

HOW AI AND DATA ARE HELPING TO SHAPE HEALTHCARE MARKETING

Emerging technologies are rapidly evolving healthcare marketing by offering brands better insights into their audiences and more effective ways to reach them. Artificial intelligence and machine learning, for instance, enable marketers to readily identify patient audiences, more effectively engage with them, and to understand their behaviours so that they can provide value along the journey from diagnosis to treatment.

Among the most exciting vehicles for interacting with patients—and a must-have healthcare marketing tactic—are voice assistants, such as Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant. The devices appeal to both millennials, who crave instant gratification, as well as older generations who leverage the technology to more easily access health information and manage their medical conditions.

Med Ad News predicts that this year 30 percent of all web searches will be conducted without using digital screens, instead relying on voice to ask for information. Voice assistants provide consumers—both patients and their caregivers—quick access to healthcare information. They enable them, for instance, to answer questions, track their wellness goals, and gain impressively accurate health-related advice. According to a 2018 study, Google Assistant, the best performing voice assistant on a smartphone device, answers nearly 80 percent of users' questions with an accuracy rate of 95 percent. Voice assistants also allow consumers to perform simple tasks, such as scheduling a doctor's appointment or monitoring the status of a prescription refill request, leading many to believe the devices will soon become digital hubs for accessing and managing healthcare.

This advancement in technology is as big of a boon for marketers as it is for consumers. It presents healthcare marketers with a broad range of branded and unbranded opportunities to more directly engage with patients, potentially becoming an integral part of their daily routines by recommending treatment options that fit their needs.

Advancements also present new challenges to brands and the marketing teams that support them. The challenges presented, including managing data, ensuring privacy, and keeping up with rapidly evolving expectations, influence the structure, expertise, and focus of today's marketing departments and agencies and provide new opportunities. Here's a closer look:



Mastering Data Management

AI and ML collect and deliver to organizations massive amounts of consumer data. Marketers are now charged with managing that data, ensuring that it is securely stored and accessible. They must mine it to better understand and engage with their clients' audiences and ensure that the data is accurate and up to date. To do this, they must boost their teams with new talents, adding technology expertise, and data analytics to the mix.



Ensuring Privacy

While patients are embracing digitized healthcare, marketers face the challenge of ensuring their privacy. A recent study reported in [HealthIT News](#) found that only 38 percent of Americans believe proper safeguards are in place to protect their personal health data. Fear over data breaches is a barrier that must be overcome in order for the adoption of digital devices to continue its upward trend, making trust building an integral component of marketing plans.



Meeting Changing Expectations

Patients' quick adoption of new technologies and their reliance on machines to manage their lives—for instance, by anticipating their needs and making purchase recommendations—means brands must meet new expectations. They can leverage patient insights to help brands integrate machines as a customer touchpoint, for example, using chatbots and digital assistants. They also have new opportunities to optimize their use of new AI-driven marketing tools and platforms, and to automate payment processes for smoother, more efficient transactions.

The new frontier of healthcare marketing is a win for both patients, who gain better access to information and more control over their care, and brands who can more effectively provide the tools and experiences needed for informative, enriching interactions. Marketers are only beginning to leverage the many advantages these exciting, new technologies provide.

Stay healthy and stay safe. [#btdoingourpart](#)