

# Importance of public relations in promotion of hospital marketing essay



The first World Assembly of Public Relations Associations, held in Mexico City in August 1978, defined the practice of public relations as “ the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organizational leaders, and implementing planned programs of action, which will serve both the association and the public interest

### **The industry today**

Require for public relations personnel is growing at a rapid pace. The types of clients that PR people work for include the government, hospitals, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, particular industries, corporation, athletic teams, entertainment companies, and even country

### **Methods, tools and tactics**

Public relations and publicity are not the same, but many PR campaigns include provisions for publicity. Publicity is the spreading of information to increase public awareness for a product, person, service, cause or association, and can be seen as a result of effective PR planning. More recently in public relations, professionals are using technology as their main instrument to get their messages to target audience. With the formation of social networks, blogs, and even internet radio public relations professionals are able to send direct messages through these mediums that attract the target audiences. Methods used to find out what is attractive to target audiences include the use of surveys, conduct research or even focus groups. Tactics are the ways to attract target audiences by using the information gathered about that audience and directing a message to them using tools such as social media or other technology.

## **A Public Relation Officer**

Technology has developed and now there are a variety of method of doing the PR. Superior age and modern technology has brought new methods of doing PR involvement and has made job of PR officer easy. With help of this technology the PRO of many different industries has newly evolved many techniques of doing the awareness. Small group of companies like software development, staffing industry and Marketing agencies have opened various online advertisement campaigns through various advertisement portals. The PRO is called as a sales doctor because of these portals, that these portals work in such a way that they had made advertisement so simple and the companies can improve their products and increase the sales ratios of their company. Tools like brochure making, writing blogs and banner advertisement are one kind of tools that many of these industries use. Online advertisement has made it and they are so easy to use and are judged on such a parameter that it gives access in any parts of world and online payments can be made

## **Importance of public relation in promotion of hospital:-**

### **Public relations department in a hospital:-**

Public relation is relatively new service in hospital. Nevertheless, it's rapid growth in recent years and the fact that many hospitals now have public relations programs and public officer indicate that it has earned an important and permanent place in the hospital set -up.

The importance of and the need for public relations can be appreciated when one considers some of the problem today's hospital have to contend with -

high cost of medical care and the growing public criticism of hospital, problem of delivering quality care at affordable cost, need for efficient and professional management of hospital and increasing involvement of government agencies and consumer protection forums in patient care and internal management of hospital. Different section of public- community, employees, medical staff, patient, visitors, etc. forms their opinion about the hospital according to the source of information . These opinions can be influences by a good public relations programmed.

A good public relation program is essential both inside and outside the hospital . Inside the hospital to maintain dedicated staff who will provide warm and personal service to patient and outside to communicate the activity of the hospital to the people and to interpret people’s perception of the hospital and its policies to the hospital ‘ s management

Healthcare changing at rapid pace with the role of public relations in hospital is changing too. There has been an explosion in technology that has revolutionized the practice of the public relations in terms of its acceptance and sophistication. Many public relations directors who remain insulated in their self contained hospitals performing the traditional public relations activity such as publication of house journals and functioning as hospitals media agent have suddenly found themselves equipped and unprepared to face the challenge of new concepts of marketing positioning and advertising that have been introduce to public relations.

## **The basic components of public relations in hospital :-**

**Counseling:** This involves providing advice to management about policies, relationships and interactions.

**Research:** shaping attitudes and behaviors of the public in order to plan public strategies.

**Media Relations:** Working with mass media in seeking publicity or responding to their interests in the hospital.

**Publicity:** Disseminating planned messages through selected media to sponsor the hospital

**Employee/Member Relations:** Responding to concerns, informing, and motivating the hospital employees or members.

**Community Relations:** designed activity with a community to maintain an environment that benefits both the hospital and the community.

**Public Affairs:** Developing effective involvement in public policy and helping a hospital adapt to public expectations. The term is also used by government agencies to describe their public relations activities and by many corporations as an umbrella term to describe multiple public relations activities.

**Government Affairs:** Relating directly with legislatures and regulatory agencies on behalf of the hospital. Lobbying can be a part of the government affairs program.

Issues Management: Identifying and addressing issues of public concern that affect the hospital.

Financial Relations: Creating and maintain investor confidence and building good relationships with the financial community Also known as Investor Relations or Shareholder Relations.

Industry Relations: Relating with other hospitals in the industry of an organization .

Development/Fund-Raising: Demonstrating the need for development and encouraging the public to support the hospital, primarily through financial contributions.

Special Events: inspiring an interest in a person, product or organization by means of a focused “ happening” also activities designed to interact with publics and listen to them.

Marketing Communications Combinations of activities designed to service or idea, including advertising, collateral materials, publicity , promotion, directs mail , trade show and special events

### **Work environment:-**

Public relations specialists work in busy offices. The pressures of deadlines and tight work schedules can be stressful. Some public relations specialists work a standard 35- to 40-hour week, but overtime is common, and work schedules can be irregular and are frequently interrupted. Occasionally, they must be at the job or on call around the clock, especially if there is an

emergency or crisis. Schedules often have to be rearranged so workers can meet deadlines, deliver speeches, attend meetings and community activities, and travel.

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### **Effectiveness of public relations:-**

To be effective public relations must depend on the government board's appreciation of the special public relations needs of the hospital as well as on the support of all departments. By and large this latter support is readily forthcoming because public relations cuts across organizational lines and in interest of the hospital managers are more willing to do for the public relations what they normally would not do for other department .

In recent time there has been pronounced trend toward the CEO's of hospital assuming an expended public relations role and performing some activity related to public relations which they feel are too important to be left in the hands of their subordinate's . consequently CEO's are seen spending more time on public relations function. These activities include public speaking, dealing directory with media, lobbying in favor of or against issues that affect health care and hospital dealing with consumer protection forums', promoting industrial, or occupational medicine by meeting corporate bosses and cultivating community and top opinion leaders. The public relations

director arranges this meeting and prepares promotional materials for the CEO's use

## **Responsibility of public relations department**

The major responsibility of the public relations department are interpreting , advertising , marketing and communicating . To carry these responsibility effectively , the public relation director should be fully informed of everything that goes in the hospital . In other word he should be amender of top management team and should attend meeting of the government board for this it is obvious that the director is a person of the highest personal integrity , stature , judgment and personal discretion

Public opinions about a hospital are formed first and foremost on the personal experience of patients and their families , then on the opinions of the staff and their families , persons who have first -hand knowledge and information about the hospital, visitors, suppliers and only then on information derived from other source . this primacy of individual as a source of opinions has a profound influence on the hospital ' s public relations . It underscores the importance of a sound internal relations program as the bases for all external public relations

Advertising, marketing, promotions, public relations, and sales managers often serve as liaisons between the firm requiring the advertising and an advertising or promotion agency that develops and places the ads.

The employees are first line of public relations . it is the responsibility of the management that all the hospital and by their actions and word , they can make or break the hospital . It is important to understand , therefore , that <https://assignbuster.com/importance-of-public-relations-in-promotion-of-hospital-marketing-essay/>



good public relations hospital public relations hospital begins with the employee and that it is product of positive employee relations . progressive personnel policies which lay emphasis and an supervision and an enlightened result in high morale , productivity , internal harmony and motivated , loyal and contented employees who take pride their organization.

From another angle it is necessary to ensure that all employees know their hospital . a well informed employee is the best public representative of the hospital . Providing a good orientation program and keeping the employees continuously informed of all aspect of the hospital are the combined responsibility of the human resource and public relations program.

## **Functions**

To interpret to the management the different view point and attitudes of various strata of the public which it has identified, and recommend action to effectively solve the problems arising from attitudinal changes on issue relating to the hospital.

To study the action and activity of the management and the impact they may have on the public perception of the hospital, apprise the management of any harmful effect and recommend suitable action to avoid it

To gather and analysis date on an ongoing basis to improve communications to between the hospital and the public

To assist the the institution to secure support and guidance from the public In the development of the hospital and , to that end . help in conducting

market surveys To develop communication materials such as internal and external newsletters , publications audio-visuals , media releases consisting of material on hospital services , health topic and human inters stories to promote the hospital goal's and objective , and direct them to reach specific target audiences

To establish channel of communication between the hospital's public and the management team

To help in rising funds for the support of the hospital

To develop and maintain good relations with the media and communicate with the press at authorized by the hospital's CEO, always keeping in mind the sound principal that public relations practitioners should be open and honest with press

To organized hospital's speaker bureau consisting of the CEO. Senior members of the staff including medical staff , and governing board member to speak to civic groups , clubs and organizations in an effort to promote the hospital's and

To participate in community affairs that have bearing on the well being of the hospital be a member of service organizations such as rotary , lions or other group and other group and become respected community leaders

## **Hospital and news media relations**

Media relations is one of the most important role of the public relations .

Hospital's media relations is built credibility , professionalism and mutual

trust . this is not accomplished in a day . The hospital's and media must respect and appreciate each other's role . The media has the responsibility of disseminating news of public interest to its reader viewers and listeners . In this it expect the hospital to serve as the news source -news of VIP patient , for example on the other hand the hospital have primary moral and legal responsibility to protect the right of the patient to privacy in addition to his proper care . Balancing these two commitments hospital hospitals generally use such standard terms as good fair serious and critical to describe a patient conditions when communicating to the media

Good media relations is built on mutual understanding and personal contact with the media established over a period of time

### **Major services of public relations in hospital:-**

Getting informed on what is being published in the daily news and following up what it issued about the hospital news. The department photocopies and saves this information in special files then is proposed to the hospital manager. Each specialist is responsible for one newspaper where he follows up the news and then displays and saves it.

Daily passage on the hospital patients in all floors. It is responsible for following and resolving all the patients' problems being faced during their stay in the hospital. They are also responsible for inquiring about the VIPs and welcoming them in the hospital.

Reservation for conferences, symposium, debate for thesis statements (masters, PHD) by filling the form that applies to each of them and writing the kind of debate or the conference, accompanied with the hospital

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manager signature and issuing the purchase order under item of the scientific activity account.

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### **The public relation department offers all the necessary services like:**

Setting up for symposiums and the different scientific activities by setting the halls, amphitheatres, and supervising on the cleaning activities and coordinating with the engineering department.

- The coordination with the Food & Beverage Department and the cafeteria in case of needing any hotel services.

The coordination with the engineering department for the availability of technicians specialized in operation.

- Sending faxes for Mass Media and especially to “ Houras” channel and the specialized channels to record and publish the conferences, scientific symposiums and thesis statements.

### **Translation Department:-**

In this section, there are 2 English translators and 1 French translator. They are responsible for welcoming the foreign visitors to visit the hospital and publish on its services in the daily newspapers. This department is also responsible of all the translation activities necessary to the hospital and writing the medical reports in the English language upon request, in addition to the invoices ” when necessary “.

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## **External Relation Department:-**

The External Relations Department is responsible for arranging the arrival of delegations and foreign experts where they are welcomed in the VIP hall, and the department messenger welcomes them at the airport. This department is responsible for arranging different educational and entertaining trips for the coming visitors in order to know the Egyptian culture. It is also responsible for accompanying the hospital medical team back and forth for 24 hours each according to the working shift applied.

## **Reception Department:-**

At the beginning of the hospital activity, the reception department responsibility was mainly for the main reception, which is located in the basement floor but due to the hospital additional requirements, the reception is distributed as follows:

Two public relations specialists in the hospital main reception in addition to a computer device to facilitate the inquiry process.

-Two public relations specialists with a computer device in the first floor reception

-One public relations specialist in the corridor of the first floor

-One public relations specialist in all floors, in addition to availability of registered files listing all the names of resident patients.

-One public relations specialist in the check up department to welcome the VIPs and explain the check up program idea to all clients.

-Two public relations specialists in the medical committee to meet members of the teaching staff and passing by them in the Internal Departments

All these activities are done for the purpose of elevating the hospital performance and work process.

### **Publishing and Announcement:**

This department is responsible for publishing all what it receives from hospital ads (job vacancies) from the Human Resource Department. It is also responsible for bids and tenders that concern the Purchasing Department where the ad is published for 2 consecutive days in the official newspapers. This act is the responsibility of two public relations specialists.

### **Services for hospital employees:**

This department is responsible for making surveys on the hospital employees where it can issue a percentage stated from the total compensation earnings concerning (marriage, death, disasters, and study).

public relations specialist in responsible for this activity.

The department is also responsible for operating transportation lines for employees and nurses and determining the transportation lines, collecting transportation fees and submitting it to the hospital safe box.

- This activity done by four public relations specialists.

The department is currently setting the operation of new lines to facilitate the transportation problems on the employees. In addition to this, 2

microbuses are assigned to transfer members of the teaching staff from and to Cairo University hospitals and vice versa.

A committee is formed from 2 public relations specialists to investigate the employee problems in order to perform their jobs with full trust.

This department is concerned with collecting appreciation letters written by patients and then publishing them on the hospital advertising board and it is concerned with doctors, nurses and employees.

- In order to increase the employees spiritual moral, the hospital arranges vacations each year for a duration of 4 months, with an annual trip in the mid year vacation, besides the one day trips.

-The department also organizes a monthly party selecting the employee of the month from each department in corporation with the office of the Hospital manager.

- Report on amphitheaters that are rented from the Public Relations Department

## **Methods of Improving Public Relations in Hospitals**

High quality of patient care will ensure simultaneously good public relations. Obviously, a patient will never accept public relations programmed in lieu of indifferent hospital care. Thus, good patient care is a sine qua non. No amount of smiles, cheers and propaganda will compensate for bad administration and poor professional care in a hospital.

A patient comes with certain definite expectations to the hospital. The reception is normally the first contact point but often he may have made earlier contact with the hospital by getting into correspondence or by contacting over the telephone. All courtesies must be extended to him on these occasions to project a good image of the hospital.

A lot of valuable information can be and should be furnished to patients even prior to their admission. Certain details with regard to time and date and the person to whom he should contact with exact place will help in achieving favorable opinion about the hospital. Equally important is the fact that the person who is to receive the patient should be available on right time or else this will lead to just opposite effect, and the patient may go back home disgruntled.

Most of the hospitals have their own telephone exchanges. The experience of a telephone call may be the first impression of understandable importance. Telephone operators should answer calls promptly and politely and promptly respond to the queries of the caller. This would avoid waste of time and frustration.

Environmental sanitation, cleanliness and physical comforts provided to patients create good impression. Well kept lawns, clean surroundings are reflection of good administration which helps in building initial confidence.

Reception, Enquiry and Admission Office should be established as one single unit. The staff posted there should be specially selected and trained in human relations. They should be courteous, cheerful and above all efficient

in their work. Persons working here should have full knowledge of the routine  
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procedures of the hospital so that information to the patients or their relatives is furnished without any delay.

The Outpatient Department is the most sensitive place from the public relations point of view. Largest number of people visits this department. According to the estimation for each bed in a hospital there are 500 visitors to a hospital in a year. This would explain the gravity of the situation. More frictions and misunderstandings arise in this department than anywhere else. Separate parking space for the staff and the public, adequate waiting space and seating arrangements and facilities of wheel chairs and trolleys should be made available. Public toilets, drinking water, cafeteria, and public telephones are essential in this department. Waiting time of the patients should be rendered to minimum. Maximum number of doctors should be available during the peak hours. Help of paramedical and non-medical staff is a must. Voluntary agencies may be required to help the patients in finding out various areas of the hospital. This department should be organized in such a manner that there is free flow of traffic and cross traffic is avoided or minimized. In addition to the help from staff and volunteers, suitable guidance aids like supply of information brochure in local community centers and other sign postings will definitely help in creating a good impression. A responsible member of the staff should be available to explain the reasons of delay or listen to public grievances.

Measures should be taken to avoid queue jumping and influence of 'pull'. To avoid public resentment separate counters should be opened for the hospital, employees.

The Accident and Emergency Department or 'Casualty' is another very sensitive area. People coming here are charged with emotions, anxiety and sense of urgency. This department should be staffed and equipped for round-the-clock services. It should be supported by an efficient ambulance service. Prompt medical relief and sympathetic behavior of the staff is very important in building good public relations. In one of the studies, it was observed that consumers were dissatisfied due to misunderstandings, rough behavior of lower cadre staff and poor information and guidance system in this department.

Most patients entering the hospital have many questions and concerns. Hospitals must strive to answer their questions. A hospital information booklet provides information that is helpful to patients and their relatives. Often, patients are admitted in an elective basis and they have time to plan their admissions. They can take advantage of these booklets in planning and preparing for their hospital stay. The booklet can be of various types and the information to be incorporated therein will depend upon many factors. The hospital administrator should decide, after careful study, as to which information should be provided through these booklets.

There are certain other aspects which need careful consideration which are described in brief as under.

### **Name Labels and Uniform:**

All functionaries should wear uniforms and name labels. This creates initial good impression on patients and reflects good administration. It also infuses among the employees a pride and sense of belonging to the institutions.

These also help in identifying the staff by name and their status. These are particularly useful in OPD and ancillary departments.

### **Importance of Color:**

Color effects many of our moods and emotions. Proper choice of color can transform depressing and monotonous atmosphere into pleasing and exciting one. It stimulates employee's productivity. Hospital is one area where color can be used with measured success not only in appearance but for the psychological uplifting which it brings to patients.

### **Delay in Admission:**

Anxiety and distress is the result of delays in admission due to long waiting list. In allotting priorities for admission, hospitals consider the physical state of the patients but forget the social background and as a result, social emergencies have to wait. Adequate facilities in efficient use of present resources can resolve this problem to some extent.

### **Ward Reception:**

Patients are generally vulnerable to anxiety and fear on arrival in the ward. The reception they get tends to leave a deep impression. Prompt reception improves the morale of the patients.

### **Privacy:**

It is normally observed that majority of the patients are dissatisfied with the type of privacy provided in the ward. Provision of screens around each bed would afford greater privacy. To have the privacy and at the same time

provide the advantage of companionship of other patients in the ward, would go a long way in creating a feeling of warmth and understanding.

### **Food:**

Good food, well prepared and attractively served to patients, makes a very favourable impression. Presence of dietician or a nurse at the time of service, creates good impact on the patients.

### **Cleanliness:**

Cleanliness is much a desired thing in a hospital. It not only enhances the image of the hospital but also helps in controlling hospital infection. Frequent cleaning and liberal use of detergents and deodorants eliminates the stink which is most dissatisfying.

### **Information about Illness:**

The most important thing to a patient is to know as to what is wrong with him and how long will it take to recover. Information in this respect will always be associated with fear, anxiety and thus, will help in building patients confidence. A doctor or a nurse should be available in the ward during visiting hours to furnish information regarding illness of the patients to their relatives.

### **Visitors:**

Relatives and friends come rushing to the hospital the moment they learn about the illness of their near and dear one. This is to show their loyalty, affection and strength of ties. It also satisfies emotional needs of the patient. The relatives etc. are allowed to visit their patients for a short while. The visiting hours policy should be more liberal for the visitors to the serious

patients and relatives coming from distant places. Too rigid visiting policy makes the public\* critical of the hospital.

### **Complaints and Suggestions:**

The best way to deal with complaints is to do everything possible to avoid getting them by anticipating the problems. In spite of the best intentions of everyone and as it happens everywhere else, sometimes things go wrong. Any complaint and suggestions should receive prompt attention and wherever possible remedial actions be taken. Equally important is that whatever action is taken, the same is communicated to the complaint.

### **Mortuary and Chaplain Facility:**

The disposal of the dead is influenced by religion, social and cultural beliefs and practices. It is necessary to provide within the hospital or its premises a place to which a dead body can be moved quietly so that other patients do not get upset. Disposal of dead has a great bearing on public relations of the hospital. This is a sensitive area for the relatives and friends. Even unintentional neglect or delay may carry unpleasant impression about the hospital. Utmost care is needed by all members of the staff to ensure that prompt and proper disposal of the dead is arranged.

### **Suggestions :-**

Too often not much of attention is paid to the public relations aspect in a hospital. In our country, demands are many and resources are few. Particularly in the health sector, almost all the hospitals remain crowded and the necessity of creating good impression about the hospital does not cross the minds of the staff. Very little do we realize that with a good public

relations system, the hospital does not only get good name but it also helps in early recovery of the patient. It is very vital that all the staff of the hospital is made aware of this aspect in order to get their full support and active help.

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