



HEALTHCARE

Digital Marketing Guide

— Insights from Industry Experts —






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Participants





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President
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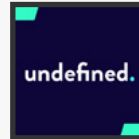
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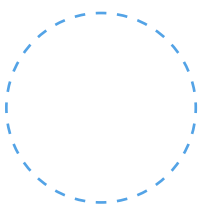
Introduction



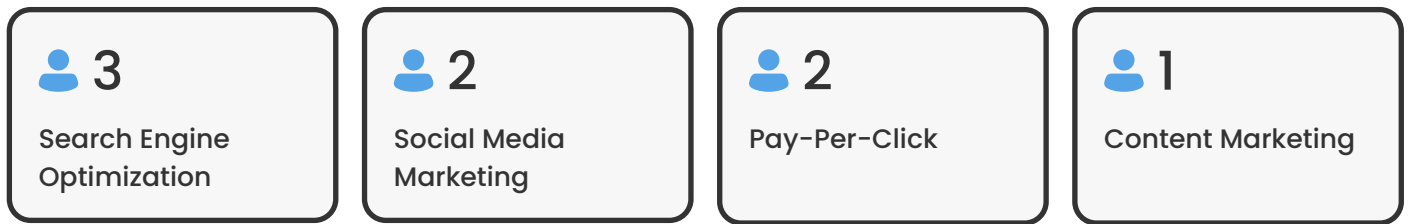
As a digital marketing agency platform with over 3,300 member agencies operating in 126 cities worldwide, DAN is a meeting point for many marketing professionals with in-depth expertise on working with different industries. For this reason, we initiated a series of industry studies that will gather the insights of our member agencies on the industries we're focusing on.

First of the series, our **Healthcare Industry Study** aims to share insights into the experience of our member agencies working with healthcare brands, hospitals, and other businesses in the healthcare industry. In this study, we asked six experts from our member agencies for their take on healthcare marketing trends, applications, methods, channels, and predictions, as well as tips on choosing and working with a digital marketing agency as a healthcare brand.

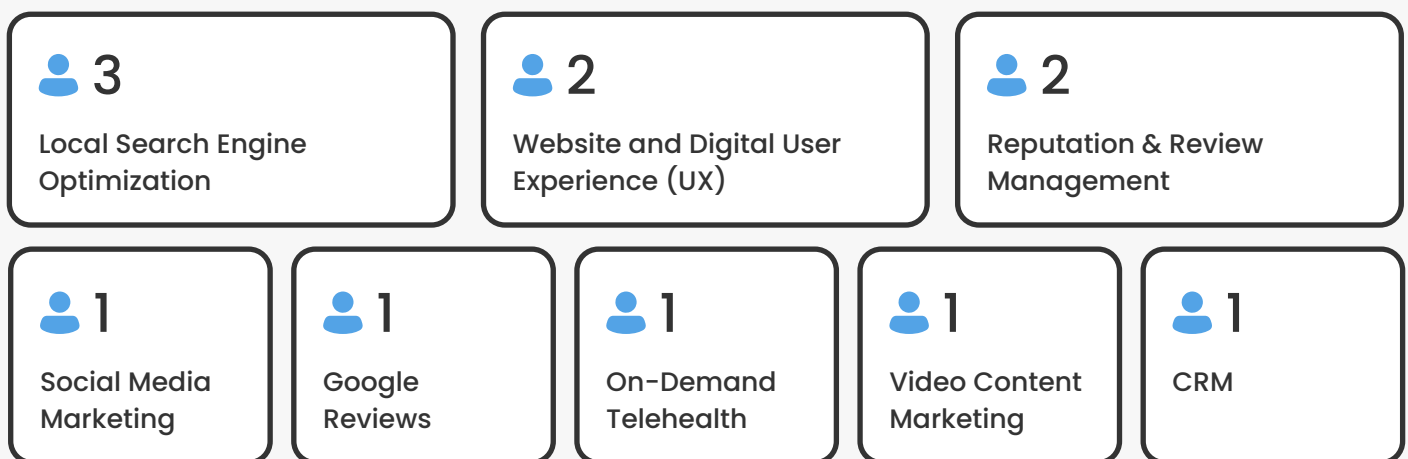
Our guide starts with some brief information on healthcare marketing, followed by opinions from our participating experts from different member agencies from all around the world. We believe their insights will be infinitely valuable to any professional working in a healthcare brand or business to clarify their perception of healthcare marketing.



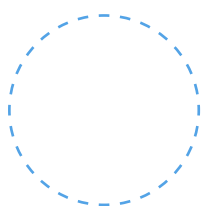
Which marketing methods or channels do you think are most effective for hospitals and the healthcare industry?



What are the most popular trends in healthcare marketing?



Are there high and low seasons for healthcare marketing?



Marketing in Healthcare

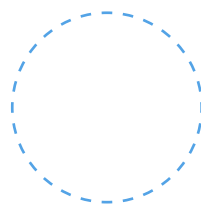


Healthcare digital marketing is sometimes challenging to get right. Some methods have proven useful for all of healthcare, some have fallen short with the speed of global digital transformation. On top of that, marketing practices in this industry are subject to some national and international regulations. Building a successful healthcare marketing strategy needs careful planning and industry-specific knowledge on the agency's end.

Social Media & Influencer Marketing

Social media marketing is considered to be one of the best methods you can use to both raise brand awareness and increase your customer base in the healthcare industry. It is estimated that [70% of U.S. healthcare organizations](#) use social media, meaning a **strong social media marketing strategy** is something you should consider.

Consumers also rely substantially on health information they may get online, and they utilize search engines to learn about healthcare, patient experience, and mental health and get support. Thus, it is essential that healthcare brands are active on social media, provide accurate health information and respond to questions from users. Many people tend to do extensive research before choosing a doctor or clinic, and **they make choices based on other people's experiences**. Medical fields like plastic surgery and dentistry are domains that made the most of social media marketing and managed to reach a vast amount of audience by utilizing the impact of social media.





Which brings us to the point that, within your [social media strategy](#), influencer marketing is a key method to make use of. It is essentially the use of social media influencers to promote a brand, product or service, and a type of sponsored marketing. The difference is that with sponsorships, brands typically aim for a larger audience, whereas influencer marketing **focuses on smaller, more targeted audiences**.

Influencer marketing often brings to mind industries like cosmetics, fashion and retail or travel, but it has shown to offer great benefits for healthcare too. Healthcare topics have become increasingly popular on social media platforms such as Instagram and Tiktok. Influencers use these platforms to provide insight on their health challenges and **recommend services or products to their followers**, creating an emotional response and building trust due to the personal nature of the subject.

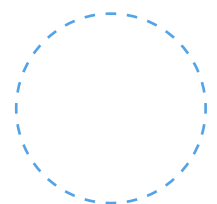
[One survey from Google](#) found that 4 in 10 millennials rate influencers as more reliable than their friends. [Research](#) has found that **57% of people consider a hospital's social media presence** when deciding on one. That is to say that benefiting from influencer marketing as a healthcare brand or establishment can help create a lasting impression and bring in potential customers or patients.



Content Marketing & SEO

In addition to social media and influencer marketing, SEO and content marketing are also among common practices. Local SEO is key for a successful online presence in the healthcare industry, and **organic search is one of the top traffic sources** for most healthcare institutions. A solid SEO strategy will bring the right consumers to your website at the right moment.

As for content, hospitals and healthcare providers can use content marketing to reach their target audience through valuable information. Another reason that makes it vital is that it improves both brand awareness and patient engagement: Many **potential patients search for their symptoms online** and rely on web pages from the search results for medical information. The broader your content variety, the more visitors you will gain from these types of searches.





Reputation Management and CRM

Reputation management is the effort to influence how people think of a brand or person. Although it includes many different strategies from crisis management to content monitoring, **online reviews** are one of the most important parts of reputation management in healthcare.

The process involves regularly checking websites and social media platforms for mentions of a brand or business and **responding appropriately to any negative comments or reviews**, as well as collecting reviews to be presented on the business' website. Online reputation management tools allow establishments to do just that with minimal effort on the business' part. Some tools even provide mechanisms for users to **submit reviews through email or advertising campaigns**. These types of systems are especially serviceable for healthcare companies.

As part of the reputation management process, there are things you can do on top of automating the review process. Redesigning your website, aiming for a **better user experience and cleaner design**, putting up-to-date contact information somewhere visible on your web page should all be priority, as your website is essentially your storefront. Improving your professional social media presence will also add significant value to your reputation too.



Automation in Healthcare Marketing

CRM tools are a large part of the automation process, but there are many more aspects getting automated by the day such as personalized communication, and automated systems created for an overall experience such as telehealth.

For a basic automation structure, you can consider setting up trigger-based patient appointment reminders and post-appointment feedback, send new patients an **invitation to your online portal** to ensure a smooth onboarding process and provide office updates, the latest articles, and general information directly to your patients or clients using email and text messages, if you already aren't.

Targeting is another great task to automate to design better ads in order to reach your customer base. Agencies can create workflows for you to use segmentation and audience groups **to target your visitors with personalized messages** to convert them into leads, as well as optimize your ads to target compatible audiences to see your top services in the first place.





Other Methods

On top of all these, there are many other beneficial methods you make use of. For example, using paid advertising models such as **PPC** (pay-per-click) will ensure that your target audience sees your web channels and **will serve to drive traffic**, sales, or inquiries from your potential clients.

Telehealth, also known as telemedicine, e-health or mobile health, is the use of digital communication technologies to access health care services remotely. The goal is to make health services and information the easiest possible to access independently of location. As our participants also underlined, **telehealth is predicted to develop even further** in the near future, and including some form of telehealth in the communication mix for applicable businesses can be a helpful strategy.

Another useful method that you should consider is producing video content. Google regularly updates its algorithm to better align with user trends and demands, and with the statistic that websites that include at least one video 45 times more likely to rank higher in search results, riding the video wave is a practically foolproof way to boost your brand's SEO rankings. [78% of video marketers](#) say **video has directly helped increase sales**, and with people consuming 18 hours of video online on average per week, up an astonishing 7.5 hours per week over the past 3 years, it became a tool that companies can no longer overlook.

Website Design & Development for Healthcare Companies

Website design and development for healthcare brands and medical organizations is a very comprehensive process as it is heavily dependent on the agencies' expertise in UX and UI practices and knowledge about laws and regulations involving client data. A digital marketing agency or design company well-versed in web design and development specifically for healthcare businesses can help you create a seamless user journey from start to finish.

User experience (UX) and **user interface (UI)** are vital aspects of designing a website for a healthcare brand or business. UX should focus on creating a seamless, enjoyable and easy-to-use experience for users, while UI focuses on creating an attractive and intuitive interface. The website must be designed with both patients and medical professionals in mind and consider **usability, accessibility, security, and scalability**.

Designing the user's journey step by step and testing how they will interact with the website is key. The **navigation** should be **clear and intuitive**, and the content should be easy to find. The design should convey a sense of trust and reliability, using elements such as clear typography, professional imagery and a clean layout, while the colors and imagery present a sense of health, wellness, and cleanliness.

The **responsiveness** of the design is essential to ensure a flawless experience on all devices, meaning that the website should be **optimized for both desktop and mobile devices**. The website, or web app, should include clear calls to action, encouraging patients to take the next step, whether that is booking an appointment or requesting information.



Compliance is another key aspect of developing websites for businesses from this industry. More so than in many other fields, marketing in healthcare obliges online platforms to comply with numerous different laws. In order to store, process and share patient data, healthcare websites should comply with **regulations regarding patient information** such as HIPAA. Moreover, there are compliance laws on **accessibility** such as the ADA that medical websites are liable to, in order to ensure ease of access for people with different levels of physical or cognitive ability.

Agencies must provide **data security solutions** for that matter, as customer data and medical records need to be kept safe and secure. Many healthcare APIs provide industry-standard protocols and formats for ingesting, storing, analyzing, and integrating healthcare data with cloud-based applications. A product studio with know-how about this field can ensure top-notch data security with the help of widely used systems.

Lastly, the integration of patient **testimonials and reviews** is one of the best proven ways to capture the attention of patients and encourage engagement. They create trust, **establish credibility**, and help to give potential patients a better understanding of the services provided and the quality of care they can expect from the health professional, making the implementation of reviews and testimonials one of the lifelines of healthcare establishment websites.

Regulations



Keeping up with latest regulations and laws related to healthcare is a top priority for healthcare communication and marketing. Healthcare communications, including businesses' websites and applications must adhere to various sections of compliance, including **ADA** (Americans with Disabilities Act) website compliance and **HIPAA** (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) compliance. A marketing agency with many healthcare brands in their portfolio will be well-versed with the specific necessities of the industry, and choosing such an agency to be your partner is crucial.



According to the Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design, all websites and technologies **must be accessible to people with disabilities**, such as those with visual, hearing, or physical impairments. The purpose of the ADA is to ensure people with disabilities are fully included in online communications.





HIPAA and the HITECH Act protect patient privacy, requiring healthcare organizations to implement **measures to keep patient records secure**. If you collect any sort of patient information on your website, including patient personal information, medical records, insurance data and more, then a HIPAA-compliant website is a necessity. This information is often collected from your website, where patients are able to schedule doctor's visits, manage appointments, make payments, or send and receive medical records.

HIPAA and ADA are US compliance laws and have equivalents in other countries, regions or unions such as **GDPR** for the EU and **PIPEDA** for Canada. So in whichever country you operate in, the agency you choose to work with has to have deep knowledge and experience with the corresponding legislations.

As online sources became increasingly trusted for healthcare information, advertising with the use of health-related big data has become another important aspect of the equation. **Google and Meta have strict policies** over which data can be shared with third parties for paid advertising purposes and which data can't. This affects many online assets of a brand, their website content may need to be changed to adhere to these policies. Meaning that it's an essential point that your digital marketing is up-to-date on tech companies' guidelines too.

What Should Brands Look For in a Healthcare Marketing Agency?

The healthcare industry is extremely competitive, and leveraging [digital marketing strategies](#) can help you stand out from the crowd. It is important to select a medical marketing agency that is specialized in the field of your health institution and one that will fit in with your needs.

Before consulting a [marketing agency](#), you should always assess and have a good sense of:

Your target audience and market

Your existing customers

Your position in the market

Your goals

Your needs

Then, when doing research for an agency:

Examine the agency's website. Look at their clients and works to see how trustworthy they are.

Check for their awards, certifications, and reviews.

Look for an agency that has knowledge of legally compliant processes in your region.

Reviewing the agencies' case studies specifically in the healthcare industry will tell a lot about their experience.





5



Expert Opinions





Jon Fox
President at Flightpath



New York, USA



Which marketing methods or channels do you think are most effective for hospitals and the healthcare industry?

Pay-Per-Click

Social Media

Content Marketing

Why do you think these marketing methods work better than the others in healthcare marketing?

Social and content provide opportunities to explore more complex questions. PPC is always good for those with intent.

What are your tips for better understanding and working with healthcare businesses and hospitals?

Clear understanding of the legal and regulatory environment.

What's your formula for a successful healthcare digital marketing campaign?

Know your audience: Are you talking to patients/families/caregivers or physicians/nurses/healthcare professionals? What are their key needs/concerns?



DIGITAL AGENCY
NETWORK

What are some outside-the-box ways you use to maximize the clients' ROI?

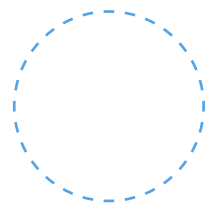
Media Multiplier Effect: Leverage complimentary channels.

Could you tell us about the regulations or restrictions particular to the healthcare industry that pose a challenge for you?

Facebook and Google restrictions.

Can you give an example of a successful digital marketing case study you've created for a healthcare business?

We do a lot of work in the Animal Health space for Zoetis. We effectively connect with people with diverse medical needs for ConvaTec.





Onur Birsen

Founder & CTO at Glacial Multimedia

Portland, USA



Which marketing methods or channels do you think are most effective for hospitals and the healthcare industry?

Pay-Per-Click

Search Engine Optimization

Why do you think these marketing methods work better than the others in healthcare marketing?

In our experience, SEO and Pay-Per-Click have produced the highest Return on Investment, and most optimal Cost Per Lead metrics.

What are your tips for better understanding and working with healthcare businesses and hospitals?

Understand the intricacies of each medical subspecialty. Meet the doctors behind the hospital / practice.

What's your formula for a successful healthcare digital marketing campaign?

- Don't limit targeting based on income.
- The tighter and more relevant the targeting can be to the desired demographic, the better.
- Use both top-of-funnel and bottom-of-funnel call to actions.
- Ensure a solid, consistent follow up process for leads.



DIGITAL AGENCY
NETWORK

What are some outside-the-box ways you use to maximize the clients' ROI?

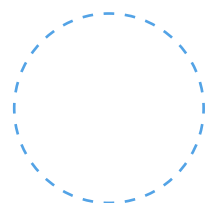
We leverage the positive impact branding has on SERP performance (paid and organic).

Could you tell us about the regulations or restrictions particular to the healthcare industry that pose a challenge for you?

HIPAA and ADA compliance have posed the biggest challenge to us.

Can you give an example of a successful digital marketing case study you've created for a healthcare business?

We recently performed a case study for a global medical equipment manufacturer to show not only that digital ads can help promote and generate leads for new, less known procedures, but also showcase how different components (display, video, search, social) drive value in different ways. The case study was a success and generated more leads than anticipated across the various ad components.





Larry Kotch

Director at The Brains



London, UK



Which marketing methods or channels do you think are most effective for hospitals and the healthcare industry?

Search Engine Optimization

Why do you think these marketing methods work better than the others in healthcare marketing?

Healthcare services are best advertised when the patient is in need of them. It's hard to convince someone not in need of dental implants to get one. Search helps you advertise to the right people.

What are your tips for better understanding and working with healthcare businesses and hospitals?

It's critical for marketers to understand the unit economics of the practice or service and to tie treatment values over time back to specific campaigns or even keywords to properly demonstrate value.

What's your formula for a successful healthcare digital marketing campaign?

Scientific Content Strategy + User Experience + Search Marketing + Closed Loop Analytics = Demonstrable high ROI campaigns.



DIGITAL AGENCY
NETWORK

What are some outside-the-box ways you use to maximize the clients' ROI?

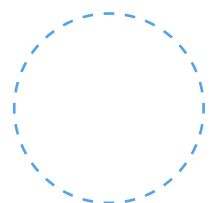
Using video in nurture emails specific to patient personas to improve experience from requesting a call to the call with the specialist. Using calendar booking after a traditional form to improve CR.

Could you tell us about the regulations or restrictions particular to the healthcare industry that pose a challenge for you?

None that pose a challenge, they are well understood and guidelines are in place. It is the practitioners duty to disclose any specific regulations in their niche but the ad platforms keep track.

Can you give an example of a successful digital marketing case study you've created for a healthcare business?

Improving lead conversion rate by 50% for Harley Street Fertility Clinic. Improving organic lead generation by 800% in a single year for London Psychiatry Clinic. We work with over 30 clinics at any point in time and they're over 70% of the clients we work with.





Josh Loewen

Co-Founder at The Status Bureau



Vancouver, CA



Which marketing methods or channels do you think are most effective for hospitals and the healthcare industry?

Search Engine Optimization

Why do you think these marketing methods work better than the others in healthcare marketing?

The intent of an unbranded Google search explains that the user is hunting for options but doesn't know where to go. An organization just needs to meet them halfway.

What are your tips for better understanding and working with healthcare businesses and hospitals?

Paid advertising is often tricky as Google and Meta have strict policies.

What's your formula for a successful healthcare digital marketing campaign?

Do not compete with the big players. Find an easy way around them.



What are some outside-the-box ways you use to maximize the clients' ROI?

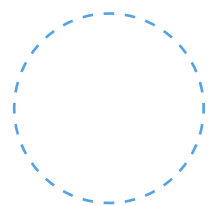
Build on existing pages rather than thinking about always creating new content.

Could you tell us about the regulations or restrictions particular to the healthcare industry that pose a challenge for you?

Changing the client's own website content to adhere to Google or Meta's advertising policies is often a challenge.

Can you give an example of a successful digital marketing case study you've created for a healthcare business?

We got Latitudefoodallergycare.com more than 10x their organic traffic with a simple SEO campaign.





Boyd Roberts

Group Director at Emote Digital



Hawthorn, AU

EMOTE

Which marketing methods or channels do you think are most effective for hospitals and the healthcare industry?

Social Media Marketing

Why do you think these marketing methods work better than the others in healthcare marketing?

It is generally underutilized and not executed effectively. Also represents the fastest and most efficient way to reach their target audiences.

What are your tips for better understanding and working with healthcare businesses and hospitals?

Spend time understanding their goals and metrics for success. Once understood then align tactics, strategies, tracking and reporting accordingly.

What's your formula for a successful healthcare digital marketing campaign?

Identify and scope out audiences. Build messaging and creativity based on research and insights to appeal to specific audiences. Then use primary digital channels such as SEO and search engine advertising alongside social advertising and organic content working in unison. Set up correct reporting, tracking and adjust and optimize these channels based on real data from the audiences being targeted.

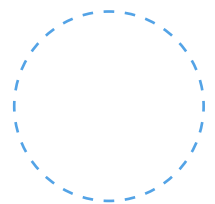


What are some outside-the-box ways you use to maximize the clients' ROI?

Establishing a solid platform of channels, creative and activities is already 'outside of the box' for many in this space.

Can you give an example of a successful digital marketing case study you've created for a healthcare business?

NSW Health - Employee Recruitment (Research, Strategy, EVP Creation, Creative Assets, Digital Marketing Plan).





Siebe Van Dijck
CEO at This is Undefined



London, UK

undefined.

What are the first things you take into consideration when starting a web design and development project for a healthcare company?

With a focus on the end user, we start by marrying the user's needs with the healthcare company's targets. We do this by covering / researching the personal data requirements stretching to confidentiality / security / compliance needs that would have to be met for the project to be considered a success. We take this knowledge into the UX process to ensure that the user flows are on point to help the user navigate the content as easily as possible whilst simultaneously building trust with the customer.

What are your tips for better understanding and working with healthcare businesses and hospitals?

- Understanding the various levels of management to ensure that all key stakeholder's requirements are met and there are no unexpected last minute hiccups.
- Discovering all possible user types and the limitations that certain users can have whilst using the product to make sure everyone can be served to their best needs.
- Drop the assumptions: don't assume people will use things in a certain way based on personal past experience.



What's your formula for a trustworthy, user-friendly and professional website design for a healthcare brand or business?

Ensure a 100% bug-free environment, not only from a programming perspective but also from the user flow + content side, so that people don't get frustrated as they are browsing the product, this also includes things like accessibility and performance.

What are some outside-the-box ways you use to engage users?

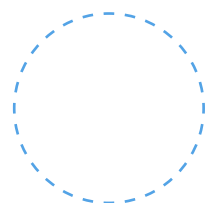
Delighting users through friendly UI and smart animations to make people talk about the product more (aiming to make them smile whilst using the product), and make them want to come back.

Could you tell us about the regulations or restrictions particular to the healthcare industry that pose a challenge for you?

Putting user privacy and anonymity as number 1. Building everything to WCAG standards including on different device types.

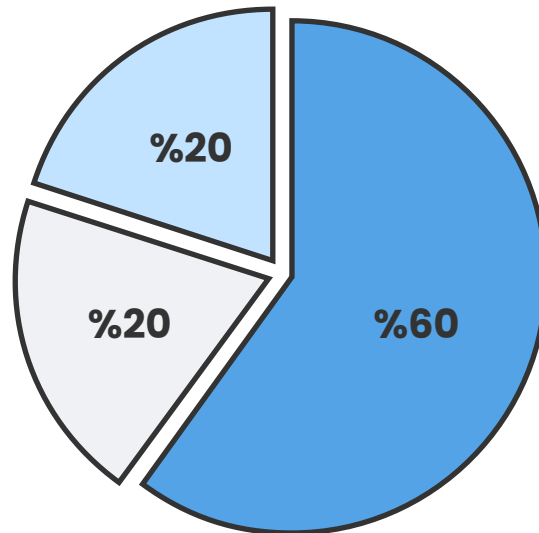
Can you give an example of a successful web design and development case study you've created for a healthcare business?

We helped Macmillan research how the charity might help people living with cancer find and access digital forms of support through designing, building and testing functional prototypes.



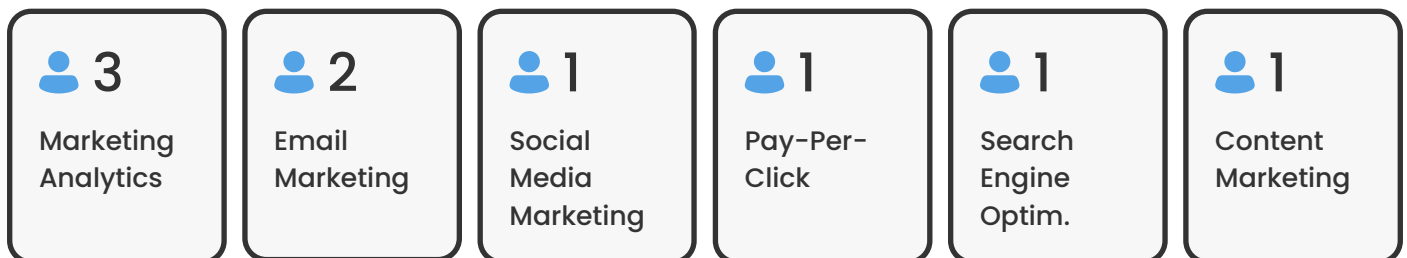
Future Of Healthcare Marketing

Do you think influencer marketing will maintain its importance in the healthcare industry in the future?



● It will protect its position ● It will have to change form ● It will lose its significance

Which methods of healthcare marketing do you think will be automated or done by AI in the future?



Josh Loewen from The Status Bureau predicts that no method of healthcare marketing will be automated or done by AI in the future.

Siebe Van Dijck from This is Undefined stated that he mostly does not predict so either for web design and development, as there is so much complexity regarding data and privacy. He said that platforms need to ensure the message gets conveyed correctly to the customer and is secure, and this will be hard to achieve 100% right with AI.

Do you think VR or Metaverse will disrupt healthcare marketing?

Yes

%50

%50

No

If yes, how?

“Continuation of Telehealth, the possibility of digital mental health experiences. Tracking health profiles and treatment on the Blockchain might help verify health history and improve data sharing.”

— Larry Kotch

“Telehealth”

— Jon Fox

“VR can help explain previously difficult topics to users by putting them in the situation and taking them through step by step.”

— Siebe Van Dijck

What developments would you like to see in healthcare marketing in the future?

“Greater personalization.”

— Jon Fox

“I would like to see easier data integration between tools such as CRM, Practice Management and Analytics so that more comprehensive and accurate analyses can be achieved.”

— Onur Birsen

“More tailored experiences, more human and video content to reassure patients and walk them through each step of potential procedures like a fly on the wall to reduce pre-treatment anxiety.”

— Larry Kotch

“More than just a few players producing reliable and informative content.”

— Josh Loewen

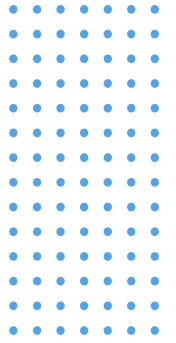
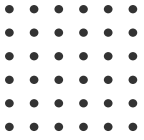
“To better embrace digital end to end.”

— Boyd Roberts

“Data portability.”

— Siebe Van Dijck





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