

# HPMSNJ Happenings

*Healthcare Planning and Marketing Society of New Jersey*

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## **Special Edition: "And now some words from our sponsors..."**

For this issue we invited our gold and silver sponsors to submit an article focusing on a topic they believe either the public or those in the healthcare marketing and planning fields need to know more about. We are pleased to present responses from Coffey Communications, Solucient, Health Strategies & Solutions and Innovative Health Solutions.

## **Choose Your Words Carefully: Written Content Can Make or Break Your Web Site**

**Submitted by Coffey Communications,  
Gold Sponsor**

Nice photos, fun graphics and appealing designs can all make your Web site better. But most Web visitors come to your site for specific information—which is almost always found in the written content.

Good content makes it easy for people to find what they need, and ideally tugs them toward an action that leads them to your doors. It leaves readers feeling that your organization is competent, trustworthy and easy to work with.

### ***Who is using the Web?***

To better craft your message, it helps to know who is online and what they are looking for. The Pew Internet and American Life project found the following in recent studies:

- **People are looking for answers.** About 64 million adults go online every day, and 21 percent of these adults are looking for answers to specific questions.
- **People are looking for health information.** A total of approximately 120 million people access the Internet, and 66 percent of these people are looking for health or medical information.
- **Seniors are using the Internet more.** The number of seniors using the Internet has risen 47 percent since the year 2000.

### ***Get results from your Web site***

To create a Web site that gets results, keep these principles in mind when writing, editing or planning content:

- **Readers come first.** Consider who is online. Keep an image of your intended reader in your mind's eye. What's important to them? What's their reading level? Why are they coming to your Web site?
- **The "who cares?" test.** When you're looking at content, consider who it's important to. If you can't come up with a quick and good answer, the content doesn't belong on your Web site.
- **They need to know now.** Web readers want to know they're on the right page, right away. If the information they want doesn't jump out, they'll leave the page. Use headlines, teasers, summaries and subheadings to quickly show

readers exactly what's on the page.

- **Shorter is better.** Forty percent of Web readers will stop reading an article after about 300 words.\* You'll communicate much more by using a few words. Choose your words wisely instead of using hundreds of words that many readers will never access.
- **Accuracy=credibility.** Copy editing and fact checking are essential, never-to-be-skipped steps in preparing content for the Web. Simple errors in spelling and grammar can give an impression of carelessness. Inaccurate or outdated information can hurt your credibility.
- **Always include actions.** Don't lead your readers to a dead end. Give them a phone number, an address, a link to more information, a way to sign up, or some other opportunity for an action. For one thing, it's simply helpful. For another, it's a great way to hold their attention longer than the few second it takes to scan the page.

For more practical ideas about reaching your consumers over the Web, contact Coffey Communications, Inc., at [info@coffeycomm.com](mailto:info@coffeycomm.com) or sign up for our health care marketing e-Newsletter Idea Watch at [www.coffeycomm.com/idea](http://www.coffeycomm.com/idea).

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\*McGovern, Jerry. Online Web writing seminar, 2004.

## "Using a P-I-P Approach To Address Consumer Needs"

### Submitted by Solucient, A Silver Sponsor

One of my son's friends exaggerates a bit about his talents in baseball, basketball, and other sports. At the age of 12, it is excusable and a bit "cute" that his healthy ego is not necessarily supported by his output. However, for institutions as mature as hospitals, boasting without being backed by facts will actually decrease patient satisfaction and loyalty, as expectations will not be met. And your public won't view it as "cute."

In this age of healthcare consumerism, healthcare organizations are ethically bound to provide consumers with the right information at the right time. This information needs to be grounded in strong, demonstrable performance. Research by Solucient has found that 26 percent of adults indicate that they are very likely to use hospital ratings data and 18 percent of adults polled said they would switch hospitals based on this data ([National Trends in Healthcare Consumerism, 2004](#)). We believe that consumers will become more financially responsible for their care decisions, and more attuned to quality care and good outcomes.

Setting consumer expectations need to be done with a P-I-P approach:

- 1) **Provide.** Most organizations know what their inpatient market share is, but integrating the outpatient arena with inpatient services will ensure a complementary approach to service delivery. Facilities need to look beyond the rear view mirror, and ask themselves more than just what happened in the past. How will markets change over the next 5 years, and what will you do to remain ahead? (Click [here](#) to see how

Solucient's tools help organizations plan for services.)

- 2) **Improve.** Benchmarking is crucial for learning how you compare to your peer hospitals and identifying opportunities for improvement. By benchmarking their clinical outcomes and operational services, organizations accept that they are not the best at everything, and attempt to learn from others. It is absolutely necessary that information about clinical quality be risk/severity adjusted for the data to be credible to clinicians who are being asked to lead performance improvement efforts. How can you become a top hospital without the knowledge of how your peers perform? (Click [here](#) to learn how Solucient's tools help organizations benchmark their clinical and operational services.)
- 3) **Promote.** Organizations that provide special services need to deliver targeted messages about those services to the right patients. Yes, we consider it silly to promote OB services to 70-year-old men, and knee replacement services to 35-year-old women. Yet, we all have received these blasts, and some marketers awkwardly justify it under the guise of "getting the word out." In this era of increased accountability to your community around limited healthcare resources, leading-edge organizations are targeting specific clients through customer relationship marketing and are able to quantify the value of these initiatives. How does your hospital understand the unique healthcare needs, attitudes, and behaviors of your

customers—and potential customers? (Click [here](#) to get a Solucient whitepaper on CRM.)

Consumers are becoming more empowered to take responsibility for their own healthcare. [Leading edge](#) organizations are prepared to meet consumer needs with a strong offering of top-notch services. The one story that hospitals need to tell the public is that they *are* providing superior care in areas that are *relevant* to them.

## Health Care: The Untold Story

### Submitted by Health Strategies & Solutions, A Silver Sponsor

The health care system in the U.S. reflects the peculiar strengths and weaknesses of America. Cutting edge treatment lays cheek and jowl with 45 million people that can't get insurance. The eleemosynary history and mission of hospitals that led to the requirement that they treat anyone who arrives at their doorstep is in increasing conflict with patient (and provider) expectations that everyone can get every kind of care regardless of resource limitations. Payors, including the government, pay for care in order to meet employer or shareholder expectations or what their budgets can afford, regardless of how much it actually costs to provide the care. When hospitals formed larger and larger systems to gain some economies of scale (and, yes, economic clout) as any private sector industry would do, there are calls for antitrust legislation.

Hospitals have been and will continue to be in the eye of the tortuous confluence of opposing ideals in America. Very few political administrations (and health care systems) are willing to talk about rationing care, even in the face of potentially huge increases in demand for health care as the baby boomer population starts aging into the 65 and

over crowd who typically use health care services at three times the overall national average. Unlike private industry that can shift focus as needed to find new markets and opportunities, most hospitals are tied to their geographic and demographic communities. Nevertheless, the health care system has been called to be more market oriented and to solve the health care crisis utilizing sacred American methodologies (i.e., capitalism) where possible and belt tightening where not.

Health Strategies & Solutions works with our clients everyday to help them find new ways to compete and succeed. However, the truly remarkable story is that millions of dedicated physicians, nurses, administrators and other health care workers work hard each day to keep focused on caring for patients despite the increasingly profit-oriented and conflicting environments they work in. Yes, there is room for improvement in quality and efficiency, but there is even more room for a more candid look at the misaligned incentives of our patchwork system of health care.

## **Integration of Financial and Strategic Plans**

### **Submitted by Innovative Health Solutions, A Silver Sponsor**

These are not easy times for healthcare decision makers. As service delivery has expanded so has the proliferation of outpatient/SDS services, expanded definitions of acute and long term care, and the increased costs of products and services. Accordingly, it is now imperative for a facility to align its strategic initiatives with financial objectives through the development of a "five-year financial projection model".

### **Getting Started**

Planning is the process by which institutions determine the appropriate uses of their valued resources (financial, people, strategic, etc). It is critical,

therefore, for an organization to assemble a comprehensive team composed of planners, administration, medical and clinical staff, and finance so that all areas of the hospital are represented.

### **Building the Model**

Hospitals must develop a clear sense of their market and financial position so that they can effectively construct a "projection" planning model. All information gathered during the process needs to be put into a model so it can be assessed and processed. Accordingly, key areas should include:

- Inpatient and Outpatient Market Demographics:
  - Market Shares
  - Population Data
  - Socio-economics
  - Patient Origin
  - Use-rates
- Recent, Proposed and Anticipated Regulatory Changes
- Payer Reimbursement trends
- Physician Needs
- Identifying and Understanding the Competition
- Major Initiatives (Capital and Other)
- Financial Situation (historic and current)

Each of the above would then be integrated into the "five-year financial projection model" so as to determine their impact on the "bottom line".

### **Using the Model**

After gaining an understanding of an institution's market position, providers need to begin to gauge which new or existing services are financially profitable (winners/losers) and to make go/no-go decisions. It is at this point where financial forecasting becomes most crucial and where information becomes king. Now, when physicians and administration ask about new services, equipment, expansion, etc. management has the answer along with a financial assessment.

Naturally, the model can not answer all questions, but it can provide for improved decision making, ensuring better overall facility performance.

For more information on this topic please feel free to call Steve Bilsky at 732-392-8216 at Innovative Health Solutions.

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## **Got News?**

If you have news for the next issue, please contact Ken Parker at The Valley Hospital: 201-291-6311 or [kparker@valleyhealth.com](mailto:kparker@valleyhealth.com).