

How to Engage with an Empowered Generation of Female Patients

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Women have long been stereotyped into roles that focused exclusively on motherhood and being the perfect homemaker. However, in the last few decades women have been slowly but steadily breaking free of gender based perceptions to become more social and economically significant. Increased focus on education and the need for gaining financial independence have played a major role in shaping today's woman. With a greater role in the economy women are also significantly impacting a change in brand marketing.

In the last few years in particular, women have emerged as a multifaceted and empowered generation of consumers who are not swayed by brands that indulge in clichéd marketing. Brands that want to connect with this new aware generation of women consumers will need to take on a more holistic approach to marketing. However, if there is one industry that needs to and can make headway in connecting with women consumers, it is the healthcare sector. In their roles as mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters, women are actively involved not only in their own physical, mental and emotional health but also of their families.

Women Outnumber Men as Primary Healthcare Decision-makers

Women are actively involved in the role of caregivers at all stages of their lives. They play a vital part in maintaining healthy families and tend to access the health system for themselves and their families more when compared to men. They are also the primary caregivers for their children and hence are more heavily invested in the overall health of the family. Another reason why women tend to be more proactive about healthcare and wellness is because they run the risk of having higher rates of disability and face a number of chronic health conditions as they age.

An interesting yet often overlooked fact is that a significant percentage of patients at any healthcare office are female. In most instances male patients seek medical consultation on the insistence of an important woman in their lives. When it comes to seeking healthcare information online and in print, women again outnumber men. So the kind of influence that women yield when it comes to healthcare decisions is huge and should not be overlooked by any healthcare brand.

However, any women centered healthcare marketing will only hit its mark when it addresses the needs and preferences of women in different stages in their lives and from all walks of life.

Boost Your Practice Traffic by Targeting Women Patients

Female patients constitute a powerful audience segment of informed decision makers who are interested in brands that offer service and product value that resonates with their needs and the needs of their families. They also hold the power of choice in their hands which means engaging with them is a marketing priority for all healthcare practices. Building a buzz around women's health issues is one of the most effective ways of getting the attention of your target female audience. Focus on marketing that is formulated on the lines of creating women's health awareness or on providing highly relevant information about specific conditions and/or on preventive care because this is the kind of brand value that will sit very well with this audience segment.

Here Are a Few Other Things to Consider;

Address Women's Health Issues in a Big Way

- Ensure you dedicate specific sections of your healthcare website, blog and social space to women's health issues.
- Include highly relevant links in your content that provide high quality information on issues and concerns associated with the main topic.
- You could offer to talk about specific health conditions in a local women's group or arrange a group talk with your female patients.
- The digital space is a popular place for women to congregate and talk about health and wellness issues that matter to them; take part in forum discussions and identify other online platforms where you can engage and communicate with female audiences.

Women's Health Awareness

Key to Improving Patient Engagement



Healthcare Awareness among Women is Necessary



WOMEN

are very different from men in their attitude and motivations when it comes to healthcare.



A number of PSYCHOSOCIAL

as well as cultural differences can influence healthcare decisions among women.



Heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic lower respiratory disease are the leading causes of death for **WOMEN**.



11.9%

of women under 65 years do not have health insurance coverage.



Women Play a Leading Role in Healthcare Decision-Making of their Families

WOMEN

typically become primary caregivers for their children. In this role they have significant influences on the overall health of their families.

94%

of women play a major role in taking health decisions for themselves.

59%

of women make health decisions for others.



According to a survey from **c2b CONSUMER DIAGNOSTIC**,

it was found that women are more appreciative and receptive to receiving information that can help them care for themselves and their families better; the survey also found that they are more receptive to preventive care information.

3 Ways Healthcare Practices can Foster Strong Relationships with their Women Patients



Identify ways in which you and your staff can improve communication related to women's health risk and conditions and preventive care.



Provide your female patients with easy to access, understand and follow online resources and tools on specific conditions, age related health risks, as well as information on preventive care.

Learn to listen to your women patients; women respond better to healthcare

Use Social Sites to Build Audience Engagement

- Social is a great place to connect with a majority of millennial mothers who are quickly going to become your biggest patient base; Facebook in particular is a social platform of choice for most mom groups where the focus is on children and family health.
- Encourage your female patients to connect with you on social sites.
- Check out trending topics and create quality content on those topics; if your content is good they will actively share your content with others in their vicinity.
- Use your social sites to respond to queries and questions on health concerns, raise awareness about risk factors, and provide information on preventive care.

Adopt a Sensitive Approach to Women's Healthcare Needs

- It is important to adopt a sensitive approach to the needs of your female patients with regards to certain issues and concerns.
- Women function within certain family, community, social, cultural and economic boundaries and are different from men in this aspect. For example, you might find that women from certain communities or age brackets might be reluctant about discussing modern choices for family planning or about common gynecological and its associated health issues if the healthcare professional in question is a male.
- An effective way to avoid such situations is by building a rapport and focusing on improving patient trust by providing longer and more in-depth consultations.
- Offer your patients information on preventive care as well as offer counseling if required.
- The physical examination and/or taking history process can either go smoothly or be traumatizing for a patient. Providing adequate explanations for the process and its purpose can in large parts reduce patient discomfort.

Communication is Key to Improving Relationships with Female Patients

- Relationship dynamics with female patients differs vastly when compared to male patient-doctor relationship.
- Women respond better when they have trust in their healthcare providers and are encouraged to share their concerns.
- An open channel of communication is the key to building relationships with your female patients; listen to their concerns and honestly acknowledge their inputs.
- Women also tend to respond positively to preventive care information as a way of improving their health and the health of their families. Use your newsletters, blog, website, and social sites to deliver highly relevant information on tips and best practices on preventive health and wellness.
- Empathy over sympathy and a non-judgmental approach is absolutely important when dealing with your female patients. Keep in mind that women are more aware of their own bodies and generalizing a condition or an uncaring attitude is the quickest way to pushing your patients away.
- Work with your staff to improve scheduling for working or single moms. Also in most instances children and senior patients are accompanied by women (mothers, daughters, or close family relatives) so it is important to build a rapport with them during the consultation as they will most likely be involved in the treatment and care process.

Conclusion

Women's attitudes and motivations towards healthcare and wellness differ from men in many ways. Understanding these motivations is essential to delivering quality care and improving relations with your female patients. As social and economic conditions for women improve, their role as primary decision makers and their involvement in improving health and wellness issues for themselves and their family is only going to strengthen. Healthcare practices

that acknowledge and understand this will be able to build meaningful relationships with their target female audiences.

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