



## Distribution and Marketing Plan for Nursing Homes

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**Received Date:** August 17, 2021; **Published Date:** September 01, 2021

### Abstract

Nursing homes are institutions where individuals who do not need to be in hospital and cannot be cared for at home can receive care. These institutions are equipped with trained nurses who aid the patients through caregiving and giving medication as prescribed by doctors or clinical officers. Some nursing homes adopt hospital set-ups, also known as skilled nursing facility, with staff members providing care, physical, occupational and speech therapy with nurses' stations on every floor. However, others have adopted a home set-up that gives patients a neighborhood feeling with less official routines or schedules. This is essential since it allows staff members to develop relationships with the residents, improving the quality of services provided to them. Nursing homes require spreading information on the nature of services they provide to the general public. Therefore, they need proper marketing plans to market their services to the public; consequently, they use the integrated marketing communication strategy. This paper will discuss the integrated marketing strategy, its elements and the best approach that nursing homes can use to ensure effective distribution and marketing of their services.

### Integrating Marketing Communication

Integrated marketing communication is the process through which organizations create consistent and coordinated messages across the available channels of communication [1]. Integrated marketing communication ensures the effective delivery of promotional messages to the targeted audience to improve sales of products and services. It is a valuable process since it emphasizes the importance of engaging all stakeholders, especially customers, to enhance their loyalty through relationship building. Integration aims to present consistent messages across the communication promotional mix elements that form the base for marketing and ensure the success of an organization [1]. IMC can also be referred to as the process and the concept of strategically managing audience-focused, result-driven and channel-centered brand communications to improve sales through marketing.

In general, integrated marketing communication should entail the following attributes. First, all the communication work should be directed to the consumer to influence their behavior and persuade them to purchase the organization's products [1]. Besides, the organization should employ an outside-in approach while designing the communication strategy. This approach ensures that the needs of the consumer are considered first. Additionally, it is essential to have a well-established rapport between the consumer and the organization to ensure acceptance of the communication messages. The strategy should also include contact points in all communication to ensure that the messages are delivered correctly and for further inquiry (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010). Furthermore, in order for an organization to create a competitive brand, they should consider proper coordination within the communication disciplines involved.

Integrated marketing communication involves different communication mix elements, including personal selling, advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion and public relations [2]. Personal selling is the process that entails any paid form of communication which seeks to inform and persuade customers to purchase a product in the event that the product has undergone some changes. Personal selling involves face-to-face interaction with the consumer, which is effective in winning the consumer's trust. In the health sector, home visits by health personnel are forms of personal selling where they invite individuals to their health institutions once they determine the needs of the patient. However, it has the disadvantage of consuming much time to convince customers to purchase products. Besides, in the case of a nursing home, it is not much applicable since nursing involves the sale of services. Sales promotion is a technique through which organizations provide incentives such as free samples, discounts, and other promotional materials to popularize products and services [2]. In the health sector, it involves free presentations such as books, pens, diaries and calendars with organization logos and other added information. Participating in professional meetings, trade fairs, and conferences give nursing institutions the opportunity to display their services which is a form of sales promotion. Such sales promotion techniques give the consumers the opportunity to meet with practitioners in nursing homes and obtain more information on their services.

## Advertising

Advertising is a form of paid product promotion through the transmission of relevant and persuasive information about goods and services through the media [2]. Advertising takes place in the mainstream media such as radio, television, internet, magazine, newspapers, billboards, among others. Nursing homes can take this opportunity to book airtime and space in the mainstream media to advertise their services to persuade customers to choose them. Advertising has the advantage of reaching a large audience over a short time, increasing the awareness of services provided in nursing homes. However, advertising has the disadvantage of high cost. To place an advert in the mainstream media is costly; therefore, only a few nursing homes can afford it. On the other hand, public relations is the process that aims at creating a good relationship with all its stakeholders [2]. Since all other promotional methods focus on customers, public relations focus on its stakeholders, including suppliers, shareholders, employees, media, investors, government, educators, and society. Public relations aim to promote the organization's image through publicity and participating in various activities in the community. Besides, it involves publications and participating in trade fairs and conferences with the aim of selling the brand name. Dissemination of corporate information through the media builds trust and

confidence, therefore attracts more customers. In the context of nursing homes, advertising and public relations are the best communication elements to use for marketing.

The internet plays a significant role in ensuring the smooth flow of information when advertising the services provided in nursing homes. First, the internet ensures the availability of real-time information since it allows timely updates and expansion of information [3]. Besides, the internet provides various platforms such as social media, websites, yahoo and google clouds. These platforms can be used to create, disseminate, and store advertisement data at a relatively low cost, minimizing advertisement costs. Additionally, the internet allows the multi-direction exchange of information between organizations and their customers. This attribute is advantageous since it enables customers to give immediate feedback; therefore, the organizations can work in line with the responses from their customers. The internet applies the aspects of multi-media, which involves sound, videos, images, graphics, and texts (Ivanov, 2012). This provides closure on the nature of services offered by nursing homes, compared to single media such as radio or newspaper.

## Advertising Efficacy

Advertising efficacy is determined by the effects experienced after an advertisement is sent to the public. The most effective method to measure the effectiveness of advertisement is the pre and post-test method. This method involves measuring the popularity of a nursing home and its services before and after an advert is released to the audience. Besides, it also consists in recording the number of clients before and after the advert. In case there is an increase, then the advert was effective, while a constant or a decrease indicates inefficacy of an advert. An advert aims to spread more information about a nursing home and create awareness, therefore, increasing the number of clients. It is essential to evaluate the changes before and after adverts on a nursing home are released to the public.

## References

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