

## **Cost-Effective Marketing Tools to Maximize Visibility and Promote Your Healthcare Business.**

**Marsh Naidoo PT**

[marsh@teletherapyservices.net](mailto:marsh@teletherapyservices.net)

This interactive course will appeal to the healthcare professional with an entrepreneurial spirit exploring starting a private practice or already out in the marketplace. It will give you a foundational basis to understand marketing concepts and models that can be leveraged within your business. We will discuss strategies for a digital presence as well as optimizing marketing opportunities within your practice workflow and learn about metrics to measure the effectiveness of your marketing strategy.

**Disclosure:** I am not a marketing professional but rather a healthcare professional who has utilized marketing strategies and content with her clinical physical therapy practice and nonprofit organization. Many of us who start a business tend to be a “jack of all trades “until we can outsource or hire for the position. So today we are going to delve into cost-effective marketing for your healthcare business.

**Disclaimer:** No conflict of interests noted.

### **Objectives:**

- Define and compare key terms: marketing and the 4P's, advertising and branding
- Understand the Life Cycle of a Business.
- Identify your Audience or Target Market.
- Understand and Explain the Brand Identity Models and how it relates to creating your brand.
- Discussion of low-cost or no-cost marketing tools including: Google business profile, Social media, SEO, Video, and Websites.
- Understand marketing metrics and their utilization within your business.

### **Marketing:**

The sum of the activities involved in directing the flow of goods from producers to consumers. (Britannica, 2023).

### **Advertising:**

**Use of paid mass media to deliver messages.**

**Branding:** This is the process of creating an **identity** for your business, products, or services, while marketing involves selling and promoting your offering to a target market.

### **Business Life Cycle ( Get ready as we get to learn about your two marketing tools)**

The business life cycle is the progression of a business in phases over time and is most commonly divided into four stages: launch, growth, maturity, and decline. T

## Business Life Cycle

Whether you are looking at a product or a service-based business you need to understand the business life cycle. Both replicate an S-shaped curve:

### Launch

Screening evaluating tool **George Day's R-W-W Screen** There is a huge risk in time and money to launching a business and a good place to start asking the question:

**Is it Real?** What is the market size, enough targeted customers who can pay for the service. What is the market size, enough targeted customers who can pay for the service

**Can We Win?** Who is the competition and do you have the advantage? How will the competitors respond? Can the advantage be sustained?

**Is it Worth Doing?** Will the forecasted returns be greater than the costs and what are the risks/how can they be minimized?

No to any of these questions gives reason for pause and reflection on competition and risk

### Growth

**escalates** sales cash flow, increasing competitors. **Building brand awareness.**

- **Finances:** seeding money, investors (exchange of control or equity for investment ), generating cash flow.
- **Skill to pivot to change**

### Maturity

Sales growth level as market share is established for stronger competitors and weaker competitors exit. Differentiating their products into competitive offerings; product portfolio. transitional/succession planning.

### Decline

decrease in demand for new products or repositioning within the market.

The tool used to develop your strategy and forecast

## Developing your Marketing Strategy

**Marketing in the healthcare domain consists of print and digital marketing. Irrespective of how you wish to develop your strategy to maximize your ad spend**

You need to :

- Create your audience or target profile.
- Access your competition and how you are different.
- Assess how patients come to you.
- Maybe design a new/improved funnel.
- Create content to communicate the message of the desired outcome (Social Media, Video, SEO)
- Decide on metrics for your plan

### Blue Ocean vs. Red Ocean Strategy

**Do you think healthcare is a blue(simultaneous offer differentiation-value) or a red ocean market**

**<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/10-key-learnings-from-blue-ocean-strategy-healthcare-marketing-dave/>**

**<https://www.blueoceanstrategy.com/blog/blue-ocean-strategy-healthcare-industry/>**

## Branding and Identity Management Tools

Bobby Calder and Steven Reagan (2001) Brand Design Model

Branding should be a consideration at the start of building your business. It's an intangible asset such as goodwill. it may not have a physical presence or you can't touch it but impacts or influences your company's reputation, customer (base, experience, loyalty, and expectation), and employee relations. Brand strategy long-term plan to influence perception to influence buying and increase market share while out master competitors'

Develop a story that would appeal to the target market

The next circle is the "meaningful relevant value" of the brand. View the experience as to what will appeal to the customer, motivate the customer the buy in, and satisfy needs/wants

The outer circle is a verbal and visual description of the brand. Convey the expression of the product

## Elements of Your Brand

**Purpose:** Why You Exist Beyond Money. Passion. What informs your choices?

**Vision:** bigger than something bigger than yourself

**Mission:** (What is it that you want to do). Clear on the commitment to show up to the vision and reputation. Shapes business decisions and drives brand strategy. it is something you work on every day towards. Gets the team moving towards a common purpose.

**Values:** What is important to the brand as they do business? Forms a part of brand culture and if you are happy inside then produces results. Core values (single actionable words) form. Culture: a group of beliefs, values, and behaviors held by a person/organization.

- Culture: Need to have an idea first who you are together with the values that will probably be reflected in the business you build. This statement is just my opinion with alignment between who you are and your why sync carries you forward. This informs/foundation of who you are as a business/entrepreneur and it also lets your customers know if you are a person that they want to interact with.

This is the foundation for building your business and will help craft your messaging and central theme to your life as an entrepreneur.

- Brand values guide towards positioning.

**Positioning:** Specific unique point of difference that sets you apart. Why are you more relevant than your competitors? What is your value proposition?

**Personality:** What and how you say it is important as part of your messaging. More connected to similar messaging. Understand the audience and speak to them

**Tone and Voice:** Set the mood and how it will sound in the market share. Subtle and it links with personality to deliver the message.

**Brand Story:** narrative tech to engage the audience in a relevant way cuts through analytical thinking. When we hear a story we want to know what is going to happen next.

**Brand Heritage:** brands with history. Create a tradition of longevity and nostalgia.

**Tagline:** the brand message is in the most basic form. Tagline and slogan(spearheads campaign) but tagline spearheads brand. Elements of the tagline: Concise, memorable, meaningful, and catchy.

Martin Linsdtroms's 5 D Brand Sonogram

Think laterally and evoke sight, touch, hearing, taste, and smell to the user design/experience. Let's mull over this: sight waiting room, soft music, clean. Taste sometimes relates to the pharma

## “Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results”

### **DAGMAR is an advertising model proposed by Russell Colley in 1961.**

The DAGMAR model defines the four steps of an effective advertising campaign as causing awareness, comprehension, conviction, and action. The model stresses defining the segment of the market that the campaign seeks to reach. DAGMAR also requires an evaluation of the campaign’s success against a pre-set benchmark.

The model focuses on getting through the noise in an ever-changing healthcare environment. It’s not always about creating new services or offering to stay competitive is also about effectively communicating to reach your target audience.

Awareness building is a process of communication and falls with the promotion component of the marketing mix (**Fortenberry, 2009**)

### **Russell Colley advocated that effective advertising seeks to communicate rather than to sell.**

Stages 1: Unawareness Stage

Stage 2: Awareness First become aware of the offering

Stage 3: Comprehension of what the product is and what it does. Remember branding

Stage 4: Conviction develops strong beliefs regarding the offering and confidence that gain benefit more in pre-sale

Stage 5: Action

Purchase product or offering

Marketing forces that move people to action such as user recommendation, design, pricing, availability, and convenience. Advertising and promotion.

Countervailing forces that delay action such as competition, time constraints, attention, and personal factors regarding timing.

Healthcare promotions mix: Direct Marketing(direct mailings, newsletter), Public Relations(Open houses, seminars), Sales Promotion(coupons, discounts), and Advertising(Mass media: radio, TV, billboards).

## Pricing

The 5 most common pricing strategy is

**Cost-plus pricing.** Calculate your costs and add a mark-up.

(Consider calculating your cost-per-patient (take into account rent/labor/equipment lease/EMR/phone/internet/insurance) to know the expenses for monthly) (35% or 1.35) =

**Competitive pricing.** Set a price based on what the competition charges.

**Price skimming.** Set a high price and lower it as the market evolves.

**Penetration pricing.** Set a low price to enter a competitive market and raise it later.

**Value-based pricing.** Base your product or services and what a patient is willing to pay usually works on high-end products. price on what the customer believes it's worth.

### **Ways to Promote Your Healthcare Business?**

Prescription pad

Brochures/ Flyers

Business cards/QR Codes

Digital Signage

Retractable banners

Publications: APTA Magazine

Speaker/Presenter

Community Sponsorships and Events

Client Loyalty Retention Program - thanking people for their referral

Referral Program -

New School: Digital Marketing: Email, Website and SEO, Social Media  
online interactive relationship build, not post and ghost

EMR(marketing tool), CRM: Patient Pop, Salesforce and Weave

CRM or email marketing system (Look at open rate, click-through rate, and forwards)

Google Analytics or social media dashboards.

#### **Google Business Profile**

Website(domain and social media handles:namech\_k)

#### **SEO**

Pay-per-click advertising ( Cost per lead from Facebook or Google Analytics)

Online Review and Management

**Social Media** - Choose your platform

#### **Video**

Blogging

Podcasting/podcasting guest

Association and Organization Memberships

#### **Top 4 Hacks:**

1. Media Kit: Boiler-Plate (100 words about you and your company), headshots
2. Name of Business, website, social media handles (Name Check)
3. Choose how to create one type of content for example video, podcast, or blog, and learn how to add content to your website.
4. Digital storage and organization, Tagging or Indexing, and Consistency.
5. Belong to your Association. #PTMovesMe

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Guidelines issued by healthcare organizations and professional societies provide sound and useful principles that HCPs should take note of.

APTA does not offer any specific guidance at this point.

There is some guidance from the American Medical Association (AMA), **OPINION 2.3.2**, and the American Nurses Association(ANA).

### **AMA**

1. Maintain patient privacy and confidentiality in all environments including posting identifiable patient information online.
2. When using the internet for social networking keep in mind privacy settings do not always safeguard your privacy and that you should monitor content posted by others to make sure it is accurate.
3. If you interact with patients on the internet, maintain appropriate boundaries.  
Suggested to separate professional and personal content.
4. Physicians must recognize that actions online and content posted may negatively affect their reputations among patients and colleagues, may have consequences for their medical careers (particularly for physicians-in-training and medical students), and can undermine public trust in the medical profession. (AMA, n.d)

### **ANA**

- “Be aware of your audience. Make sure that the content of your posts is appropriate for the people who will be seeing it and may share it with others.
- Maintain your professionalism. Avoid posting anything that could be considered unprofessional or inappropriate, such as photos or videos of patients.
- Know your social media policy. Familiarize yourself with your employer’s social media policy and adhere to it across all the social media platforms that you choose to use.
- Secure your social media profiles. Review and set up the respective privacy settings for the social media platforms that you choose to use.

- Share credible information only. The dissemination of credible and reliable information protects the health and well-being of the public.
- Engage with respectful content. Do not share content that is harmful, disparaging, racist, homophobic, or derogatory, (American Nurses Association, n.d.)

**Building your Website is non-negotiable and here is your checklist!**

- Domain name (website address)

Short, Simple, and if possible help with SEO. Need to see if it's available and then also consider the extension, for example, org, com, etc

You can register your domain on your website builder.

Think about your tagline.

- Website builder: WIX, WordPress, Squarespace.

Reliability and Speed. Website Hosting determines speed loading also you to rank better and give a better customer experience.

Security(need an SSL certificate to ensure secure transmission between website and host)

Maintenance and bug fixing.

Customizability built-in features that you can scale.

- Brand elements

The logo goes into the header together with the tagline.

Photo or photo stock.

Pick your template - the theme where the layout is already in place.

Color Palette

Typography

Serif: Fonts with a small line attached to the ends of each letter.

Sans serif: More standard, block-like typography without small lines at the ends of each character.

Script: Has a more elegant feel, with each letter connecting fluidly from one to the next.

- Sitemap:

Flow of your website which should include your home page, about, services, contact, and privacy policy(You can use a privacy template generator like Termly) which can be found in the navigation bar.



- Header/Footer will stay consistent no matter how many pages you have on your website  
Content: Copy of website, research comparable websites and determine the style or wording you like.

- **HIPAA Compliant Website:**

Need to ask what it is that you are going to do through your website for example If PHI is collected, transmitted, and stored on a server of the website then you need a HIPAA-compliant website.

So what does this mean?

Business Associates Agreement between the healthcare providers who are covered entities under HIPAA and the vendors that you may be using to run third-party integration through your site. Jotform is an example of a HIPAA Complaint Form (keep in mind that intakes, signatures, etc., or through EMR). They also do encryption.

### **SEO Search Engine Optimization**

Even though we are not marketers there are some basic principles of SEO that we can utilize in our content strategy specifically for writing a blog that works on getting our website higher in the rankings other than taking out a Google Ad (Local minimum investment **\$126/week** or monthly budget \$504-\$630)

Think SEO, optimizing a website, and over time, it is something that belongs to you.

A few points to get you started to get you showing up on Google Website/Blog to boost your organic ranking.

1. Meta Title or Page Title: 60 character count so that it is mobile responsive  
The free tool for this is [charactercounttool.com](http://charactercounttool.com)
1. The title needs to reflect key wounds and content with a hook such as Learn More or Free Download
2. H1 Tag for headers and then use a consistent layout with subheadings
3. Use alt text tag for photos: images can be optimized for SEO using descriptions and the bonus of this is you are also adding to the digital accessibility feature of your website for individuals who use screen readers. Examples of Alt Text.
4. Free ways to search for keywords: No keyword stuffing
5. Building Backlinks.

How to find keywords: Semrush(\$129/month), Wordstream(\$294/month), and Google keyword planner free if you have a Google Ads Account. <https://ahrefs.com/free-seo-tools> \$99/month  
The software crawls the web and with its algorithms makes it easier to find the right keywords to target and rank to get more traffic.

### **How to Sign up for your Google Business Listing/Profile.**

On your computer, sign in to your Google Account, or create one.

- If you create a new Google Account, sign up with your business email domain.

1. Go to [business.google.com](https://business.google.com)
2. Enter the name of your business. It may already exist or add your business name. If you get a message that someone else has already verified the business, request ownership of the Business Profile.
3. Search for your profile(name) and business category.
4. Click Next.
5. Choose whether you have a location customers can visit.
  - Click Yes for your address to show up or No if you are mobile or don't want your home address to show up.
1. Enter the service area of your business.
2. Enter a phone number and website URL.
3. You also have the option to create a website based on your information.
4. Click Finish.
5. Verification option.Mailed a postcard with code
6. Services offered and hours are open.
7. Description of your business and add photos

### **Measuring Metrics:**

To calculate Customer Acquisition Cost add all sales and marketing costs for a specified period and divide by the number of customers.

Other marketing metric considerations:

#### Websites Metrics

Total number of visits in a specified period to track engagement from the campaign or blog

Unique visitor is counting only the new visitors coming to your site

Returning visitors is important for audience building

Conversion Rate for CTA

#### Email Metrics

Open rate gauges the effectiveness of your subject line

Click-through rate that is hitting the links in the email.

#### Social Media Metrics

Reach

Impressions: how often the content was shown

Engagement to the Post

#### Pay-Per-Click

Generates massive revenue for the advertiser and the person that takes the ad pays if the link is hit (this means traffic not conversion)

CPC (cost per click) is variable and depends on the keyword and the site you want to run your campaign.

ROAS (Return on Ad Spend) is the revenue you receive for every dollar you spend.

You also need to keep an eye on your KPIs for your clinic:

Total number of visits per month.

Revenue per visit ( Total revenue for the month/total visits of the month)

Cost per Visit ( Total costs = rent, payroll, utilities, phones, internet, insurance, EMR, Equipment lease, loans/ total number of visits that month)

#### Exit Interview - Discharge

Besides outcome measures, consider a customized patient satisfaction survey to rate the clinic environment, front desk, wait times, clinic processes, and staff. Primetime to mention Google reviews and ratings or gather testimonials.

### **Conclusion**

Marketing is an ongoing process during the business lifecycle. Healthcare businesses in today's competitive marketplace must be able to leverage and monitor an effective strategy to elevate the business above the noise and consistently keep the brand identity in front of the target audience.

Weaving the business mission, vision, and culture into the brand identity fosters authenticity as well as credibility to recruit and retain your customers. Marketing can be expensive however know your target audience and with time the marketing metrics will provide the data on marketing budget allocation.

## References

- American Medical Association. (n.d.). Professionalism in the Use of Social Media. Retrieved Sept 30, 2023. <https://code-medical-ethics.ama-assn.org/ethics-opinions/professionalism-use-social-media>
- American Nursing Association. (n.d.). Social Media Principles. Retrieved Sept 30, 2023. <https://www.nursingworld.org/social/#:~:text=Avoid%20posting%20anything%20that%20could.that%20you%20choose%20to%20use.>
- Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2023, August 17). advertising. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/money/topic/advertising>
- Bower, Alexandra. (August 18, 2023). Video Production for Small Business: Benefits and Strategies to Get Started. <https://www.capterra.com/resources/video-production-for-small-businesses/#sources>
- Calder, Bobby.J., and Steven Reagan, 2001. Brand design. In Kellogg on marketing, ed. Dawn Iacobucci. New York: Wiley
- Elrod, J. K., & Fortenberry, J. L., Jr (2020). Direct marketing in health and medicine: using direct mail, email marketing, and related communicative methods to engage patients. *BMC Health Services Research*, 20(Suppl 1), 822. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-020-05603-w>
- Kim, W. Chan and Renee Mauborgne, 2005 Blue Ocean Strategy: How to create uncontested market space and make the competition irrelevant. Boston: Harvard Business School Press. <https://www.blueoceanstrategy.com/what-is-blue-ocean-strategy/>
- Farsi D, et al. (2021). Social Media and Health Care, Part I: Literature Review of Social Media Use by Health Care Providers, J Med Internet Res 2021;23(4):e23205. URL: <https://www.jmir.org/2021/4/e23205> DOI: 10.2196/23205**
- Farsi, D., Martinez-Menchaca, H. R., Ahmed, M., & Farsi, N. (2022). Social Media and Health Care (Part II): Narrative Review of Social Media Use by Patients. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 24(1), e30379. <https://doi.org/10.2196/30379>
- Lambert KM, Barry P, Stokes G. Risk management and legal issues with the use of social media in the healthcare setting. *J Healthc Risk Manag.* 2012;31(4):41–47. [[PubMed](#)] [[Google Scholar](#)] [[Ref list](#)]
- Ventola C. L. (2014). Social media and health care professionals: benefits, risks, and best practices. *P & T: a peer-reviewed journal for formulary management*, 39(7), 491–520.