

HEALTH CARE IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD:

CHAPTER 5

Building Trust and Relatability Through Communications

As consumers venture out again and we settle into our new normal, it's important to consider how trends that were gaining traction before COVID-19 will continue to grow. One such trend is consumers' desire to feel secure and safe¹. For example: consumers are turning toward familiar places, where they **feel more in control and surrounded by those they trust**. Our partners at Gartner call this phenomenon "shrinking of our spheres of influence." COVID exacerbated these desires, and they will continue to impact how consumers make decisions in and out of health care.

STEADILY SHIFTING VALUES OVER THE LAST DECADE



Security
I need to feel secure and protected.



Safety
I actively seek ways to keep myself, my family and my friends safe from harm or danger.



One foundational element in establishing a sense of security and safety is **trust**. Below are three considerations to improve patient trust through health care communications.

KEY CONSIDERATION

Illustrate patient commitment with proactive, relevant communications

Consumers are bombarded with information, much of which proves to be irrelevant. And while information is seemingly infinite, our attentions are finite, forcing brands to compete for attention and share of voice. In a category as personal as health, consumers yearn to feel like health care companies have their back.

At a certain point, public information no longer suffices, and patients need to see actual doctors. **These patients will be more likely to turn to someone within their "sphere." That is, someone who has established themselves as a trustworthy, safe option by showing a level of commitment through proactive, relevant communications (e.g., checking in via email, sharing health tips and reminders through targeted paid social).**



Consumers want better, clearer, easier communications from health plans and providers, with a preference for digital channels. Only 1 in 3 consumers said their provider and health plan communicate too much.²

“ People with chronic conditions, for example, want weekly support, they don't want support every six months like in the old world. They want to be supported from the comfort of their home. It's where you feel safe, it's where you spend most of you time.”³ ”

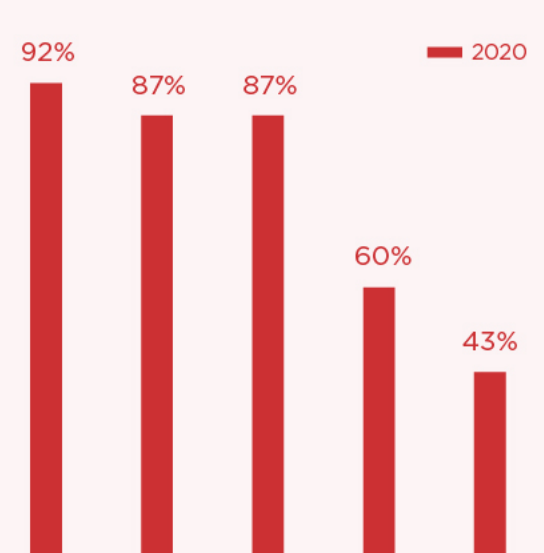
KEY CONSIDERATION

Make it feel personal through 1:1 communication

While the prominence of large and successful health care companies and systems build clout, it is important to recognize that consumers trust information from a known source more than a large entity. For instance, medical professionals (i.e., a doctor or nurse) have trust levels in the same tier as family. This trust is notably higher than that of big brands or Corporate America, which larger entities like health systems could be considered by some.

As such, marketers should approach efforts with a personal touch in mind. Such outreach helps to humanize processes with health care companies that can feel transactional and daunting. This approach will ultimately improve outcomes too, as patients are more apt to listen to ongoing education and feel motivated by a recognized voice. One way to do this could be to position social media posts or email communications from the perspective and voice of department heads or specific provider.

I TRUST _____ AND AM CONFIDENT THAT IT IS/THEY ARE RELIABLE AND COMPETENT



When it comes to each of the following, which best describes how you feel. I trust _____ and am confident that it is/they are reliable and competent. Base: U.S. consumers 15+ Source: Gartner Trust and Skepticism Survey, 2016; Gartner Cultural Attitudes and Behaviors Survey, 2018; Gartner Consumer Values & Lifestyle Survey, 2020

KEY CONSIDERATION

Show up in places where consumers are inclined to listen

A final key element to garner attention and establish credibility is to insert yourself in the right places. And by "right," we don't necessarily mean expected.

A trend among forward-thinking health care providers of late is to use TikTok to spread reliable information to teens. Since health care and technology tend to evolve at different paces, health care providers inserting themselves into the outlets widely used today is a clever and effective way to spread information. Additionally, showing up in the frequently used social media app and aligning with the informal, sometimes silly tone of TikTok is helping young people develop trust in medical practitioners and view them as more accessible and relatable.⁵

“ Back in the old days, there was a town doctor, and everyone knew where he lived, and you traded milk and eggs for health care. You had trust in your doctor because you trusted them as a person first...TikTok can help to humanize doctors.” ”

— Dr. Danielle Jones, a Texas gynecologist in Texas; Her videos have racked up over 11 million views.



PERSPECTIVES BY TIERNEY

Connect with Tierney today to learn more about how your brand can empower consumers to navigate the health care landscape. Visit hellotierney.com.



To reach us directly, contact:
Tracey Santilli / tsantilli@tierneyagency.com

Sources:
¹ Gartner, Inc. 2021 U.S. CONSUMER VALUES: CONSUMERS SEEK SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SERENITY; BRANDS MUST RESPOND. 2020. All rights reserved. No further reproduction or distribution permitted without the express written consent of Gartner.
² Harris Poll. 2020 Change Healthcare - Harris Poll Consumer Experience Index. 2020.
³ HBW Insight. Post-COVID Consumers Want Digitally Enabled, Personalized and Continuous Self-Care. 2021.

⁴ Gartner, Inc. Gartner Trust and Skepticism Survey, 2016; Gartner Cultural Attitudes and Behaviors Survey, 2018; Gartner Consumer Values & Lifestyle Survey, 2020. 2020. All rights reserved. No further reproduction or distribution permitted without the express written consent of Gartner.

⁵ Gartner, Inc. Doctors use TikTok to spread information to teens. 2020. All rights reserved. No further reproduction or distribution permitted without the express written consent of Gartner.