Nandini: and how is it affecting the revenue generation of your hospital?

Executive: I think our hospital can attribute a total of 5% of its total revenue generation to website and other online activities.

Nandini: what is the evaluation process of your website like? Do you use Google Analytics?

Executive: Yes... my team reports to me and through Google analytics, my team is able to tell me the status of the website in terms of number of visits and page views.

Nandini: Do you face challenge while handling your business website?

Executive: I have a competent team, so I can't enumerate any difficulties to you.

Nandini: ok. Thank you so much sir, for giving me the time.

Executive: my pleasure Nandini.

Interview 8

Nandini: Good afternoon madam. How are you?

Doctor: I am fine thank you. Please take a seat.

Nandini: Thank you

Nandini: Madam, Can you please give me a brief introduction of yourself.

Doctor: what details do you need?

Nandini: A little about yourself including your background, work experience, etc

Doctor: Ok. So I am a MBBS doctor passed out from the Gandhi Medical College, Bhopal. I worked in the public and private hospital sector with a special interest in dermatology. Then I did my residency in Dermatology department from a hospital in New Delhi. I have an experience of 7 years and I am continuously learning everyday.

Nandini: 7 years is a long time. So since when have you been associated with ARV?

Doctor: I have completed 3 years with this centre now.

Nandini: How do you market your product/services Do you have a marketing division?

Doctor: We have a team of 2 people who do the sales for us. They meet the doctors and try to fetch patients for us. Since it is a cosmetic clinic, patients are a little apprehensive to come for procedures. There is tough competition, and our team is working very hard.

Nandini: Do you do other online activities for your business also.

Doctor: Oh yes, our new centre just opened in the city, that is when we decided we could go ahead with the website. At the same time, we decided to promote our centre through facebook. We even announced our inauguration on our facebook page.

Nandini: what more activities do you do on the internet?

Doctor: We do almost all activities advised to us by our team. we sent e-mailers to our prospective customers along with special discounts. We have groups on face book on which we post regularly... we recently thought of writing articles about the procedures and their success rates...We also upload pictures and videos of satisfied patients on our website.

Nandini: That's a whole bunch of things you do. Is it expensive for you?

Doctor: We are spending a lot on the maintenance of this website. I think it is about 'give and take'. We are an aesthetic centre and the website affects the functioning of our centre in a big way. We receive maximum number of patients from the website.

Nandini: So you feel it is beneficial for you?

Doctor: Oh yes it definitely is. Our patients who have seen the website have appreciated it. They say it is very informative.

Nandini: What more do you know about activities that can be done for marketing?

Doctor: Activities such as online marketing, publications, social networking, participating in conferences and trade shows are the avenues for query generation I suppose.

Nandini: How do you check your website?

Doctor: I check on the content and get it rectified by the team.

Nandini: do you know about Google Analytics?

Doctor: No I don't. What is it?

Nandini: Mam, it is a software that tells you about the performance of your website. Your team would be able to explain it in a better way.

Nandini: Any other difficulty you face in handling your website?

Doctor: The biggest challenge that I face is the lack of time to have a look at the website on a regular basis and inform my vendor about the updates that need to be incorporated.

Also I am not very active on facebook and stuff so leading from the front on facebook is not there.

Nandini: hmmm. Okay. Are you aware of the concept of keywords, query generation, search engine listing?

Doctor: yes, when we gave the contract to the web team. They told us about these.

Nandini: So all in all you think this online marketing is a good innovation?

Doctor: It is I think so. At least for us, yes because people search and rely on experiences and information. And we give it to them.

Interview 9

Nandini: Please tell me something about yourself sir.

Dr : I am an orthopaedic surgeon. I did my MS in orthopaedics from Nagpur University. Later I did my residency M.G.I.M.S and Kasturba Hospitals Wardha. Later I went to US for my MCh in orthopaedics.

Nandini: So since how long have you been working?

Dr: It has been almost 10 years now. I opened my clinic later in 2007.

Nandini: Sir, tell me something more about this clinic?

Dr: Our clinic is a dual speciality clinic. I am the Orthopaedician here and my wife is a Gynaecologist. We started with it in 2007. We both are consultants at other hospitals too, so we see patients over here in the evening only. Also, if required we do some day-care procedures that are possible.

Nandini: So with all these services, how do you make yourself aware to the general public?

Dr: That is very important now. And till a few months ago, we weren't doing anything in particular. All that we were doing was telling our patients at the hospital about the clinic and doing consultations for people living nearby. Now we have hired a team to do it seriously.

Nandini: and what all is that team going to do for you?

Dr: When we started talking to them about the activities, they listed mainly referrals and website to us. We didn't know much so we avoided the website. But later we realized that everyone was doing it and it was very important to be present on the web.

Nandini: What more do you know about internet as a source of marketing.

Dr: They told us that they would make a website and we decided on some keywords. They even created a map for us on Google. Other than these, they said they would charge us for advertising also.

Nandini: Advertising?

Dr: Yes, to list our ads on AskLaila, JD, etc. A lot of people search on just dial. And we also thought that for a gynaecologist specially, it would be a good step.

Nandini: Ok. So now your website is ready?

Dr: Yes it is. But we have to get things corrected. My wife generally does that, since I don't get much time. She goes through it and then the team does it.

Nandini: Do you check otherwise also, on Google Analytics?

Dr: No we don't know what that is.

Nandini: You mentioned that website is important and that it's ready. Do you get some queries or patients from it?

Dr: Not right now. But we hope that we get now.

Nandini: What did you do to promote your website?

Dr: website was made after deciding on keywords for which they said that the website will come on top. Other than that they do some activity on face book.

Nandini: So you said keywords. Do you think advertising and promoting business on social media is beneficial?

Dr: Yes it is beneficial but there is an issue with the time that goes into it. We don't get that much time to sit on the computer and update about the clinic. Our team thankfully does that.

Nandini: Do you face any other challenge while handling your business website? If yes what are those?

Dr: Yes, the other difficulty that I face is that I am not so comfortable with the computer. So I keep asking my children or the team about the steps and errors.