

Developing a digital recruitment marketing strategy within your healthcare organisation

The digital world has evolved beyond recognition in the last decade or two, and that means many functions of an organisation which were once conducted using traditional methods now make use of new technology.

Recruitment is no different – where once, a job advertisement would be placed within the local newspaper or shared with an agency who would find good candidates on your behalf, now increasing numbers of job-seekers are picking up their phones and laptops rather than a paper in order to find viable career opportunities.

While other sectors have adapted quickly to this new way of recruiting, the healthcare sector has taken a little longer to make the shift, and in some cases this hasn't yet happened.

Following a highly successful campaign with a Midlands-based NHS Trust, the team here at Clear has put together this guide to help other healthcare organisations looking to transform their recruitment marketing strategy...

Why is a solid strategy vital?

The gap between the number of roles within the NHS and the number of candidates filling those roles is widening at pace – it's predicted there will be a 250,000 staff shortfall by 2030. Traditionally, both the initial recruitment and then retention of staff has been an issue, and something which Trusts have been attempting to address in recent years. Attracting the right people to roles within other organisations across the healthcare sector has also been an ongoing concern.

- NHS data showed there were 100,000 vacancies across the UK in 2019¹
- There was a 30% decrease in applications for nursing degrees after bursaries were cut²
- Costs associated with locum and agency staff have risen in recent years

Ensuring your recruitment strategy is forward-thinking, well-executed and compelling is a vital part of beginning to reverse the trend.

Why is a digital strategy vital?

As digital technology has evolved, so too has audience behaviour. More than 3.8 billion people globally are now active social media users – an increase of 9% from the start of 2019 to the start of 2020³. Meanwhile, circulation of national newspapers dropped by more than 52% between 2010 and 2018⁴.

It's not that the future is digital – the present is digital.

Key consideration: The real benefits of a career in healthcare

If you don't know why someone would want to work in healthcare, then you're missing a vital part of the picture when it comes to a strategy. Some of the main aspects to focus on include:

- Being able to work in a large, interesting and diverse workforce
- Making a difference every day in people's lives while caring for them
- Using cutting-edge technology which is constantly improving
- A new challenge every day – each day varies and it's definitely not monotonous
- Once you're skilled in a particular aspect of the sector, you are able to transfer those skills potentially to anywhere within the country
- Career progression – there are plenty of opportunities to be promoted within the sector, and skills which would easily transfer to other sectors too.

As well as considering the overarching reasons why a healthcare career might appeal, you also need to consider what you (as a specific organisation) are you offering them. This is not only about the job role, but also the unique opportunities within your organisation.

And don't forget the wider implications: you're potentially giving them the chance to relocate to the area, so focusing on the key reasons someone would move is a much-overlooked part of many organisations' digital strategy.

This can cover everything from the local amenities, nightlife, transport links, schools, and beauty spots. It's about remembering that you're hiring a person who is going to have a life outside of their work hours. Many traditional adverts simply state the location of the organisation, but this can be developed into a real selling point. Incorporating the area's amenities into your strategy also gives plenty of opportunities for the use of captivating imagery and video footage.

There are so many jobs within healthcare organisations available at any one time, that you need to establish a unique selling point – why would someone want that job within your organisation?

Key consideration: The diverse audiences

Have you got a focused idea of your target audience? If you're looking to hire a range of candidates for managerial, medical and ancillary roles then consideration of the different target audiences for each of those is essential. This will ultimately impact everything about the strategy, including your key messaging, where you choose to focus your efforts, and even the imagery you use.

It may be that different roles attract a different demographic of applicant, so that must be taken into consideration. There are also geographical factors to consider – how far are candidates feasibly going to travel to work for the organisation, and where are the key locations that they're likely to be coming from (i.e. those with good travel links to your main sites).

Key consideration: User experience

A digital marketing strategy is no use without considering the user experience. As technology has evolved, so too has the expectation people have of the digital world. They want sleek websites, working links, stunning imagery, captioned video content, engaging social media posts, and cohesive branding so they associate the content with your organisation no matter which digital touch point they're viewing it from.

Planning how to grab the attention of those scrolling through social media or wading through page upon page of online job advertisements is a key aspect of your strategy. And once you've got that attention, you must hold it and compel potential candidates to take action. They must want to send their contact details to you, sign up to receive further content, or hopefully apply for a job. Otherwise, your strategy simply hasn't worked.

For more information...

Visit <https://cleardesign.co.uk/sectors/healthcare>

Clear is a creative digital agency – An in-house team of 23 professionals based in Shrewsbury with offices in Birmingham, made up of designers, developers, strategists, account managers and marketing executives. The company has been delivering results for the past 18 years and the integrated teams work on projects together to maximise ROI.

Sources:

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