



*The Online Empowered Patient Has
Come of Age; Is Your Hospital Part of
the Conversation?*

*Effective Participation in the Social Media
Conversation Takes Strategic Planning and Analysis*

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I'm having a baby, too. We'll have to sign up for the same childbirth classes at this hospital. They say they have online classes if we miss one. That will be great for Ryan in case he gets stuck in traffic.



The Online Empowered Patient Has Come of Age; Is Your Hospital Part of the Conversation?

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This article says exercise can help my arthritis pain

I see they recommend checking our local YMCA

Just finished my test, not so bad. Saw Dietician for meal plans.



High cholesterol runs in my family. What can I do to lower my risks? What doctor should I see?



My mammogram showed I have a lump. I'm scared.

Critical Social Media Concepts

Social Media is a Process

Instead of watching a commercial or visiting a website, social media lets the customer engage, comment, and influence products and service. It's interactive, an exchange of ideas, insights and collaboration toward a better patient experience. It is a long term process to build your community of users, friends and fans and develop their trust. It's investing in a long-term relationship through conversation - key to our connection to the customer. Be open to let the community - your customers influence your service.

Marketing Shifts to Voice of the Patient

The new online generation doesn't read papers, they fast-forward through commercials. Why? Because they want to be heard, listened to, and help shape their world.

For your business or organizations, this means shifting from pushing out your messages to participating in online conversations and shaping the messaging to incorporate the needs and desires of your customers. Social media then becomes an adaptive technology for your organization, letting you constantly poll the views of your customers and adjust your messaging as needed.

Empower the patient's voice – Open up to let your customers market for you. Most referrals in healthcare are word of mouth; satisfied patients tell their friends and neighbors about their experiences. Hosting a social media platform provides an additional venue for these word-of-mouth referrals.

Is My Hospital Ready for A Social Media Plan?

You are participating.... You're a hospital with an ear to the social media conversation. You're multi-channeled with a Facebook page, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts. You have begun to listen to your online patients who are on these tools interacting with business and personal connections. Maybe your hospital has found your online conversation with patients and family is limited on these open conversation platforms. Specific questions about patient care seem to need to be redirected offline.

You are finding this a challenge to keep up with, monitoring these disparate social media channels. You have the channels but the path of your patient is not so clear. Providing answers to their questions, gaining support from fellow patients and advice from the clinical experts is disjointed and difficult to navigate with the numerous social media tools you have implemented.

You are getting the hits to the website, have lots of fans on your Facebook page and followers on Twitter. Strategically, are you able to connect better with your patients to improve care, increase efficiency in the clinical process, gain market share and collaborate with your community resources? If you are not sure, it may be time to reconvene and put together a strategic social media plan.

You are observing.... Your hospital has taken a backseat, watching this social media evolution. Your leadership is still weighing the risk vs. value question. Hospitals have not traditionally followed the same path that business has in marketing. In the past, the idea to advertise as a doctor or hospital seemed to not fit the medical model. Could the healthcare industry generate new patients? Doctors referred patients to hospitals, few patients chose their hospital. Would patients actually shop for healthcare?

The era of prevention and elective surgery has changed that. Many things we do in healthcare involve the patient's choice now. They can elect to have surgery, facelifts, and take preventive measures to improve their health and how they feel. Now patients and providers have accepted advertising for certain procedures such as lap band surgery and plastic surgery.

Initial Steps

Wherever you are on the social media spectrum to engaging with your audience, selecting the right tools to reflect strategic goals is critical to success. Understanding why you are entering into the social media sphere, identifying your target audience, matching their needs to specific platforms and tools, developing the resources, policy and procedures to support the initiatives, developing success measures and analytics are all elements of a planning strategy that will keep your social media tools working for you and your users. Your first step is to develop a social media plan.

Does your organization have a comprehensive strategy in place that can deliver specific healthcare solutions? Is your organization ready to move? Do you understand the challenges involved? Do you understand the common mistakes and missteps others have made? Have you researched and addressed the special concerns social media has for healthcare organizations? Will you be able to measure your progress against your goals?

We can help you answer these and other critical questions, recommend strategies, implement components and assist with integration issues.

What Value Do You Seek in Social Media?

Value to Hospitals:

What social media purposes align with your own hospital's goals and priorities? Understanding why you are entering this marketsphere and what value you are seeking from it will better position your strategy to meet expectations and work successfully at your hospital.

Administrative control by hospital

- ❖ Membership management
- ❖ Profile configuration
- ❖ Web analytics integration
- ❖ Enable and disable settings and functionality
- ❖ Protect patient privacy
- ❖ Setup separate communities by location, service line and/or organizations

Builds Relationships and Loyalty with Patients, Physicians and Staff

- ❖ Networking is a great way to improve interaction with (and between) your patients, staff and physicians.
- ❖ Consistent contact and development of relationships will lead to short and long term benefits, including building stronger bonds.
- ❖ Prevention, patient education and empowerment to the patient are potential value-added offerings of a web-community. Putting the power back in the patient's hands to ask the questions, tell their providers what is important to them and what information they still need.
- ❖ Health condition or disease specific collaborative groups
- ❖ Build support among patients, foster relationships.
- ❖ Provide trusted source of medical information, online libraries, videos
- ❖ Online Fundraising and Event management
- ❖ Deliver alerts
- ❖ Targeted Newsletters and Articles

Cost savings, Efficiency and Workflow Process Improvements

- ❖ Online pre-surgery process can lead to a prepared patient that leads to on-time surgery.
- ❖ Better prepared patients leads to reduced wait times and rearranging of schedules in outpatient areas like lab, radiology.
- ❖ Moving paper documentation to online electronic versions saves in copying, paper and staffing costs. Storage requirements are reduced.
- ❖ Efficient medical information look up and storage for the consumer.
- ❖ User-generated tips and ideas add to content value.
- ❖ Guiding patients appropriately through the system will lead to fewer cancelled procedures & surgeries, fewer returns to the emergency room and appropriate use of medications.
- ❖ Advertising Revenue – to offset marketing costs

Mechanism to Partner with Public Health

- ❖ Partner with community health centers and DHHS, public health to address outbreaks, infectious disease
- ❖ Promote clinics, vaccines & flu shots to target populations. Disaster management, communications through Twitter, Facebook etc.
- ❖ Address other public health initiatives to improve general health of population through condition-specific groups, focused on prevention i.e., asthma, diabetes, obesity, smoking, alcohol and drug abuse

Staff recognition

- ❖ Patients can recognize staff for their performance.
- ❖ Hospitals can highlight employees of the month.
- ❖ Staff can be featured to let patients know how they are involved in their care; e.g., respiratory therapists, occupational therapists, nuclear med techs.

Respond to complaints

- ❖ Participate in conversation if complaints arise on forums, Facebook walls.
- ❖ Offer customers solutions. Explain steps the hospital is taking to prevent re-occurrence of problem.

Enhance Your Reputation

- ❖ Improve how others think about and view your organization. You'll be perceived as progressive. Respond to complaints.
- ❖ Encourage patients to tell stories.
- ❖ Open communication with your community will improve your reputation.

Increases Brand Awareness.

- ❖ This progressive approach will build awareness for your healthcare organization.
- ❖ Increase your visibility through interaction on many different levels. Networking also drives traffic back to your website.

Personal Development

- ❖ Physicians and Staff stay in the loop on industry happenings and improve knowledge levels.
- ❖ Patients can become active partners in their own health care.

Build Physician Reputations

- ❖ Write papers
- ❖ Expert blog on clinical topics
- ❖ *Physician to physician communication for consults*

Physician Interaction

- ❖ Forum to write and publish papers, which provides more exposure for your experts and highlights the value of your hospital.
- ❖ Start blogs on specific topics of interest
- ❖ Physician - to - physician communication for consults and information sharing.

Value to Patients

Put the patient in control

- ❖ Respond to blogs or communicate with clinicians and staff experts
- ❖ Search information important to them (internal and external to their own community)
- ❖ Locate information which is understandable and packaged in a way that they can relate to, i.e., geographically or culturally specific
- ❖ Allows patient to dive deep into content, organize it and save it in a way that is specific to them.

Gain support

- ❖ Communicate with other patients, gain support
- ❖ Discuss issues on forums, offer and get tips to better care
- ❖ Find other patients that are similar to them not just in that they share the same disease or condition.

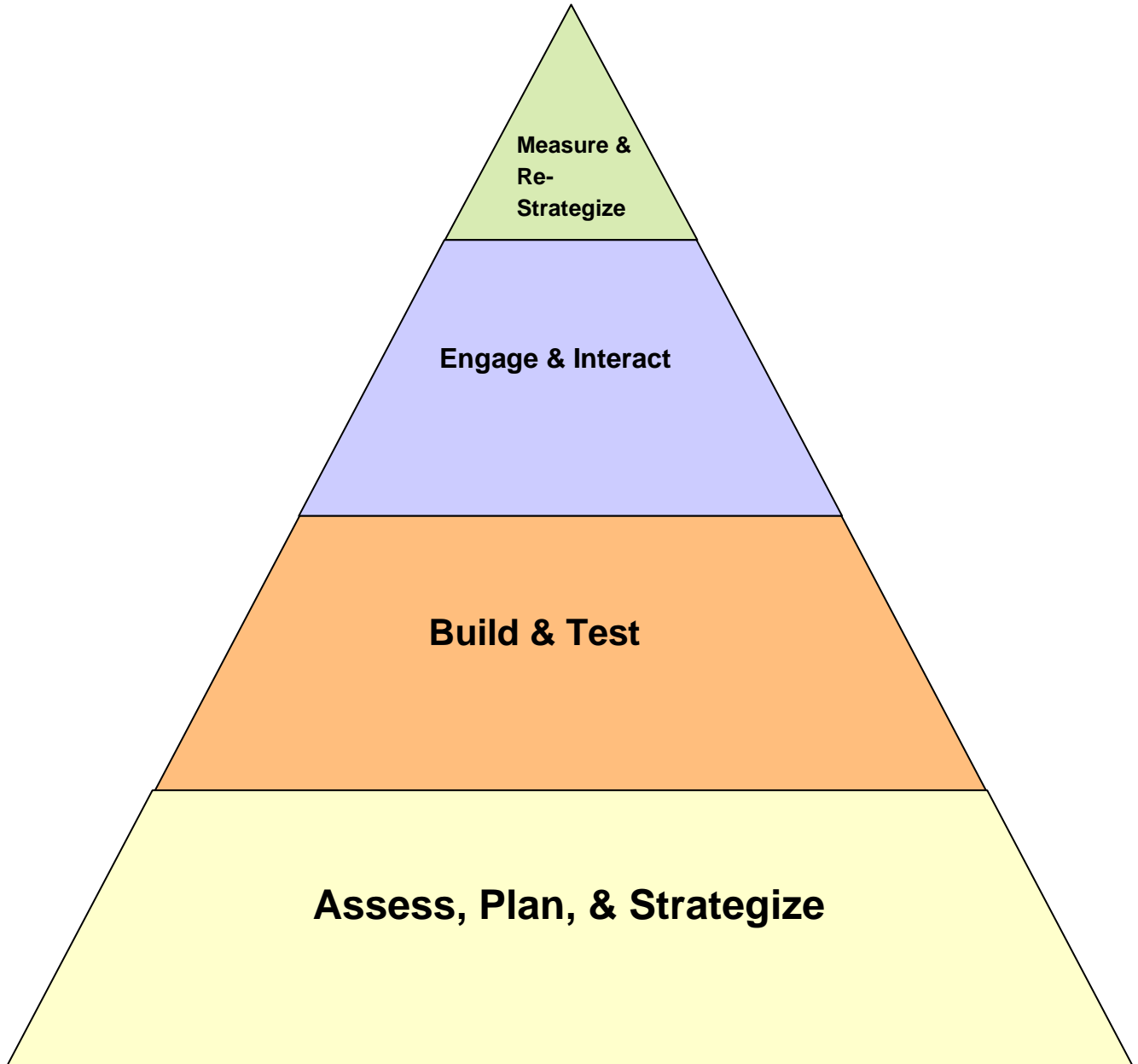
Protecting Patient Privacy in the Conversation

Today special issues with marketing medical procedures still exist but have taken on different meaning. In particular social media marketing concerns have centered more on how to ensure that patient's personal health information is protected on these open systems. Recent developments on these turnkey solutions in social media have changed the attractiveness of platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

Revelations that these companies will change their privacy policies without notice to their customer base are causing the healthcare industry and regulators to rethink their social media strategy. Opting-in users to share personal information (protected by HIPAA) with no direction on how to opt-out of a confusing process threatens the privacy of patient information that hospitals have gone to such great lengths to protect. Is your hospital in search of tools that offer privacy controls, secure sign on, and administrative controls while still creating an open conversation for your patients and their families.

Read our White Paper on ["To Facebook or Not to Facebook: The Question for Hospitals Today"](#)

A Coordinated Approach to Social Media: Building a Social Media Strategy



Build a Successful Strategy (continued)

Each healthcare organization has a unique set of factors to consider when planning a social media strategy. Cookie-cutter strategies lead to dead ends. However, a common process for designing a strategy can be applied with success.

Use the following roadmap as a starting point:

Assess, Plan, & Strategize

Assess Your Hospital vs. Competitive Environment

1. What it is, why it matters?

- ❖ Who your customers are that will be using social media.
- ❖ Target which customers you need to build new or different relationships with.

2. Assess Competitive Environment, What is your competition doing in Social Media?

- ❖ What platforms are they on? Facebook, Twitter, private online community?
- ❖ What is the community saying on their wall, tweeting about them?
- ❖ Does it overlap with your initiatives?

3. Identify your Strengths, Distinctions

- ❖ What are your strengths? What are your clinical areas of excellence? Top quality scores?
- ❖ How do patients compliment your staff?
- ❖ Hidden areas to highlight, emerging technologies needing promotion? How do you want to reshape your brand?

Define Organization Goals

4. Define your organizational objectives

- ❖ What are your success measures with an investment in social media?
- ❖ What are the desired results that your organization wants to achieve?
- ❖ How should you incorporate your vision and mission statement into this strategy?

Build a Successful Strategy (continued)

Gain leadership buy-in & budget

5. Identify Executive Sponsor
 - ❖ Educate Leadership Team
 - ❖ Develop and Get Budget Approval
 - ❖ Identify success measures
6. Get your champions on-board
 - ❖ Develop your champions with skills to connect with your target audience.
 - ❖ Who are the thought leaders? Who are your superstars, “The Heart Doctor” or “Sleep Expert”? Promote researchers on the cutting edge of medical solutions.
 - ❖ Can you identify healthcare champions and stakeholders in the community to partner with?
 - ❖ Do you have staff that are both passionate and want to participate?
 - ❖ What are the staffing requirements in terms of skills and time investment?
 - ❖ Get your champions on-board

Processes and Workflow

7. Develop your internal processes and plans
 - ❖ What are your budgetary requirements?
 - ❖ What are your short-term and long-term goals? Clinical areas projected to grow or losing volume? Consider which areas need to recruit doctors/staff to build expertise.
 - ❖ What organizational impact will implementing social media initiatives have?
 - ❖ What workflows may change, who needs to be involved to make this happen?
 - ❖ Who will be the corporate sponsor(s)? Will there be a social media strategic advisory group? Will there be medical staff and clinical representation? Who will run it and be accountable?

Identify Target Audience

8. Understand and profile your customer
 - ❖ Who your different customers are, including your current relationships.
 - ❖ Engagement and levels of trust with each type of customer.
 - ❖ Define target customers you need to build new or different relationships with.
 - ❖ Which targeted customers will be best served by which social media?
 - ❖ Who are the best initial targets for the first 6 to 9 months?

Identify Target Audience(continued)

- ❖ Match social media to customer needs.
- ❖ What services and information are they most interested in and how do they want to get it?
- ❖ Prioritize which customers to target first.

Match tools to audience, goals, & risk tolerance

9. Match your Customer Communications with Customer Needs and Desires
 - ❖ What do you want to communicate, to whom, in what way?
 - ❖ How are you communicating today – phone, direct mail, face-to-face, and so on?
 - ❖ How are you measuring the success of your communications?
 - ❖ What is working and not working today?
 - ❖ Do you want to educate, inform, guide, motivate, connect, position your customer?
 - ❖ Which social media tools are most effective for your purposes?
 - ❖ What sort of messaging will best resonate with your target audience?

Choose your tools

10. Select your social media platform and/or tools
 - ❖ Do you need a platform, or just a selection of tools?
 - ❖ How do you evaluate available platforms?
 - ❖ Are there any platforms designed specifically for healthcare organizations?
 - ❖ How can you effectively use Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube etc?
 - ❖ How does your social media strategy integrate with your existing web site?
 - ❖ How much content control do you need, and why? What are the benefits and costs involved? Who will generate content?

Create Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, Address Risks

11. Understand how HIPPA regulations may affect your strategy
 - ❖ How will you protect health information (PHI)? Advise and educate users how to converse about medical information and protect their privacy or other patients' privacy they discuss. Build guidelines and social media policy. Develop a process to protect PHI.

Create Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, Address Risks (continued)

- ❖ What information will be posted? Who should post the information? Will there be checks? Will the rules be different for patient-specific clinical information vs. general health information? Require anonymous user names.
- ❖ What administrative tools do you need to protect patient information? Different user levels with assigned permissions? Approval process for content and tools.

Address Risks & Legal Issues

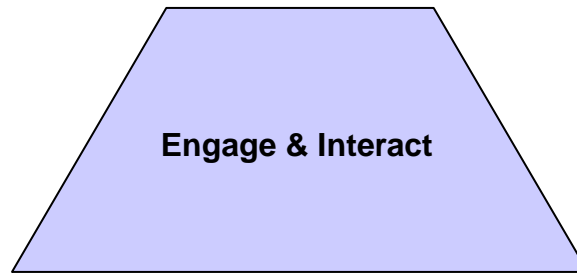
12. Determine and address your potential legal issues
 - ❖ What are the potential liabilities for your organization and how can you best mitigate them?
 - ❖ Do you need to write up new member agreement, terms of use, and disclaimer documents, or will existing (web site) documents work?
 - ❖ What issues are specific for your medical staff; for your employees?
 - ❖ What are your liabilities and how do you mitigate risk?



Build & Test

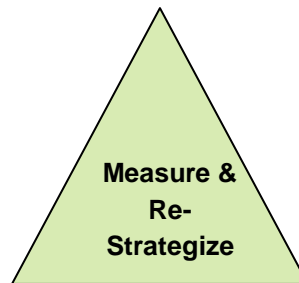
13. Understand Social Engagement with your Customer/ Community.
 - ❖ Secure tools, technology, SAS platform
 - ❖ SM Accounts established
 - ❖ Create efficient navigation path between tools, platforms
 - ❖ Identify staff resources. Identify super users that are a part of your staff.
 - ❖ Build content, engage clinicians
 - ❖ Test with staff users, Tweak & Retest
14. Tactics
 - ❖ Platforms
 - ❖ Security
 - ❖ Process
 - ❖ Controls
 - ❖ Measurement

Build a Successful Strategy (continued)



15. Start talking. Post blogs. Start discussions on forums. Create groups that share common interests. Respond to positive tweets and wall posts. Show your appreciation. Contact these users. Ask them to share their stories, be a part of videos, moderate forums or post blogs. Offer unique information about your hospital.

- ❖ Engage in active discussions, open interactions
- ❖ Community members share success stories
- ❖ Drive members to appropriate tools



16. Determine how to measure your progress against your objectives

- ❖ What information is required to measure results? What metrics will you use?
- ❖ What are your baseline measurements?
- ❖ What measurement tools are available? How will you quantify success?

17. Pull analytics; assemble key stakeholders and present data. Adjust your processes and tactics to try to increase participation and increase qualities of posts and other content. Create contests and other innovative motivators to drive more people to your platforms and get them to participate. Show appreciation for their contribution to making your social media a valuable way to interact with your community.

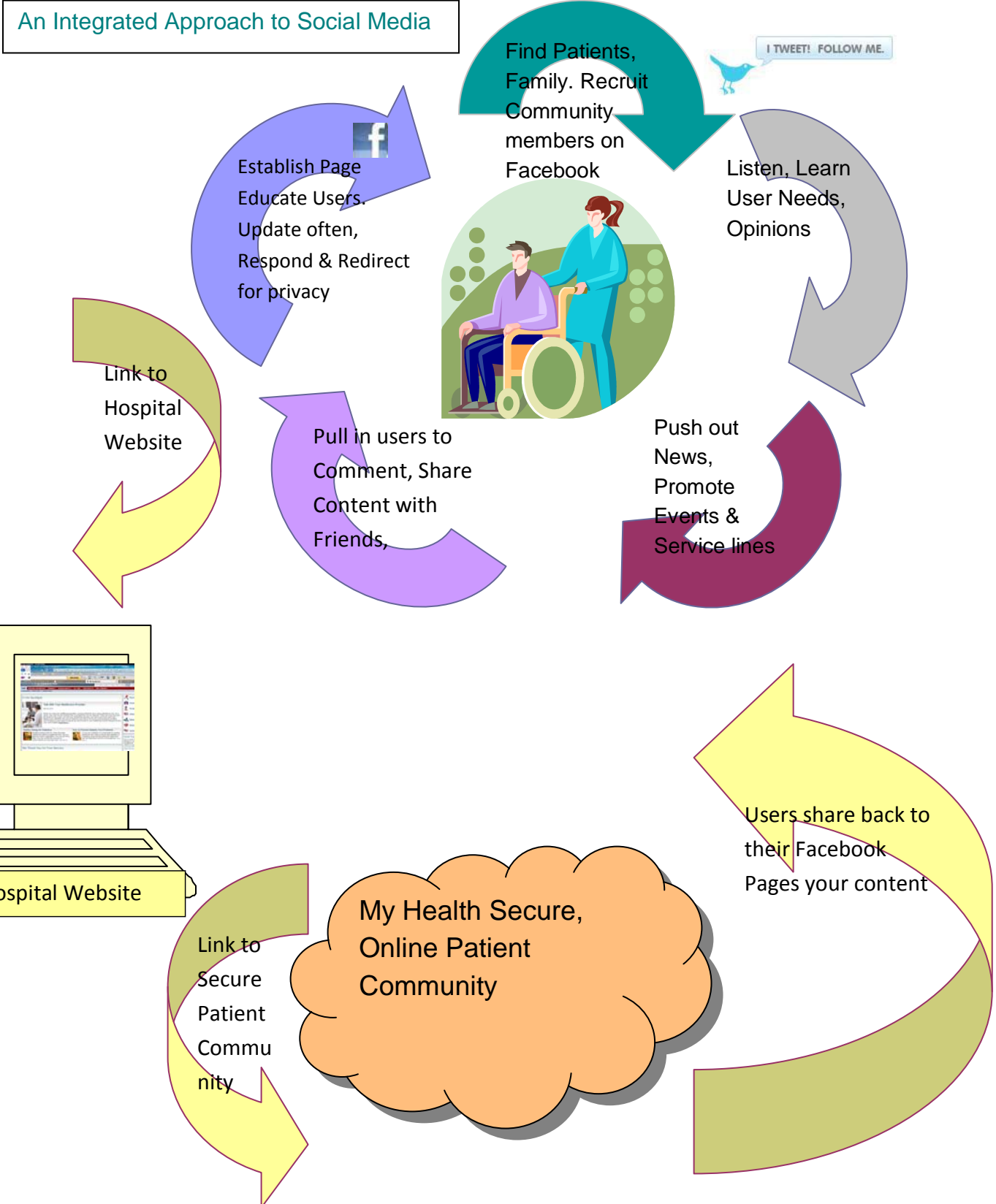
- ❖ Measure user experience: page clicks, retweets, time on site, etc.
- ❖ Use analytics to measure your tactical performance
- ❖ Repurpose efforts, staff, tools to better respond to user requirements
- ❖ Expand efforts to new service areas, new clinical arenas, target audiences
- ❖ Assess new social media options and available tools
- ❖ Re-measure and re-strategize. It's an ongoing effort.

Get Started

Getting started is relatively easy. Developing a strategy is the key to success. Here are a few things to think about as you get things rolling.

- ❖ Develop a strategy that can go forward within the next 18 to 24 months.
- ❖ Determine whether or not you have the skills in-house to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy. If you decide to bring in an outside consulting firm, it is critical to retain one who understands the healthcare business.
- ❖ Use the 80/20 rule. First target those areas that will have high impact for your organization and that have high probability of success.
- ❖ Remember to focus on developing process, structure and communications prior to implementing tactics.
- ❖ Make sure all parties involved understand that building a community of loyal users, friends and fans and earning their trust is a long term process.
- ❖ Ensure that risk management is an integral part of your overall strategy.
- ❖ Assess tools available in market that may offer turnkey platforms, expertise to bring your social media approach up faster, more effective and efficient implementation.

Move to a Fully-Integrated Social Media Solution



Creating a Fully-Integrated Social Media Solution

To create an integrated social media solution it is most effective with a strategic plan that is a living document, flexible enough to incorporate the innovative technologies that are continuing to hit the healthcare IT runway in lightning speed. It is important to offer your patients a private community online that is governed by your hospital. Your hospital can assure your users of a safe place to obtain trusted medical information and obtain support from peers.

Assemble a one-stop-shopping experience for users who come in to find everything you offer about asthma, diabetes, obesity, cancer, etc. Create a supportive environment where people who have experienced the ups and downs of a disease can come to receive guidance and tips. Offer a library of medical knowledge that is relevant to the care your community has at your hospital. Give them choices and options. Reach out with the latest research to help them along their decision path.

There are options available to pull your online consumers in through the conversation platforms that they are on such as Facebook and Twitter then redirect them to your website and your own secure patient online community. You can partner with a company that offers this type of software as a service (SAS). If this is something that you would consider bringing into your social media environment you might want to consider our SAS MyHealthCommunity platform that can be branded to your hospital. We offer online demos of the community and would love to have you see it and give us your feedback.

Step into the Social Media World, You and Your Patients Will Be Glad You Did

The time to start is now. Ignoring social media opportunities cedes the advantage to your competitors. In addition to a significant return on your investment, you will reach a new generation and begin the process of building loyalty. The potential benefits are huge and the risks are manageable.

The Time is now for a Social Media Plan

We can help every step of the way; answering your questions, recommending strategies, implementing components and assisting with integration issues. We are MyHealthCommunity Social Network, Inc.



About MyHealthCommunity

MyHealthCommunity (MHC) is a service and platform company. MHC is dedicated to serving hospitals and hospital enterprises with services and platforms to increase patient satisfaction, reduce costs, build your brand and provide patient education through social media. MHC has brought together healthcare and social media experts that understand the hospital industry. Our team is ready to help you get started with a social media solution.

For more information, contact, sales@myhealthcommunity.net