

Marketing for Health Communication Through Professional Medical Content Creation on Digital Platforms.

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Abstract:

This research paper aims to define the term ‘marketing for health communication’ by establishing a connection between it and the increasing amount of medical content produced electronically, either through social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and TikTok, or through various websites. Notably, this content is often created by specialised health professionals or representatives of global organisations. High-quality, accurate and reliable content is crucial for achieving significant awareness and cultural objectives, including marketing for health communication and delivering a public health message, and there is intense competition to produce such content.

key words: : Health Communication – Marketing – Medical Content Creation – Digital Platforms

Introduction:

In recent years, health communication has become an essential complement to global health policy. Access to reliable medical information is a key societal goal. Consequently, governments are striving to implement specialised strategies to promote health communication and disseminate health culture across all segments of society. These efforts encourage all means of marketing health communication and producing serious medical content, ranging from various media outlets to utilising digital media and relying on digital platforms via social media.

In Arab societies, these platforms are considered innovative technologies, and now require their content to meet professional journalistic standards, particularly with regard to medical information such as proper nutrition and exercise. Consequently, health communication no longer relies solely on traditional media to achieve its objectives; it now primarily depends on interactive digital content and seeks to equip individuals with the skills necessary to produce credible medical content. Therefore, it is essential to develop electronic content that serves the concept of health communication marketed through these digital channels.

This raises the question: How does the creation of professional medical content on digital platforms contribute to the marketing of health communication? Several supporting questions fall under this central inquiry:

What is the digital concept of health communication?

What do we mean by the creation of professional medical content on digital platforms?

What methods are used to market health communication and healthy nutrition culture digitally?

How effective are digital platforms at producing credible medical content to compete with traditional media coverage?

2. Conceptual framework for the study:

2.1 Concept of Health Communication:

Health communication is a specialised form of media that presents news and facts about various health and medical issues, as well as essential and secondary health developments and emerging medical and nursing situations faced by society, including chronic diseases and how to deal with them. Its aim is to educate and inform public opinion on health issues (Mushabaka, 2012, p. 92). It is also defined as a specialised form of media in the field of health and medicine that conveys information about diseases, injuries and deformities, their causes, progression, prevalence, diagnosis, prevention and treatment methods. It provides news about various medical and health issues to guide, educate and inform individuals (Abu Samra, 2010, p. 29).

In 2007, Shiafo defined health communication as a multifaceted, interdisciplinary approach to reaching diverse audiences with the aim of exchanging health information and guiding and influencing individuals, local communities, health practitioners, policymakers and the public to introduce, adopt or maintain behaviours or policies that improve health outcomes in society (Al-Tamimi, 2013).

It is also defined as a means of providing the community with accurate health news and information, as well as sound health knowledge and scientific facts, to assist in building a preventive and therapeutic health culture. This involves four elements: the sender, the receiver, the subject of the message and the means of communication (Al-Shalaan, 2014, p. 54).

Jean Merriet, a researcher, views health communication as cognitive content including ideas, data and statistics related to health or illness. The aim is to develop the recipient's knowledge and reduce health-related uncertainties (Khubayzi, 2020, p. 14).

Notably, health communication has reached several milestones in its recognition process, including the establishment of a group focusing on therapeutic interests under the International Communication Association (ICA) in 1975. This group later transformed into a health communication interest group, recognising its specialisation by creating a dedicated section for health communication. In 1985, a specialised journal titled *Journal of Health Communication* was issued, leading to media participation by journalists in communication associations. This culminated in the publication of books and articles in the peer-reviewed journal of health communication in 1996. This marked the first time that health communication began to reflect the growing importance of health media (Hussein, 2018, p. 32). The first graduate programmes appeared in Boston as part of a joint project between Emerson College and Tufts University specialising in health studies.

2.2 Content creation:

Content creation involves generating ideas on suitable topics for a specific audience and presenting these in a format that the audience can access via a webpage, video or other medium, whether visual or written. The term 'content' does not differ from the concept of content creation as understood by many researchers (Atiya Issawi, 2021, p. 244). Content creation is conducted by institutions in both the private and public sectors to produce intellectual property in the form of informational content, involving authors, editors, and others.

These individuals sell their work to publishers, distributors and production companies, which acquire the raw content, process it in various ways and then distribute and sell it to consumers of information. Some of the produced informational content does not focus on creativity, but rather on information gathering, such as reference works, databases and statistical series.

From an educational perspective, UNESCO defines content creation as a means to achieve the four goals of education in the information age. However, Professor Hani Al-Qarjoli does not view content merely as what is presented to audiences through

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social media to meet their needs or desires through a combination of sound, images, video clips, and artistic design (Labeeb Shaif Muhammad, p. 5).

Health content creation:

Health content creation involves producing accurate and reliable medical information in an engaging way to educate and inform the public. Thorough research from reliable medical sources is essential, as is the ability to simplify complex medical concepts and present information in a clear and professional manner. This industry requires a combination of medical knowledge, editorial skills and marketing expertise, as well as a commitment to ethical and professional standards.

Essential elements of health content creation:

- Understanding the audience: identify who the audience is (e.g. patients, doctors or students) and the purpose of the content (e.g. raising awareness, providing education or marketing).
- Reliance on trustworthy medical sources: Use published research and accredited health organisations to ensure accuracy and reliability.
- Simplicity and clarity: Write content in simple, easy-to-understand language, avoiding excessive scientific complexity.
- Visual appeal: Use images, illustrations and other visual elements to make the content more attractive and easier to understand.
- Professionalism and ethical commitment: adhere to medical professional ethics, such as avoiding disseminating misleading information or offering general advice as a substitute for specialised treatment.
- Search engine optimisation (SEO): Consider SEO rules to ensure that content appears in the top search results.

Fields of health content creation:

- Pharmaceutical and medical device companies
- Health magazines and online healthcare websites
- Healthcare providers (hospitals and clinics).
- Medical associations and academic institutions

Innovative techniques:

- Artificial intelligence: Can assist in analysing user behaviour and providing personalised content.

Mobile applications facilitate the delivery of timely medical information to users.

- Content marketing: Use content to increase brand awareness and build trust with the audience.

2.3 Concept of Digital Platforms:

Digital platforms are interactive, technology-based environments that enable multiple participants to communicate and interact with each other, exchanging knowledge, information and data. They remove barriers to communication and enhance social interactions across various fields. They contribute to the development of interactive networks with peers in similar fields, facilitating dialogue, discussion and the exchange of opinions and ideas, as well as the exploration of related topics (Salwa Mahmoud et al., 2022, p. 683). They are a complex set of technologies with unique features that facilitate digital interaction through digital content prepared for specific

Marketing for Health Communication Through Professional Medical Content Creation on Digital Platforms. _____ Dr. Gourari Sonia communication purposes. Digital platforms are also defined as a complex organisational structure comprising information repositories, processes, analysis and information visualisation tools (Najm Abd Khalaf Al-Aisawi, p. 87).

2.4 Marketing for Health Communication:

Health communication marketing is an administrative function that seeks to achieve health and hospital objectives by providing distinctive services. Researchers have defined it as creating a connection and delivering health information through consumer-centred interactions and strategic thinking, with the aim of protecting and promoting the health of various populations. It is a pattern of exchange and communication aimed at improving the quality of health services provided, achieving patient satisfaction and improving public health (Tomi, 2007, p. 36).

Health communication marketing is also described as an integrated and interconnected analysis of activities undertaken by health organisations to offer appropriate services, plan effectively, oversee execution and promote these services, thereby enhancing administrative exchanges of benefits and values with target markets and enabling organisations to effectively and efficiently achieve their objectives (Othman, 2008, p. 82).

Kotler (2012, p. 29) defined marketing as ‘the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully prepared programmes aimed at achieving voluntary exchange value with target markets, in pursuit of the objectives set by health organisations, by meeting the needs and desires of those target markets through effective management, communication, and distribution to inform the market and create incentives for individuals’.

3. Health Media Coverage:

Through three studies (2004a, 2004b and 2006), researcher Othman Bergman examined the relationship between media sources and health awareness regarding obesity, nutrition and physical activity. The first study (2004), titled ‘Primary Sources of Health Information’, found that active media such as personal communication, reading newspapers, magazines and books, and browsing the internet were the primary sources of health knowledge for health-conscious individuals. These audiences consist of individuals who seek health information, possess strong health beliefs and are committed to health-related activities. In contrast, passive sources such as television and radio are the primary sources of health information for individuals who are not health-conscious (Al-Shalhub, 2012).

Health communication requires specialised media skills in health and medical writing. A specialised journalist writes or edits journalistic content for a specialised audience or to meet the specific needs of general readers. This information may appear in a specialised section of a general newspaper or a specialised magazine. Such journalists must have comprehensive knowledge of their field, acquired through sufficient study and practice (Mansour, 2018, p. 140). Modern health communication has the advantage of disseminating health knowledge and raising awareness, verifying the accuracy and safety of health news, and presenting health facts without exaggeration or understatement. It emphasises objectivity when presenting health

information, enlightening and educating communities with beneficial medical information, and helping them to form sound opinions regarding health issues. This is achieved by balancing the presentation of health information through diverse styles and approaches to different health issues (Al-Sharq Newspaper, 2012).

Health communication takes various forms, the most important of which are (Al-Ma'aitha, 2013, pp. 36–38):

Radio and television. Television can be used for various methods of health education, such as broadcasting lectures, seminars, demonstrations, films and series aimed at raising health awareness in an engaging manner. Radio plays a similar role through radio programmes, particularly given the prevalence of local radio stations. It can also be used due to the lower cost of producing programmes and its ease of access for community members.

Newspapers and magazines: Daily newspapers and magazines contain a variety of methods and techniques for health education, including the publication of medical lectures and scientific discussions. They can also be used as health education materials in hospitals, healthcare centres and other public places.

The methods used to disseminate health information can generally be categorised in various ways. For example, they can be classified based on their effect on the senses as either auditory or visual. They can also be divided according to whether they involve direct communication with the target audience, into direct and indirect methods. Additionally, they can be categorised as either traditional or modern techniques. Health education methods are categorised based on their sensory impact as follows:

Auditory methods: information is transmitted through spoken words, affecting individuals through their sense of hearing, such as via the radio or recorded tapes.

Readable methods: information is conveyed through written text, affecting individuals through their sense of sight. Examples include brochures, booklets, posters, text messages, whiteboards, models, illustrations, samples, exhibitions and slides.

Audiovisual methods affect both hearing and sight simultaneously. Examples include television, video, films, CDs, interviews, seminars and conferences (Mustaba, 2019).

They can also be classified according to whether they involve direct communication with the target audience:

Direct method: This involves a direct meeting between one person and another, where the health educator delivers the message and information, as occurs in lectures, seminars, discussion groups, direct dialogue and conversation.

- Indirect method: This method conveys the desired message to the target audience through indirect sources such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, the internet, posters, pamphlets and booklets, or audiovisual media.

- Combined method: This method combines the first two methods. For example, posters are considered indirect when placed on a noticeboard, but become direct when used as an illustrative aid during a lecture (Mustaba, 2019).

4.1 Social media and health content creation:

In recent years, social media and online platforms have played a significant role in disseminating health and medical information, helping to bring the medical profession out of closed rooms and into the online space. When used effectively by specialist physicians, they have also contributed to raising health awareness. While it is important to spread information to the public and enhance health awareness and education in communities, some individuals exploit these platforms to disseminate misleading news and promote herbal remedies and dietary supplements, which can harm community members' health. Furthermore, much of the medical information shared lacks trustworthy sources and is managed by non-specialists in the health and medical fields, resulting in incorrect and misleading information being circulated. Some individuals have turned it into a means of commercial marketing, competing with and undermining rival medical companies and damaging their reputations (Al-Rashed, 2017).

Social media and online platforms are often criticised for their lack of credibility and reliability regarding the information they provide, particularly health-related information. The sources are often unknown and aim to gain fame or make quick profits by exploiting people's interest in personal and public health and promoting any product that could improve health. Recently, there has been an increase in the circulation of medical information from unknown and inaccurate social media sources.

. We see individuals sharing personal experiences that may or may not be successful, and trying to generalise these experiences to others. This poses significant risks, as some patients abandon proven medical treatments in favour of unproven medications or herbs, which can lead to serious, potentially irreversible, complications. Accurate medical information is widely recognised to go through numerous stages and medical reviews, with treatments and their safety being studied by various entities. This process can take many years before a treatment is approved and recognised in hospitals. Therefore, individuals must exercise caution when selecting sources of medical information and ensure that it is reliable, rather than rushing to publish information about the efficacy of a particular medication without thorough verification. Many of the messages that circulate on social media are incorrect or inaccurate and can have serious health consequences. Many complications arise from incorrect prescriptions and strange mixtures, leading to kidney or liver failure, or even amputations. This highlights the importance of obtaining medical information from reliable sources, such as official websites of medical centres or qualified doctors and specialists (Al-Rashed, 2017). Accordingly, caution should be exercised regarding the health and medical information provided by various social media platforms (Ali, 2017, pp. 97–98).

4.2 The necessity of effective health content on social media:

It is essential to make health topics published on social media more attractive to guarantee continuous audience engagement.

Focus on presenting the most common health problems in society.

- Ensure the accuracy and credibility of health information published on social media. Updating health information can increase public trust in these platforms.

Give more attention to health awareness topics and prioritise them on social media.

Innovate new methods of presenting health topics and diversify their content to provide comprehensive, integrated and balanced coverage of various health issues on social media.

Encourage community members to follow health-related social media platforms to enhance health awareness.

Promote a culture of relying on social networks, including Facebook, to obtain health information, thus increasing health awareness and facilitating communication with medical entities.

Publish summaries of research and scientific studies in a simplified manner that is easily understood by readers.

It is crucial for health specialists to utilise the expertise of qualified medical personnel when disseminating health information on social media to ensure its accuracy and scientific validity.

- Health topics published on social media must be filtered by specialists to reduce misinformation and exaggeration and ensure the accuracy of information.

4.2 Conditions for Writing Professional Medical Content:

The medical content industry is growing rapidly, and there is an increasing demand for writers with expertise in creating medical content. If you are interested in writing medical content, it is important to develop your skills in this area to improve your career prospects or make your website, blog or channel offering medical content more appealing. Here are some ideas and tips to help you write medical content effectively:

Familiarity with the medical field: It is important for a medical content writer to have a good understanding of the medical and health field. While it is not necessary to be an expert, having a solid foundation in medical knowledge is crucial to ensure you can understand and convey information clearly and effectively to your readers.

- **Targeting the right audience:** Knowing your target audience is one of the most important steps before writing medical content. Once you have identified your target audience, it becomes easier to choose an engaging title that will capture the attention of interested readers, and to determine the type of information you will provide, as well as the complexity of the language and terminology used. The healthcare sector is vast, and medical content writers may target content at doctors, patients, pharmaceutical manufacturers, hospitals, healthcare centres or medical companies. Therefore, it is crucial to define your target audience when writing for the medical sector.

- **Reliance on trustworthy sources and research:** Medical content is highly sensitive, and many patients or individuals facing health issues rely on it before consulting their doctors. Therefore, it is crucial to verify the accuracy of the information you provide by referencing reputable medical sources and relevant research. A medical content writer's most distinguishing factor is the accuracy and credibility of the information they present.

- Providing accurate data and statistics: Readers are often influenced by precise data and statistics, so support your medical content with accurate numbers derived from the latest relevant research and studies. Including figures and statistics in your content can also improve its ranking in search results.

Be specific and update regularly: aim to be clear and precise in your medical content. Avoid digressing from the main topic, as this can confuse readers and distract them from the content's core idea. Focus on presenting your ideas exactly and ensure you update the medical content on your site or blog regularly whenever new information, studies or research become available. The healthcare and medical industries are evolving rapidly, so it is important to keep up to date with these developments in medical writing to prevent your content from becoming inaccurate or outdated, which could undermine public trust.

- Focus on keywords: Pay special attention to keywords in your medical content and emphasise them. This helps to enhance search engine optimisation (SEO) and improves the chances of your content ranking higher in search results.

- Write cohesive and readable content: Create smooth-flowing medical content. Avoid using jargon and terminology that may be difficult for the average reader to understand. Your writing style should be straightforward and simple, using language that everyone can understand.

Support medical content with videos: present the medical information you wish to convey in video format, or summarise it in a short video. People often engage more with videos than written content, and they find it easier to share videos with others. Videos currently account for around 85% of total internet traffic.

Utilise social media to share the medical content you write across various platforms to reach a larger audience, receive support and feedback on your content, and increase its shareability through these platforms.

- Provide solutions to problems: Often, individuals seek solutions to their health issues when searching for good medical content. Describing a health problem or condition is not enough; your content should also include the latest findings from studies and medical research on how to treat these issues.

Conclusion:

The production of medical content is considered vital for disseminating accurate and reliable health information. However, this process faces a range of challenges that may affect its quality and effectiveness. One of the most significant challenges is the abundance of misleading information online, which underscores the importance of reliable, well-documented content.

Additionally, the medical complexity of many concepts makes it difficult to simplify information without compromising its accuracy, so writers need to have high levels of analytical and interpretative skills. Furthermore, science is continuously evolving, necessitating regular updates to content to keep pace with the latest research and studies.

Writers must also consider audience diversity, as readers come from various backgrounds and have different levels of medical understanding. These challenges mean that medical content writing is a significant responsibility that demands precision and professionalism, thereby enhancing the importance of this field in promoting health awareness and benefiting society.

Consequently, marketing health communication through digital platforms requires the creation of professional digital content that adheres to reliable media standards. This has the potential to contribute to the dissemination of health culture and promote the idea of health communication, something that traditional media alone can no longer adequately address.

In the digital age, writing medical content for digital platforms is one of the most important skills, as it helps to educate the public, raise health awareness and support medical institutions in providing accurate information to users. As demand for medical content writing increases, adhering to precise scientific standards to ensure the accuracy of information presented to the public has become essential.

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